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Women Wooing Men

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WOMEN WOOING MEN

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Abstract

Although many early modern English plays portray women courting men, I contend that there are significant resonances between the methods of Rosalind, the female protagonist from a Shakespearean comedy, and those of the Duchess, from a Websterian tragedy. Rosalind and the Duchess woo, propose to, and arrange the marriage ceremony between them and their love interests. The witty dialogue which permeates the wooing scenes helps establish a strong mental connection between Rosalind and Orlando and the Duchess and Antonio. I examine the motives behind wooing and comparatively analyze the strategies of these female characters. Through this analysis, I present Rosalind and the Duchess as creative, intelligent, and devoted women who choose freedom by wooing the men they love.

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

Playwrights of the early modern period created radical characters that seem more relevant to our lives today than ever before. The idea of women wooing men in early modern England is a particularly compelling subject because of the expectations for women's behavior at the time. In the Renaissance, women were expected to be obedient, quiet, and chaste. It was unconventional and even shocking for a woman to incite bouts of clever dialogue with a man, which is what Rosalind and the Duchess do in *As You Like It* and *The Duchess of Malfi*. They choose and actively pursue the men they love. Rosalind and the Duchess propose the idea of marriage to their counterparts. The Duchess even puts a ring on Antonio's finger and conducts an exchange of vows. As gender roles become less restrictive in contemporary society, it is incredible that we can turn to performances of the early modern period for clues of how to transcend stifling behavioral expectations for males and females.

This thesis will analyze the concept of women wooing men in William Shakespeare's *As You Like It* and John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*. It will investigate what motivates these female characters to woo men and what constitutes wooing. Though one play is a comedy and one is a tragedy, *As You Like It* and *The Duchess of Malfi* share compelling moments of wooing initiated and carried out by the female protagonists. Rosalind and the Duchess reject the roles assigned to them by early modern English society to be silent and subservient. Instead, they actively pursue the men they love. Rosalind's approach is unconventional in that she pursues Orlando while disguised as a young male named Ganymede. The Duchess woos Antonio without the security of disguise. Her decision to pursue Antonio is a much more dangerous one because her

brothers, Duke Ferdinand and the Cardinal, strongly oppose the idea of her remarrying. Not only does the Duchess propose to Antonio, but she knowingly risks her life to be with him.

My research questions include: What is significant about women wooing men in these plays? What are these playwrights saying about gender roles? How do these plays illuminate the significance of women wooing men today? The answers to these questions are compelling because they give us a more clear understanding of the reasons why women court men and reveal how powerful a reversal of courtship expectations can be. The concept of women wooing men encapsulates much more than an acknowledgement of a female's emotional, romantic, or sexual desires. It reveals that they are not unchaste contributors to cuckoldry, nor perfect unearthly figures of beauty but women who are creative, devoted, clever, and capable of shaping their own destinies. When women take the initiative to woo men despite societal constraints that hold women to be silent and obedient, they determine their place in the world independent from patriarchal societal rule. Placing wooing women on stage reflects the progressive choices Shakespeare and Webster made in the creation of these plays. My interpretation of women wooing men in *As You Like It* and *The Duchess of Malfi* gives readers a narrow scope of female protagonists who charm male characters in a society which did not encourage women to freely express their honest thoughts or desires.

Several scholars have researched women wooing men in early modern English drama. D. J. Palmer establishes the significance of "playfulness" in As *You Like It*. Palmer argues that the impulse behind the" play" that Rosalind and Orlando engage in is one that strives to create a better world and release passions that the courtly world

restrains. He presents the dialogue and interaction between Rosalind and Orlando as one that is both passionate and playful. As a result of this discourse between Rosalind and Orlando, they become more aware of each other's desires. Margaret Boerner Beckman discusses Rosalind as a wooer of Orlando. Beckman goes as far to say that she is also a pragmatic magician. She explains that Rosalind harmonizes the contrarieties she brings together in her unique approach to interact with Orlando.

Lisa Hopkins illustrates how what happens to the tragic female heroes in *The Duchess of Malfi* and *T'is Pity She's a Whore* not only reflected the culture which the plays were produced in, but also changed it. Hopkins emphasizes the women of these plays as characters who are revolutionary in their efforts to turn expectations for gender on their head. Linda Woodbridge explains how her reading of *The Duchess of Malfi* celebrates the Duchess's sexuality rather than damning it (162). Woodbridge asserts that the Duchess is a female hero for courting, proposing to, and marrying the man she loves despite her incestuous and controlling brothers' orders to remain single.

In "The Ethics of Imagination: Love and Art in *Antony and Cleopatra*," Robert Ornstein brings readers' attention to Cleopatra's honesty in the imagination and devotion to Antony as the most important idea at the end of the play. Ornstein argues that the final act is even more vital for audiences than the political scenes which precede it. This is because it most strongly demonstrates Cleopatra as a woman honestly devoted to Antony in both life and death.

Susan Muaddi Darraj's "The Sword Phillipan" discusses Cleopatra as a woman who uses her sexuality to woo Antony. She argues that while Cleopatra employs

sexuality to keep Antony coming back to Egypt for her, she also possesses masculine traits. This article expounds a female protagonist's refusal to adhere to gender roles and helps readers understand how female protagonists of early modern English dramas transform into powerful female wooers. My interpretation of female wooing focuses on comparisons and contrasts between Rosalind and the Duchess with their extremely different wooing strategies from two vastly different dramatic genres.

The treatment of women wooing men in early modern English drama is radical when one considers the conservative historical context in which these plays were written and performed. In the sixteenth century in England, patriarchy wielded a great deal of power in husband-wife relations as well as relations between fathers and their children (Stone 136). Historian Lawrence Stone insists that "By marriage, the husband and wife became one person in law—and that person was the husband. He acquired absolute control of all his wife's personal property, which he could sell at will" (136). A wife's subordination to her husband was not limited to property rights. Starting in 1562 the Homily on Marriage was ordered by the Crown to be read by parsons in church every Sunday (Stone 138). Stone explains that this treatise "left the audience in no doubt about the inferior status, rights, and character of a wife" (138). The eighteenth installation of the Homily of Marriage reads:

> the woman is a weak creature not endued with like strength and constancy of mind; therefore, they be the sooner disquieted, and they be the more prone to all weak affections and dispositions of mind, more than men be; and lighter they be, and more vain in their fantasies and opinions.

(138)

Early modern English society was conservative compared to our contemporary notions of marriage. Women were not considered capable of rational thought and were assumed to be guided by the lower halves of their bodies instead of their brains as men were. It is a serious detriment to be part of a group whose fantasies, which by definition are inherently free from constraint, are even deemed to be fruitless. Carol Neely explores the women's role in Shakespeare's plays by looking at monumental marital and wooing scenes. She contends that [women's] "roles and status are determined by their place in the paradigm of marriage—maiden/wife/widow which likewise governed the lives of Renaissance women (33). However, Rosalind and the Duchess alter the expectation for the first step toward marriage, which is wooing. In this sense, they rewrite the role for women with regard to marriage and courtship.

Irene Dash explains that Queen Elizabeth ruled before Shakespeare was born and continued to reign as he wrote plays (5). She contends:

> Living at a time when a woman sat on the English throne, an artist of Shakespeare's sensitivity must have been affected by this extraordinary circumstance. Not only was Elizabeth I a remarkable woman and a person of power, but she remained unmarried, thus preserving that power.

(5)

Shakespeare and Webster take the image of a powerful woman who wishes to control her own destiny and expose the intricacies of the choosing and wooing scenes of Rosalind, a princess, and the Duchess. These approaches shed light on reasons why women would

woo men and the imaginative methods women might use to woo their love interests. Since Shakespeare is in the genre of comedy with *As You like It*, he is free to stage a woman who experiments with role-playing and woos through the identity she assumes for protection in the Forest of Arden. While in disguise, her convincing portrayal of a misogynistic man who is experienced with women is ironic and humorous keeping with the lighthearted tone often found in dramatic comedies. This woman's dynamic demonstration of well-known female stereotypes represents the complexity of the Rosalind-as-Ganymede persona who portrays many of Rosalind's true affections and the frustration felt by the woman who struggles to prove she is much more than a fickle, unchaste, irrational creature. Rosalind's performance of the male believer of these stereotypes and her fulfillment of Ganymede's promise to "cure" Orlando of his lovesickness by ensuring that they are wedded establish Rosalind as intelligent as any man, extremely perceptive to misrepresentations of love, and in honest pursuit of a mature, loving relationship with Orlando.

In Act 4 Scene 1 Rosalind-as-Ganymede rebukes Orlando for being late to their appointment and cautions him that Rosalind would think him to be "the most hollow lover and unworthy of her." Once Rosalind and Orlando's scene ends, Rosalind realizes that Celia does not fully understand her approach because she observes that as soon as Rosalind pours her affections into a vessel, it runs out (4.1.197-198). Rosalind assures her that her love for Orlando is lasting and confirms, "let him be judge how deep / I am in love. I tell thee, Aliena, I cannot be out of the sight of Orlando. I'll go find a shadow and sigh till he come" (4.1.202-205). Rosalind insists that her strategy behind telling Orlando that Rosalind will not appreciate his tardiness is a way to make sure he cares about her as

much as she cares for him. She is confident that Orlando will see how strongly she loves him when the time is right and reminds Aliena and the audience that she cannot bear to be away from Orlando and will pine over his love until he returns. Instead of pining over Orlando as an ideal abstraction, she yearns for Orlando as his true self, someone who understands Rosalind's wishes and knows that real relationships are complex. When she utters these lines to her cousin, Rosalind knows that Orlando has already exited the scene. However, she still calls Celia Aliena, keeping with the identity she has assumed in the forest. She stays in character as Ganymede as best she can to ensure consistency and their safety, but she cannot refrain from expressing her immense adoration for Orlando. She breaks character in this way. Rosalind's desire to reveal how much she looks forward to seeing Orlando again despite her otherwise masterly ability to remain in Ganymede's character accurately depicts the genuine love she has for him which she knows he will recognize.

In Act 1 Scene 1 of *The Duchess of Malfi*, Ferdinand and the Cardinal, the Duchess's brothers, threaten the Duchess to refrain from ever remarrying. The Cardinal is concerned about the family's social status, whereas Ferdinand seems obsessed with controlling his sister's sexuality. Throughout this tirade, Ferdinand makes hateful remarks to the Duchess damning her sex. At the end of this passage, he concludes that there is no limit to what "a neat knave with a smooth tale / Make a woman believe" punning on "smooth tale" to mean "penis." He suggests that women are gullible and easy to manipulate especially when in the midst of a quick-witted young man and his penis (1.1.331-332). Before Ferdinand exits the scene he adds, "Farewell, lusty widow" (1.1.332). Ferdinand cruelly insults the Duchess with this remark. He insinuates that she

is unchaste despite the fact that she has not done anything to prove that this is true. Ferdinand is a contender of women as unchaste beings, the remarrying widow as a detriment to men, and women as perpetual cuckolders.

When Ferdinand leaves, the Duchess reflects thoughtfully on her situation and decides that she cannot let these base threats and extreme insults from men who care nothing about her well-being determine how she conducts her life. She actively chooses to determine her own destiny. She proudly exclaims, "Let old wives report / I winked and chose a husband" (340-341). This line perfectly reflects the progressive choice Webster makes with his decision to stage a female protagonist as a wooer and to have this widow remarry for love under extremely dangerous conditions despite her brothers' and society's wills against it. Webster demonstrates that the Duchess knows how grave the circumstances are and that if it means she will have a chance at kindling Antonio's love, it is worth the risks. During such a turbulent, tense scene the Duchess weighs all of her options and decides what she must do. Instead of allowing fear to consume her, she pursues what is important to her. She declares that she "winked" as she chose a husband for herself. This is Webster's way to underscore the Duchess's clever nod to the audience which affirms that she will subvert societal gender expectations, her brothers' threats, and established ideas of courtship. Webster stresses the Duchess's desire for the power of choice.

Irene Dash writes about Shakespeare's focus on the problematic sexual inequality between men and women. She writes:

> By creating confident, attractive, independent women whom we like, he questions the wisdom of a power structure that insists they relinquish personal freedom. Some of his dramas question accepted patterns of behavior. Some stress the values of mutual respect between a man and a woman. Some reveal the confusion in a woman's mind when she seeks to understand the limits of her world. Occasionally, a drama documents the tragedy of a woman who loses her way and her sense of self when she seeks to conform.
>
> (5)

At the end of the *Duchess of Malfi*, the Duchess is tortured and murdered by Bosola, the Duchess's provisor hired by Ferdinand. Webster treats the female wooer like this because in *The Duchess of Malfi*, we are in the realm of tragedy. The play demonstrates that the freedom to choose one's destiny is so precious that it is worth pursuing despite foreseeable risks. In the strongly patriarchal climate that the play was written in, it takes a highly perceptive and progressive playwright to stage such an adept, captivating, authentic female character who is brutally murdered for living a life that goes against her brothers' orders. In Act 2 Scene 2, shortly after Ferdinand chastises the Duchess for ruining her reputation with her plans for a second marriage he proceeds to call her "undone" (3.12.111). He even establishes that his disapproval of her choice is filled with disgust and hatred, for he banishes her from his sight. The Duchess utters, "Why should I / Of all the other princes of the world / Be cased up like a holy relic? I have youth, / And a little beauty" (3.2.136-139). She expresses the injustice she feels from being blamed for ruining her reputation as a chaste royal woman if she remarries. The Duchess knows that she finds herself in this challenging situation because she is a

widowed woman who has two excessively detrimentally controlling brothers. She likens herself to other "princes" to refer to her royal title to convey that her wish to remarry is only a problem because she is a woman and that males in similar positions of power do not have this problem. She wishes to be treated like a male possessor of power so that she would have the discretion to marry or not marry as she pleases. She does not wish to be treated as an object that will be corrupted by a man's touch.

In *As You Like It* Rosalind's concerns about her and Orlando's relationship fuel the scenes in which she mentors and woos him. Rosalind woos Orlando by using flirtatious language and speaking her honest feelings to him while pretending to be his Rosalind under the guise of Ganymede. While under this guise and under the pretense that Ganymede will disprove Orlando's true dedication to Rosalind, Rosalind chooses her words carefully so that she can say things to Orlando which allow her to convey her earnest feelings to him while maintaining her male disguise. She arranges the mock marriage scene in which she tells Celia what to say to minister the event. Rosalind also shows Orlando a dark side of marriage in which men and women are only happy in the beginning of a union. She plays with the idea of the tumultuous union fueled by malcontents to determine the maturity of Orlando's love. Rosalind woos Orlando when they first meet at the wrestling match and when she is disguised as Ganymede when she unexpectedly encounters Orlando in Arden. Because Rosalind engages in witticisms and charms Orlando no matter what identity she portrays, it is clear her desire to do so comes from internal impulses.

The Duchess is considered a wooer because she chooses Antonio to be her future husband, charms him, proposes to him, and conducts their marital ceremony. The

audience knows that Antonio finds the Duchess's language alluring since before the play even begins. In the first scene which Antonio and the Duchess have together, we get a clear image of the enchanting, clever style of rhetoric that the Duchess possesses. She explains that she promised never to part with her ring for anyone but her second husband. Then, she even places her ring on Antonio's finger, signifying that she has chosen him to offer her love and devotion. This moment is the beginning of her wooing scene. It is the same vitality and determination we see in this scene that moves the plot forward and allows the Duchess to experience love and determine her own destiny which is what she most desires.

Chapter 2: Rosalind in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*

In *As You Like It*[1] Rosalind's efforts to woo Orlando come from internal impulses as opposed to an external guise. Rosalind is an intelligent woman who is careful about the kind of man she selects to begin a relationship with. She is aware of naive lovers who are more infatuated with the idea of romance than of actual love and wants to make sure Orlando's love for her is true. She also wants to be sure that Orlando's expectations of marriage are realistic. Rosalind's concerns about their relationship fuel the scenes in which she mentors and woos Orlando. This interpretation, which emphasizes the interiority of Rosalind's will to woo Orlando, differs from other critics' analyses, which attribute Rosalind's wooing to her male disguise. For instance, one critic explains, "It is because she is disguised as Ganymede that she can be so free portraying a Rosalind who is a flesh and blood woman instead of a Petrarchan abstraction" (Hayles 65). My interpretation positions Rosalind as a woman who portrays her own desires both with and without her disguise. Rosalind's willingness to express her desires to Orlando and guide him in matters of love comes from an internal inclination to convey her true feelings to him as opposed to the comfort of an external disguise.

In Act 1 Scene 2, Rosalind and Celia, daughters of Duke Senior and Duke Ferdinand, have a discussion about falling in love which quickly turns into a conversation about Lady Fortune and nature. When Rosalind asks Celia what she thinks of falling in love, Celia advises Rosalind to be sportive or playful in marriage but not too carefree that she should relinquish her independent nature as a woman (1.2.25-29). Kay Stanton

[1] I am using The Arden Shakespeare edited by Juliet Dusinberre.

asserts that Celia believes heterosexual sex threatens "maidenliness" and dismantles feminine unity (132). Stanton draws a sharp contrast between Celia and Rosalind when she establishes, "Exploration of her sexuality, however, will become Rosalind's means to break out of the restrictive male-defined roles as daughter and niece that she is trapped in at the beginning of the play" (132). Rosalind's playfulness with words is a way to explore her sexuality as well as express her personality. Disguised as the young male Ganymede, she encourages Orlando to ask what he wants of her and assures him that she will grant it. In this sense, she experiments with the homosexual option of union. More importantly, since Rosalind knows she is consumed with love for Orlando, she role-plays with Orlando by pretending to be his future girlfriend while simultaneously acting out the role of his curer of lovesickness.

Celia goes on to explain that the two women will mock Lady Fortune as their sport. Celia refers to Fortune as merely a housewife, who they will criticize in an effort to disrupt her order so that her gifts may be bestowed equally (1.2.31-33). Rosalind responds, "I would we could do so, for her benefits are / mightily misplaced—and the bountiful blind woman / doth most mistake in her gifts to women" (1.2.34-36). Rosalind's daring statement calls for justice on behalf of women. She expresses that women do not have as many material advantages as men. This sentiment is strengthened by Duke Ferdinand's banishment of Rosalind's father, Duke Senior, from the court. She draws a sharp contrast between her uncle's ability to banish her father from her life and the lack of royal power she possesses to convince Duke Frederick to let her father stay despite her seemingly significant title of "princess." Celia expounds, "'Tis true, for those that she makes fair she scarce / makes honest, and those that she makes honest she / makes very

ill-favouredly" (1.2.37-39). However, Rosalind disagrees with this notion and iterates, "Nay, now thou goest from Fortune's office to Nature's; Fortune reigns in gifts of the world not in the / lineaments of Nature" (1.2.39-41). Juliet Dusinberre's footnote explains that by "gifts" Rosalind means material endowments and that Rosalind compares these to spiritual ones. Rosalind clarifies that Celia's idea that pretty women are dishonest, or unchaste, and unattractive women are true, or chaste, is not what Rosalind means. Celia has confused Fortune with Nature. Rosalind understands Fortune as determiner of material possessions and advantages, whereas Nature is what determines people's talents, such as wit and humor, or their "spiritual endowments," as Dusinberre explains (162). Rosalind also conveys that Nature determines a person's appearance as well. It is Fortune that reigns over luck or destiny.

In her refusal to agree with Celia's latter statement, Rosalind makes the case that Nature creates honest women who are also beautiful or as Celia describes them "fair." As a perceptive woman, it is likely that Rosalind would not agree with Celia's statement that fair women are unfaithful. Throughout the play, we see just how enthralled Orlando is with Rosalind's beauty as well as how many times Rosalind speaks the truth to Orlando in the most honest way she can without revealing her identity while disguised as a young man. The audience also sees how Rosalind upholds her principles in how hard she works to guarantee that she begins a relationship with a man who understands how real women act and will allow her to be herself while in his company. Rosalind has an adept understanding of women as well as men. She is likely to know fair women who are also true to their husbands and wishes to bring attention to the vast existence of these women.

In doing so, she deconstructs the firmly established belief among both sexes that fair, young women are bound to make their husbands cuckolds.

The first time Rosalind and Orlando meet each other is in court, right before the wrestling match between Orlando and Charles. When Rosalind and Celia find out that Orlando is about to wrestle Charles, they advise him to forgo the fight since they know how strong Charles is and are concerned for Orlando's well-being. They realize that Orlando is young, ambitious, and confident, but they do not want him to misjudge his strength and get hurt. Celia and Rosalind do their best to cajole him to give up the fight in favor of his own safety. Rosalind declares, "Do, young sir. Your reputation shall not / therefore be misprized. We will make it our suit to the / Duke that the wrestling might not go forward" (1.2.172-174). Rosalind cares so much that Orlando should not leave this fight with undue injuries that she guarantees she and Celia will stop the wrestling match. They promise to make sure that no one will know that he had anything to do with the match's cancellation, keeping his reputation as a brave man and fighter unscathed. Rosalind demonstrates that she has thought this plan through and has found a way to keep Orlando free from injury as well as maintain his heroic masculine character. By saying that his reputation will not be misprized if he decides not to fight, it is also Rosalind's way of letting him know that she and Celia will still admire him as a courageous man if he decides not to fight. Displaying this willingness to accept Orlando no matter what decision he makes is one way in which she begins to woo him. It is also important to understanding the kind of attributes that Rosalind values. Later on in the play, we see how important she feels acceptance is in a romantic relationship. Rosalind proves that she believes in accepting Orlando's decision to abandon the wrestling match if it will keep

him safe. She would also hope that Orlando would accept her decisions and feelings if they were to marry each other one day. For Rosalind, acceptance in a relationship is mandatory and should be a natural aspect of true love. She wishes to be as certain as she can that both parties in her relationship possess a true willingness to accept each other's imperfections.

Orlando is immensely polite in his response to Celia and Rosalind's advice. He asks them not to punish him too much for denying two beautiful and kind women their requests but asks for them to continue their support for him in his match (1.2.175-178). Suddenly, his plea takes a melancholy turn. He goes on to express that he has nothing to lose in this fight for he has no friends to mourn his possible death and that this world may even be more pleasant once he has left it (1.2.181-184). Rosalind proceeds to charm him with her offer, "The little strength that I have, I would it were / with you" (1.2.185-186). To say she offers him all of her strength in his battle with the tough opponent Charles is incredibly compassionate and lets Orlando know how strongly Rosalind cares for his well-being. From the very beginning, Rosalind makes it clear to Orlando that she is on his side and that it would be easy for her to do anything—cancel a wrestling match or give him all of her strength and best wishes—if it means that he will be safe.

During the wrestling match, Orlando fights Charles and defeats him. After the match, Celia and Rosalind congratulate Orlando on his victory and Rosalind gives him her necklace and tells him to wear it for her (1.2.235). Orlando wishes to thank the two women, explaining that he is exhausted from the fight and unable to think at full capacity (1.2.238-340). Then, Rosalind affirms, "Sir, you have wrestled well and overthrown / More than your enemies" (1.2.242-243). With these words Rosalind flirts with Orlando

because she wants him to know how he makes her feel. She does not fawn over him, nor reveal every thought and feeling she has about him in this moment. She briefly and cleverly lets him know exactly how she feels by hardly saying anything at all. However, what she utters reveals the strong effect that meeting Orlando has had on her. She asserts that in addition to his opponent in the match, he has overthrown her heart in that he has conquered it. She feels a romantic attachment to him. Just as an expert wooer does, Rosalind expresses her feelings ingeniously and honestly, and she and Celia leave him to ponder this overpowering newfound knowledge. Then, Orlando expresses:

> What passion hangs these weights upon my tongue?
> I cannot speak to her, yet she urged conference.
>
> *Enter* Le Beau.
>
> O poor Orlando, thou art overthrown!
>
> Or Charles or something weaker masters thee.
>
> (1.2.246-249)

Orlando voices to himself how strange it was he could not speak to Rosalind in that moment because some sort of strange passion impeded him from speaking. He divulges that his feelings for Rosalind are mutual, expressing that he too has been overthrown with infatuation. This statement illustrates Rosalind's efficacy in wooing Orlando. When he exclaims that he is mastered by something weaker, Dusinberre points out that his statement is an oxymoron identifying the paradox of love and also gender. Dusinberre argues that Rosalind functions as both "the weaker sex" because she is female and

Orlando's 'Master,' when she is disguised as Ganymede (176). As Ganymede, she claims to help Orlando "master" or cure his passion, which will "overthrow" him. Rosalind will also prove that women are not the weaker sex. Through her wooing of Orlando she will prove, as a woman acting naturally and true to her passions, that women can also be logical, proactive, and powerful orchestrators of courtship.

In Rosalind and Orlando's first encounter in the forest, Rosalind is disguised as Ganymede. She lets Celia know that she plans to speak to Orlando like a "saucy lackey" and act convincingly as a mischievous serving boy (3.2.287-288). She begins with asking him what time it is, and he replies that a more sensible question would be to ask what time of day, since there is no clock in the forest (3.2.292-293). Rosalind asserts that there must be "no true lover in the forest" either because if there were, we would know the precise time due to the lover's sighing and groaning every minute and hour. She plays with the idea of the Petrarchan lover in love poetry for whom time moves at a painfully slow pace (3.2.294-296). This question about time allows Rosalind to poke fun at the Petrarchan lover who is so consumed with romantic passion that he cannot enjoy his infatuation but can only moan about it in despair. Their discussion about time also allows her to bring up the idea of love to discover if Orlando will reveal his infatuation with Rosalind. As a result of Rosalind's rhetorical prowess, he eventually does reveal his love.

When Rosalind utters that there are no true lovers in the forest, Orlando has the opportunity to argue against the bold claim, allowing Rosalind to gauge his devotion to the woman he writes little love poems about. Not only does Rosalind's comment allow her to snub the Petrarchan tradition and open up a discussion between Orlando and her about love, but it conjures up an incredibly humorous and clever image in the listener's

mind. We do not know what time it is because there is no lovesick person whining and weeping at the turn of every hour and every minute. Marianne Novy asserts that Shakespeare's comedies emphasize the theme of mutual dependence (304). She explains, "Not only wooing speeches but jokes are attempts to establish relationship" (304). Rosalind uses humor to get Orlando to keep coming back to talk to her. Even though she is disguised as Ganymede when she does so, she reaps the benefits of getting to understand his character before they start a relationship together and engages in clever conversation with him along the way.

When Orlando insists that Ganymede's accent sounds too refined for someone who was raised in the country, Ganymede explains that he had an uncle who grew up at court who taught him to speak. This uncle read many lectures against love, which Ganymede was accustomed to hearing. Ganymede goes on to express that he is so thankful he is not a woman because to be a woman is to have a multitude of faults such as the ones Ganymede's uncle spoke about (3.2.335-338). Rosalind's speech is ironic because she is a woman declaring that she is thankful that she is not one. Her speech is also convincing because as she remarks on how many flaws women have according to this man's lectures on love and how one must avoid it, she sounds like a man of early modern England who genuinely believes this outlook is true. By showing that Ganymede believes this idea, Rosalind reveals how easy it is to take an idea from an experienced old man about the problems with women and conduct his actions and sentiments accordingly.

A curious Orlando inquires about the evils that were attributed to women, but Ganymede insists he will not waste his love-curing medicine on those who are not sick. Then, Ganymede mentions that there is a very sick man who has been causing the forest

disarray and harm with his glorifying of the name Rosalind, hanging poems on trees, and carving her name in their trunks. Ganymede mentions that if he could meet this man, he would save him from his misguided affections because he sure seems like he is miserable. When Orlando discloses that he is this man, Ganymede says his uncle taught him how to accurately to identify a man in love and that Orlando does not have the symptoms of a man struck with love. He explains that if one were to look like a man in love:

> Your hose should be ungartered, your bonnet unbanded, your sleeve unbuttoned, your shoe untied, and everything about you demonstrating a careless desolation. But you are no such man. You are rather point-device in your accoutrements, as loving yourself than seeming the lover of any other.
>
> (3.2.364-369)

Ganymede's remarks prompt Orlando to express how he truly feels about Rosalind. Rosalind does not know how he will respond but can surmise an accurate answer from his reaction. Because Orlando does not look as consumed by love as he writes that he is in his poetry, because he is well-groomed, and because Rosalind has not yet heard him speak in person about how he feels about her, she, disguised as Ganymede, wishes to discover what lies beneath the love verses pinned on trees dedicated to her. Ganymede uses the idea that a person consumed by love looks like he or she has been distracted in every other aspect of life. So, since Orlando's hose is gartered, his sleeve is buttoned, and his shoes are tied, Ganymede presents the notion that he must be more in love with his own well-being than in love with another person. Rosalind knows that just because his

appearance is neat does not mean he is not in love with her, but she plays with this notion of all-encompassing love to her advantage. The idea of true love being distracting and taking a toll on the lover allows Rosalind to prompt Orlando to reveal his genuine feelings for her, thereby allowing Rosalind to attain an honest expression of Orlando's love through a face-to-face, verbal exchange. This interactive method will be a more accurate reading of his feelings than reading his impassioned, seemingly amateur poetry (as Cecilia and Touchstone suggest it to be). By informing Orlando of what a truly lovesick person looks like, Ganymede lets him know what true love actually feels like. The description comes so alive in Ganymede's voice that the audience becomes aware of why Rosalind's depiction of lovesickness is so accurate. Rosalind is able to give such a vivid description of the haggard lover because she has felt disheveled and has experienced an inability to eat and sleep due to her love for Orlando. In this scene, she uses the feelings she has for Orlando to teach him about her ideas of love, escorting him away from the misleading ideas of love taught by misogynistic men modeled by Ganymede's uncle.

Orlando explains to Ganymede that if he could he would surely make him believe he loves Rosalind (3.2.370-371). Rosalind unexpectedly turns the situation around and tells Orlando that it is much more important that he makes *Rosalind* believe that he does, for Ganymede is just shepherd with magical powers. He utters, "Me believe it? You may as soon make her that / you love believe it, which I warrant she is apter to do / than to confess she does. That is one of the points in / the which women still give the lie to their consciences" (3.2.371-375). Expressing that Orlando should be more concerned with Rosalind believing he loves her than convincing Ganymede he does is a clever response

because it is realistic of what a young man would say who does not know Rosalind. It is also indicative of Rosalind's plan to find out if Orlando is infatuated with her for her personality or purely for superficial reasons.

Rosalind acknowledges the idea that as Orlando says he will illustrate his love for Rosalind to Ganymede, he is actually illustrating it to Rosalind, the person who will most benefit from gaining this knowledge. In the second half of this passage Ganymede adopts a viewpoint that portrays women as those who are not always true to their consciences. When Ganymede says Rosalind will likely be more willing to affirm their love than she will confess, he emphasizes the idea held by some men that women pretend that their suitors' pursuits are insincere and refuse to fully acknowledge the deep feelings the man has for them. Ganymede's rhetoric is reminiscent of the Petrarchan lover who is forever tormented by his lover's cruel refusals of his love. Ganymede speaks convincingly as a young man experienced in love when he speaks of women's habits as all-inclusive and conveys a widely held belief that women are not logical beings and have actions which are governed by bodily and emotional impulse alone (3.2.372-375).

Rosalind demonstrates a keen understanding of men's ideas about women, women's thoughts, and the discrepancies between the two. The audience can ascertain through Rosalind's actions that she does not act like the women described by Ganymede at all. Not surprisingly, she is quite the opposite of this false idea of women. Audiences quickly become aware of this distinction through the way she talks about Orlando with Celia and pursues Orlando with such determination. It is clear that Rosalind would confess her love to Orlando immediately if she was in her own apparel because her love for him has consumed so many of her thoughts and actions since she first met him in

court. It is also clear that she would not hesitate to reveal her romantic feelings for him because while disguised as Ganymede and through clever language, she nearly does so numerous times. This compelling urge to reveal her love comes through in her rhetoric but is controlled simply because she wants to maintain her disguise to make sure that Orlando's love for her is mature and worth investing in. In this way, she breaks and admonishes false stereotypes of women in love. Ganymede presents women as creatures who not only lie to their suitors but also are capable of lying to themselves. When he declares that women "give the lie to their consciences" it is an effort to explain that women are more likely to accept a man's love than they prefer to imagine (3.2.375). In fact, a woman may be quick to do so and may very well never admit it. Through Ganymede's rhetoric, Rosalind further demonstrates her self-awareness. She knows that she is the kind of woman who values honesty. She acts faithfully to her values and speaks truth in these double meanings even though she is disguise. Orlando encountered her while she was disguised in Arden, so maintaining her appearance for protection does not make her deceitful. Her approach is quite the opposite of deceit. Rosalind's immense, pure love for this man is what prompts her to speak candidly with him: to illustrate to him what women are truly like and most importantly act naturally with him as the intelligent, understanding, creative, and passionate woman she is.

In Kenneth Branagh's film adaptation of *As You Like It*, Bryce Dallas Howard's interpretation of Shakespeare's lines are most effective. In the film, once Ganymede and Orlando agree that Orlando will come to Ganymede every day to woo him as if he is his beloved Rosalind, and Orlando departs from the scene, Rosalind portrays a myriad of emotions. These emotions are ones that an audience member would imagine Rosalind to

feel after such an incredible display of rhetorical expertise. At the end of the scene, Orlando agrees that he will show Ganymede where he lives and assures, "With all my heart, good youth" (3.2.415). Ganymede asserts, "Nay, you must call me Rosalind" and beckons Celia to leave with him (3.2.416-417). When Howard utters this line, she takes a significant pause in between the word "me" and "Rosalind" all the while making unbreakable eye contact with Orlando. This is a monumental moment for Rosalind because it indicates the beginning of this playful interaction in which she will get to know Orlando truly. It also marks an official promise between the two of them that signifies that as long as Orlando comes to Ganymede each day and tries to woo him as if he were Rosalind, Ganymede will cure him of his enthrallment with her. Though Orlando does not think it is a promise between romantic lovers, but a platonic one between young men, Rosalind finds it meaningful because they have both pledged something to each other. It is the beginning of what could be an all-encompassing devotion to each other, but for the moment, it is the first time Ganymede makes a declaration that could also be spoken by Rosalind, imparting how meaningful this exchange is to her.

Whenever Orlando must pretend Ganymede is his love, Rosalind, he speaks his feelings for her directly to her, making Rosalind feel the anxious yet spectacular sensation that lovers feel when their person of interest tells them their feelings. It is as if the pause she takes before uttering the name "Rosalind" is all she needs to muster the courage up to say her true name to him. Revealing her name is as though Rosalind is confessing a truth despite the fact that, to Orlando, this is all part of the deal they made and he expects Ganymede to have him call him Rosalind for the sake of role-playing. Rosalind-as-Ganymede looks after Orlando at the end of Act 3 Scene 2, as he walks

away, mouth agape, revealing an expression of awe. She looks as though she can hardly believe that her plan worked and that she will get to see Orlando every day as he courts her. Rosalind looks so enamored with Orlando and excited for what is to come from this strategy. Her wonderment quickly turns into a smile as she looks in his direction again and presses the love letters he gave to her close to her chest. Howard's facial expressions reveal a sense of accomplishment that also convey that Rosalind is proud of herself for being so clever to get Orlando to believe she is someone else, a male practiced curer of love of all things, and to get him to demonstrate his love for her without knowing that Ganymede is his Rosalind in disguise. Proud of her ability to be charming and convincing enough to set a plan like this into motion to learn Orlando's innermost feelings, she looks as though she is about to cry tears of happiness before she exits the scene.

When Ganymede renounces love, he speaks the opposite of how Rosalind feels. Through this method, Rosalind is able to determine if Orlando's feelings for her are true or if he is in love for love's sake. Ganymede describes how he cured one man of lovesickness by constantly changing moods when he would come to woo him as he advises Orlando to do. Ganymede explains he would be proud, fantastical, apish, shallow, inconstant, one minute full of tears and the next full of smiles (3.2.394-395). He discloses that he would "like him, now loath him; then entertain him, then forswear him; now weep for him, then spit at him; that I drave my suitor from his mad humour of love to a living humour of madness" (3.2.398-401). Ganymede assures Orlando that his depiction was so disturbing to this man that he gave up the idea of marriage and committed to an ascetic lifestyle. The examples Ganymede gave were exaggerated versions of how women behave. Ganymede affirms that he will get every spot of love out of Orlando's liver when

he's done working with him (3.2.405-406). However, Ganymede's speech has a double meaning. This promise suggests that he will get every drop of love out of Orlando, which is not untrue if we remember that Rosalind is Ganymede and that Rosalind has intentions to marry him. Rosalind will take love from him as well as give him her love in the way that lovers do. By playing with phrases, Rosalind courts Orlando through the guise of the identity she assumes when they first encounter each other. The words she speaks to him are those that she could say to him if she were dressed in her women's garb. Since Orlando appears to her when she is disguised as a young male, she simply says what she wants to him without revealing who she is. This way, she acquires more time to get to know his honest personality through an uncensored lens.

In Act 4 Scene 1, Ganymede and Jaques are engaged in conversation about Jaques's melancholy when Orlando appears about an hour late to meet with Ganymede. Ganymede chastises Orlando for being late because this sort of behavior is unbecoming of a lover. Ganymede insists that he would just as soon be wooed by a snail because at least a snail brings his destiny with him, meaning he wears the horns of the cuckold before his wife has a chance to betray him (4.1.51-52). Orlando asserts that Ganymede's example does not apply to him because his Rosalind is virtuous (4.1.57-58). Then, Rosalind disguised as Ganymede utters, "I am your Rosalind" as if so overwhelmed by Orlando's praises that she cannot help but say the truth, rendering these lines heavy with desire and confidence (4.1.59). Since they have been pretending that Ganymede is Rosalind, this remark does not reveal Rosalind's identity but contributes to her declarations of double meanings.

In this scene we see a quarrel between to-be lovers over Orlando's tardiness. The advantage of this mild disagreement is that it allows Rosalind to experience disappointment brought on by Orlando before they commence a relationship, giving her a real sense of what it feels like when her love makes a mistake. It also allows Orlando, though he is unaware of it, to witness the precise reaction which Rosalind would have to his tardiness to their promised appointment because Rosalind does not censor her distress but uses it to fuel her "acting" as Ganymede-as-Rosalind. When Orlando shows up, Rosalind tells him to leave her sight and remarks on how unfitting it is that he calls himself a lover because he does not even bother to be timely to his date (4.1.36-37). Orlando assures Ganymede that he has come within an hour of when he said he would (4.1.38-39). Ganymede is not satisfied with his response and declares:

> Break an hour's promise in love? He that will divide a minute into a thousand parts, and break but a part of the thousand part of a minute in the affairs of love, it may be said of him that Cupid hath clapped him o'th'shoulder, but I'll warrant him heart-whole.
>
> (4.1.40-44)

Ganymede explains what a lover's tardiness actually indicates to a woman. He makes the sarcastic comparison that while Cupid may approve of breaking up minutes into the tiniest parts when it comes to love, as though making time spent together all the more precious because each part is being savored, what Orlando is doing by breaking an hour's promise is making an excuse for being significantly late. Ganymede expresses to Orlando that a woman will consider a lover who does this to be careless and insincere in his

promises of love. Despite this chiding that Orlando receives, he is not deterred by Ganymede, nor is he dissuaded from loving Rosalind. Orlando is willing to continue role-playing with him even though he gets a strong taste of how Rosalind would react if he was late to meet her. This reluctance to leave the session with Ganymede and refusal to abandon his love for Rosalind demonstrates his commitment to her. In the dialogue that ensues directly after this passage, Orlando appears more enthralled by Rosalind and committed to this exchange as if it were real than in any other moment in the play. It is in this section that he calls her virtuous and expresses how joyous he would be if he received the chance to speak to her. The quarrel between Ganymede and Orlando indicates that truth, or a realistic projection of natural emotions is preferable when disagreements arise and that this kind of honesty has an attractive quality. We know this because Orlando is not repelled by Rosalind's honest explanation of how his tardiness makes her feel, and upon listening to it, he understands and continues to talk about Rosalind as the honorable, desirable woman he has fallen in love with.

After the make-up scene, we also witness the exchange of praises between Rosalind and Orlando and the beginning of a new role-playing scene. Orlando's refusal to join Ganymede's discussion of unfaithful women makes Rosalind feel assured that Orlando is not the kind of courtly lover that thinks all women are unchaste. This reassuring moment prompts Ganymede to insist, "Come, woo me, woo me—for now I am in a holiday humour and like enough to consent. What would you say to me now, an I were your very, very, Rosalind?" (4.1.62-65). Rosalind repeats "woo me" in a rhythmic, encouraging manner, acting the part of the lover, but more importantly, acting on her own impulses and desires. Rosalind's tone in these lines is inviting and even seductive. When

Rosalind-as-Ganymede asks Orlando to woo her because now she is in a festive mood, it suggests that Rosalind is actually in a fanciful mood and feels like being sought-after amorously. "Holiday humour" also conjures up ideas of behavior that a person would not ordinarily do except for on an exceptional occasion such as a vacation or particularly special event. Rosalind explains that this festive mood has her feeling likely to consent, confirming the charming and enticing discourse she has with Orlando.

This "holiday humour" scene in Branagh's *As You Like It* contains a sexiness exhibited by Howard that perfectly envelops Rosalind's ability to woo. As if the dialogue were not indicative enough of Ganymede's effort to derive the rawest romantic feelings Orlando has for Rosalind so he can express them, Branagh adds memorable stage direction between the two characters. Orlando pulls Ganymede close to him so that their bodies touch and their faces are only centimeters apart. Because of this direction choice there are two layers of eroticism here: one heterosexual, the embrace that Rosalind experiences and that the audience sees and one homoerotic, the one experienced by Orlando as he firmly pulls Ganymede toward him. The film emphasizes Rosalind's keen wooing abilities with this visual of Orlando submitting himself to Rosalind's words and clutching Ganymede to his body as if to passionately kiss him.

Orlando insists that he would kiss Rosalind before speaking to her, but Ganymede suggests that it would be better if he were to speak to her first. As Ganymede tutors Orlando on how to be an adept lover, the audience knows that on stage we see a woman showing a man how to love. By both demonstrating and telling him that talking is more important to incite first rather than kissing, Rosalind woos Orlando before he even gets the chance to pursue her without her disguise. Ganymede explains to Orlando:

> Nay, you were better speak first, and when you were gravelled for lack of matter you might take occasion to kiss. Very good orators when they are out, they will spit, and for lovers lacking (God warrant us) matter, the cleanliest shift is to kiss.
>
> (4.1.67-71)

Ganymede uses an inventive example to reveal how foolish it is when lovers default to kissing rather than talking. He explains that when orators forget their lines, they spit as a way to stall to remember them. Similarly, when lovers do not have substance or anything important to say to each other, the safest action to take is to kiss. In this lesson, Rosalind expresses that she knows what a meaningful relationship looks like and that she would not be satisfied simply by a doting lover's affections. By conveying to Orlando that women want something more substantial than surefire kisses and that he should not kiss first, she reverses the stereotype of the unchaste, fickle woman. Instead, Orlando is left with a much more complex and realistic idea of what women desire.

When Orlando asks what to do if Rosalind denies his kiss, Ganymede responds that this is a whole new matter because it means she does not desire him. Orlando asks "Who could be out, being before his beloved mistress?" (4.1.75-76). Ganymede explains that Orlando should be "out" if he were his mistress. This prompts Orlando to ask "What, of my suit?" Ganymede quickly corrects the image of Orlando without clothes that he has just conjured up and responds, "Not out of your apparel and yet out of your suit. Am not I your Rosalind? (4.1.80-81). Rosalind puns on the word "suit," implying that she speaks of a legal request or the request a suitor makes when wooing. She means Orlando would be unable to continue courting her. Rosalind uses daring rhetoric with Orlando by

drawing attention to a situation where he has no clothes on. This is something Rosalind would say to him if she were permitted to, but she catches herself because she is disguised as someone else. Rosalind's consistent punning and flirting comes naturally to her when she is in the company of Orlando. It is as if her feelings for him are so strong and pure that wittiness and playful banter ensue whether Rosalind has planned it or not. However, these "slips of the tongue" are not detrimental to her disguise nor her true identity or character. Actually, they function as practice for when she and Orlando are wedded to each other. These interactions also provide Rosalind with an accurate indication of how Orlando reacts to witty, uncustomary discourse and whether he has a sense of humor.

In Act 4 Scene 1, there is another indication that Rosalind's will to woo Orlando comes from internal impulses. She has just urged Celia to perform a mock marriage with her and Orlando and tells both Celia and Orlando what to say when they are unsure of how the marriage ceremony should be conducted. When Orlando says he will take Rosalind to be his wife, Ganymede replies, "I might ask you for your commission. But I do take thee, Orlando, for my husband. There's a girl goes before the priest, and certainly a woman's thought runs before her actions" (4.1.127-131). Ganymede comments on how if Rosalind was actually orchestrating these vows, as Ganymede is acting out as Rosalind, she would be tending to the priest's job before the priest had a chance to begin. Ganymede makes this correlation with the way a woman's thought precedes her actions. With this line, Ganymede speaks of women's tendencies, but also touches on Rosalind's actions. Rosalind is that woman that "goes before the priest" and Rosalind's plan to woo Orlando is a prime example of how a woman's internal musings guide her actions.

Susanne Wofford argues, "the theater institutionally preserves the power to say that the girl may go before the priest, and this power itself is potentially more disruptive (the power of theater as social institution, appropriating the King's language) than the specific ending that the play represents" (88). The radical nature of Rosalind's invented ceremony in which she gives herself to Orlando and her orchestration of the real ceremony successfully dismantles the social construct that does not permit women to choose who she wants as a husband. It is not only performed under her disguise, but through Rosalind's careful planning, it becomes reality.

Orlando discloses to Ganymede that if Rosalind told him she did not want to be with him, he would surely die (4.1.85). Ganymede argues that in all the time the world has existed, no man has died from love (4.1.86-89). He lists ancient heroes of literature who died for love and then says these stories are all lies. Ganymede concludes, "Men have died from time to time and worms have eaten them, but not for love" (4.1.97-99). Even though Orlando thinks Ganymede is a young shepherd, the honesty with which he speaks urges Orlando to return to him for more advice and mentorship on love. This evidence indicates that beauty lies in unrestrained truth and that Orlando is allured by Ganymede's declarations of truth because they are something so rarely heard in court. Orlando's dedication to Ganymede is also an indication of how well he and Rosalind will get along when they are united because Rosalind also opposes empty flattery and embraces the kind of love which both understands and transcends reality.

Orlando confesses that to see his real Rosalind cry would surely kill him (4.1.100-101). Orlando has assumed the role of the lover who is totally vulnerable to a courtly lady's actions. Rosalind wishes to reject this convention and establish that Rosalind's

expressions are in no way cruel and could not kill anything. Rosalind responds, "By this hand, it will not kill a fly. But come, / now I will be your Rosalind in a more coming-on / disposition, and ask me what you will, I will grant it (4.1.102-104). This utterance reveals Rosalind's playful character. "A more coming-on disposition" suggests an encouraging mood that is flirtatious, like the contemporary "come-on." It is also difficult to overlook the word "position" that stands out in "disposition." Rosalind's language is not merely flirtatious but sexual. Orlando does not know it yet, but Rosalind "comes on" to him with her innuendoes and tutoring discussions, and will "come on" to him in a physical meaning as well, suggested by the marriage at the end of the play. This new "disposition" hints that there will be a shift in Rosalind's interaction with Orlando.

The wish Orlando asks Ganymede to grant is for Rosalind to love him. Ganymede utters, "Yes, faith, will I, Fridays and Saturdays and all" (4.1.106). Orlando asks if Rosalind will have him and he agrees. Then, Ganymede asks Celia to marry them. Orlando's wish is granted in this mock ceremony as well as at the end of the play when he and Rosalind are actually married. Rosalind proves to be true to her word which demonstrates her honest desire to make Orlando happy as well as to fulfill her own romantic desire to be united with him.

Ganymede then requests, "Come, sister, you shall be the priest and marry / us. Give me your hand, Orlando. What do you say, sister?" (4.1.114-116). She insists that Celia conduct the mock marriage ceremony, but Celia confesses she does not know what words to say. Ganymede urges her on, "You must begin: 'Will you, Orlando—'" and this prompts Celia to remember the lines (4.1.120-121). When Orlando agrees to have Rosalind for a wife, Rosalind-as-Ganymede adds, "Ay, but when?" (4.1.123). Rosalind

urges the mock ceremony along to determine how Orlando will react to the idea of actually marrying Rosalind. When Orlando replies that he will of course have them married as fast as Celia can marry them, Ganymede instructs, "Then you must say: 'I take thee, Rosalind, for wife'" (4.1.125-126). Orlando repeats it and Rosalind asserts that she will take him to be her husband. This is when she makes the remark about a girl going before the priest (4.1.127-131). In this scene, it is as if Ganymede comments on Rosalind acting as Ganymede acting as Rosalind. If this were a real marriage ceremony, Rosalind would surely be performing the priest's duties. This utterance strengthens the idea of a woman as a logical thinking strategist with a powerful imagination. This imagination is so vast, vivid, and pure that it cannot be broken by taking action too soon. In this way, Rosalind disguised as Ganymede describes her true self to Orlando. In this scene, Ganymede also comments on Rosalind's unconventional behavior with Orlando. She recognizes how far she has taken this role-playing and knows it is remarkable that she conducts a faux-marriage ceremony with the man she desires to marry. Though it is not the real ceremony, the feeling is completely tangible and this opportunity allows Rosalind to live out her own fantasy with the protection of not having to reveal who she is.

During the mock-marriage Orlando asserts that he would be with Rosalind "For ever and a day" (4.1.135). Ganymede insists that he should:

> Say 'a day' without the 'ever'. No, no, Orlando, men are April when they woo, December when they wed. Maids are May when they are maids, but the sky changes when they are wives. I will be more jealous of thee than a Barbary cock-pigeon over his hen, more clamorous than a parrot against rain.

(4.1.136-141)

Ganymede gives Orlando a pessimistic outlook on marriage to determine if it deters him from marrying Rosalind. Ganymede's outrageous and uncensored correction that it is more likely that he will love her for "a day" rather than "forever and a day" is striking to Orlando. The images of men and women changing like the seasons from cheerful and fresh to cold and despondent after they have wed is a concept Orlando had not fathomed. Orlando asks, "But will my Rosalind do so?" (4.1.147). Ganymede replies, "By my life, she will do as I do" (4.1.148). This moment is another instance in which Rosalind utters an absolute truth to Orlando as well as swears by her life for him, indicating the closeness she feels for him to the audience. To Orlando, Ganymede is simply upholding his role as lovesickness-curing magician and as he has promised to act convincingly as Rosalind, it is characteristic of him to say he will act as she does. However, another layer of truth lies in Ganymede's clever iteration. Rosalind and the audience knows that of course Rosalind will do everything as Ganymede does because Rosalind is Ganymede in disguise. Rosalind's ability to speak the truth to Orlando numerous times while in disguise illustrates her keen awareness of her visible identity and her interior identity and her ability to act on her feet charmingly enough to allure Orlando. Though as Ganymede, she is dressed like a young man, she portrays her true personality when she speaks wittily. Orlando gets along with this character splendidly even though he does yet know that he speaks with Rosalind.

The historical practice of courtship and marriage in early modern England reveals another interesting element in Rosalind's wooing of Orlando. Lawrence Stone, historian of early modern English marriage practices, explains in *The Family, Sex, and Marriage in*

England, 1500-1800, that marital practices had many stages. The exchange of verbal promises between a couple, also called the spousals, were considered to be "as legally binding as the church wedding" (31). As long as there was a witness involved in the exchange, the spousals were permanent (31). In this thorough mock-ceremony, Celia takes the position of the witness. Because Rosalind is disguised as Ganymede, the marriage does not carry official weight. However, in Act 5 Scene 2, Rosalind disguised as Ganymede explains to Orlando that if he loves her as his actions and words say he does, Ganymede is equipped with the necessary magical powers to make Rosalind appear before him (5.2.60-66). He asserts that Orlando should marry her tomorrow when his brother marries Aliena (5.2.60-63). Rosalind disguised as Ganymede asserts, "I will satisfy you, if ever I / satisfied a man, and you shall be married tomorrow" (5.2.110-111). Even though Phoebe, Silvius, and Duke Senior are present in this scene, it does not impede Rosalind from using the word "satisfy" which carries a second, sexual meaning. Not only will Ganymede make Orlando content by bringing him Rosalind to marry, but in this marriage, Rosalind will surely "satisfy" Orlando sexually as well as with her wit. That Ganymede says he will satisfy him if ever he satisfied a man richens the image further since he is a man speaking to another man. Rosalind initiates the idea of Orlando marrying Rosalind while disguised as Ganymede, and then she abandons the young male persona and shows up to the ceremony as Rosalind to marry Orlando. Though she does not propose to Orlando in her true identity, she woos Orlando with her natural witty discourse, coordinates the marriage ceremony, and fulfills the marriage between them.

It is also important to note that when Rosalind is disguised as Ganymede in Act 5 Scene 2, she orchestrates the marriage but not in a devious way that suggests she desires

to control Orlando's will or actions. She decides to arrange a real marriage because she trusts Orlando and hopes that his love for Rosalind is as strong as his words and actions say it is. A delighted Orlando asks Ganymede if he seriously plans to make Rosalind appear tomorrow to take his hand in marriage when he inquires, "Speak'st thou in sober meanings?" (5.2.67). Ganymede replies, "By my life I do, which I tender dearly, though / I say I am a magician" (5.2.68-69). This is the second time Rosalind gives Orlando a real promise. Under Ganymede's persona, she swears by her life that she will appear to Orlando tomorrow to be married.

In this vow that she swears her life by, she adds that she cherishes her life seriously, to assure Orlando in case he has any doubt. She also assures him that despite her being a magician, she is still human enough to value her life even though she possesses otherworldly abilities. Rosalind puts careful thought into every word she utters, especially while she is in Orlando's presence. She includes "though I *say* I am a magician" because it allows her to underscore that all Ganymede did was say he was a magician and that he may not truly be one. This moment also signifies Rosalind shedding her identity as Ganymede. As she gets closer to abandoning Ganymede and presenting herself to Orlando as Rosalind, she deliberately weakens the notion that Ganymede is a real magician. This choice indicates that Rosalind is ready to give over her true self to Orlando in which he can enjoy her unrestricted and striking wit while in her female identity. Rosalind declares that it is not impossible for her to make this union happen "if it appear not inconvenient to you" (5.2.64). She goes on to disclose, "Therefore put you in your best / array, bid your friends; for if you will be married / tomorrow you shall, and to Rosalind if you will" (5.2.69-71). The way Ganymede presents the opportunity to

marry Rosalind suggests to Orlando that this option is available to him if he desires it enough to seize it. Ganymede even makes clear that the marriage is a situation he can arrange, and he will do so as long as it is convenient for Orlando. This phrasing emphasizes the mutuality of love that Rosalind is so interested in. Rosalind does not condone or desire selfish love or obsessive infatuation. She hopes that Orlando feels as strongly about her as she does for him. This way, the relationship between the two of them will be stronger and more likely to survive the passage of time. Explaining that the arrangement can happen as long as it is convenient to Orlando is an incredibly diplomatic way of presenting the matter.

The latter lines contain not one but two conditional cases: *if* Orlando will be married and *if* he will have Rosalind to be his wife (5.2.70-71). By phrasing these situations in hypothetical terms, it is more likely that Orlando will feel free enough to make a decision without being swayed by Ganymede. Ganymede does not pressure Orlando to marry Rosalind. After all the tutoring, playful banter, and discussion about marriage Orlando is left to decide what course of action he wants to take. Ganymede's "for if you will be married" also introduces the idea that fate largely determines what will occur. It seems to Ganymede, from Orlando's explications about Rosalind and eagerness to marry her, that if it were left up to him, he would surely be at the wedding ceremony tomorrow. Ganymede is a magician, so it seems that the only other bystander that he refers to that may hinder the union is fate. This careful rhetoric demonstrates Rosalind's masterly ability to be realistic and consider many different factors concerning this possible marriage as she presents it to Orlando.

Ganymede carries this tactful approach to the end of his interaction with Orlando. Ganymede suggests that if fate allows Orlando to marry tomorrow, it shall be to none other than Rosalind—but only if he will have her. Again, Ganymede emphasizes that it will only occur if Orlando is absolutely certain that he still desires to marry this woman. Rosalind strategically crafts her speech to Orlando to guarantee that Orlando does not make a rash decision to marry her simply because he is overjoyed at the opportunity and only superficially enthralled with her. Rosalind does not try to command Orlando to marry the woman he loves, nor does she threaten him into doing so with persuasive rhetoric and storytelling which she is certainly capable of employing. Because Rosalind understands the value of true, natural love, she does not feel compelled to secure Orlando's will to marry her in any way that does not require his freedom of choice.

Some readers view Rosalind's interaction with Orlando while portraying a male curer of lovesickness as a game she plays with him. One could argue that Rosalind is deceptive toward Orlando because she presents herself as someone she is not and has an agenda behind this role-playing of which Orlando is completely ignorant. However, her intention is a meaningful one because it is to make sure she does not begin a relationship with someone who is more infatuated with the idea of being in love than love itself. Rosalind is familiar with the Petrarchan tradition, in which a male is a victim of the unrequited love he has for a woman whom he places on a pedestal. He describes her as a perfect, unearthly being with rosy cheeks and fair skin. This character is often not a lover at all and only a person infatuated with an unattainable ideal. Because of this, Rosalind is wise to determine for herself what kind of lover Orlando truly is. The situations Ganymede portrays in front of Orlando to gauge his honorability, such as the scene in

which he describes how he would act around someone he was trying to cure of love to turn him off of a woman, "changeable, longing and liking, proud, fantastical, apish, shallow... full of tears, full of smiles" are extremely important to Rosalind (3.2.393-395). This approach is Rosalind's way to determine Orlando's seriousness for her and to choose a proper mate for herself. If he proves to want Rosalind as she is instead of Rosalind, the heavenly creature that Orlando writes about in his amateurish love poetry, she will feel confident in her decision to marry him.

To address the deceptive factor of Rosalind's disguise and how she uses it to communicate with Orlando, we must look closely at the plot and remember that the sole purpose of Rosalind's disguise was to keep Rosalind and Celia safe from harm as two young courtly women as they roamed the Forest of Arden. When Rosalind sees Orlando in the Forest, he has just spoken with Jaques. She knows it would be unwise to reveal to Orlando that she is a woman because this information could find itself in the hands of enemies through gossip. Therefore, Rosalind maintains her identity as Ganymede in Orlando's presence. Another reason she sustains her young male identity is because she is a motivated woman who is determined to take action, solve problems and carry out things in her own way. As she explains to Jaques when he asserts that it is good to be sad and say nothing, "Why, then, 'tis good to be a post" (3.5.8-9). This exchange is a prime example of Rosalind's tendency to be interactive by using skills in wit and rhetoric and how she feels that creativity is a shame to waste. To Rosalind, not saying anything to Orlando, even though she was disguised as a young shepherd, would have been a wasted opportunity. She would rather not act as passive as a post because in such a situation, no one would gain any knowledge or understanding; nor would either party have the chance

to practice their wit. So, even though she must maintain a seemingly conflicting identity, she is brave enough to engage with Orlando and find out what is on his mind. As she does this, she is wise to uphold successfully her identity as Ganymede while introspectively preserving her identity as a resourceful and honorable female capable of shielding herself from unnecessary heartbreak as best she can. Equally importantly, Rosalind does not hold back from speaking to Orlando while in disguise because she is so delightfully eager to talk to him and cannot help but engage with the man she loves.

While the ability to woo their love interests comes naturally to both Rosalind and the Duchess, the nature of their situations is vastly different. When Rosalind and Orlando meet for the second time after the wrestling match, Rosalind is disguised as Ganymede because it is her method of remaining safe while in the Forest of Arden. When Rosalind and Celia decide they will venture into the Forest to find Rosalind's father, they realize that it would be dangerous for two young women to wander there together with no male protector. Rosalind asserts, "Alas, what danger will it be to us, / Maids as we are, to travel forth so far! / Beauty provoketh thieves sooner than gold" (1.3.105-107). They would be targeted and vulnerable to criminals because they are women; no one would expect them to be able to defend themselves. Because of these reasons, they decide that Rosalind will disguise herself as a man and that Celia will act as his sister, Aliena. In Act 3 Scene 2, Orlando comes across Rosalind and Celia after Jaques has just left the conversation displeased with Orlando's lovesickness. She is still disguised as Ganymede, because they are still in the forest and she must remain in character. Since she wants to retain her identity as Ganymede for reasons of safety for her cousin and herself, she must not tell Orlando that she is the princess, Rosalind, who he pines after. She realizes that

she can "play the knave with him" by carrying out her male role as convincingly as she can by speaking to him as an audacious serving boy (3.2.288). This "playing the knave" turns into an opportunity for Rosalind to understand the psychology behind Orlando, his reasons for loving Rosalind, and to determine whether or not his love is mature enough for Rosalind to feel comfortable beginning a relationship with him. So, when Orlando asks where Ganymede lives, he responds, "With this shepherdess, my sister, here in the skirts of the forest, like fringe upon a petticoat" (3.2.324-325). Rosalind's motive in wooing him is to harness additional moments in which they get to converse with each other to gain an honest assessment of his love for her before marriage. Her motive is also to instruct him that mature love does not idealize someone as a creature as perfect as an angel but accepts a person's honest feelings and moments of imperfection.

While both Rosalind and the Duchess woo the men they love with verbal wit, Rosalind does so under the safety of a disguise. The Duchess has nothing to protect her from her brothers' knowledge of her secret marriage. She presents herself as her true identity and knowingly risks her life to be with Antonio. This decision further illustrates the Duchess's bravery and dedication to love. Rosalind only risks revealing her identity to Orlando and his realization that the curer of lovesickness is really his lover in disguise. She would have to explain to Orlando that she participated in this playful interaction with him under an assumed identity because when he came upon her in the forest she was disguised as a man, and she hated the idea of missing the opportunity to engage in clever conversation with him simply for this reason. The implications of marrying Antonio for the Duchess are deadly. With no protection of a disguise, she chooses no other option than to be true to her values and speak naturally with Antonio. Whereas Rosalind woos

Orlando because she wishes to interact meaningfully with him as well as gauge his real feelings and intentions with her, the Duchess's reasons for wooing Antonio are even more serious. She woos and proposes to him because she knows that pursuing him is a chance at attaining the love, happiness, and emotional and sexual intimacy that she so strongly desires. If she does not take this chance to woo Antonio, she remains under the stifling reign of her brothers, cloistered for the remainder of her life as a widow forbidden to marry, and her love for Antonio would be unfulfilled. Because living according to her own beliefs is so important to the Duchess, she readily takes the monumental risk that comes with pursuing Antonio. The chance of fulfilling her natural desire for love is worth whatever punishment her brothers can assign to her.

Rosalind tutors Orlando in matters of love under the guise of a young male before proposing to him. Rosalind's aim is to convey to Orlando her innermost concerns and bond with him through exchanges of clever dialogue. She charms her love interest with clever discourse and initiates marriage with utmost confidence. Rosalind risks having her identity revealed during the moments laden with witty exchanges. Though she assumes the persona Ganymede while she woos Orlando, the discourse she uses with him when she pretends to be Rosalind conveys Rosalind's feelings toward him perfectly. It is her wooing scenes with Orlando that lure him back for more tutoring and interaction, and it is also in these scenes that Rosalind realizes Orlando's love for her is mature and true. Her practice of enticing courtship and fulfillment of passionate fantasy, as seen in the mock-marriage scene, marks her as a forerunner of female wooing and mentorship.

Chapter 3: The Duchess in *The Duchess of Malfi*

Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*[2] contains compelling moments of wooing initiated and carried out by the female protagonist, the Duchess. The Duchess of Malfi rejects the roles assigned to her by early modern English society to be silent and subservient. Despite the strong opposition of her brothers, Duke Ferdinand and the Cardinal, to the idea of her remarrying, the Duchess decides to pursue Antonio, the man she loves. This decision is an incredibly dangerous one because she knowingly risks her life to be with him. The Duchess charms her love interest with clever discourse and initiates marriage with incredible confidence. The following chapter examines what motivates her to woo Antonio, what constitutes wooing, and the radical nature behind Webster's decision to portray a wooing Duchess.

The Duchess's desire for Antonio is the driving force of the play. She desires to love him entirely, which is why she chooses him as her husband. This chapter presents the Duchess as a master of witty discourse and Antonio's wooer. Judith Haber analyzes playful discourse between the Duchess, Antonio, and Cariola in the bedroom scene and makes the connection between this "foreplay" and feminine sexual excitement (83). She argues that Webster "engages in a self-consciously contradictory effort to construct a subjectivity that is specifically female, to reimagine speech, sexuality, and space−most particularly, the space of the female body−in 'feminine' terms" (73). According to Haber, Webster challenges the erotics of patriarchy and the convention of traditional tragedy in this play (73). This chapter will investigate the Duchess as wooer and underscore her

[2] I am using the New Mermaids version of *The Duchess of Malfi* edited by Brian Gibbons.

bravery to decide for herself that she will attain her desire for love and sexual and mental intimacy.

Webster emphasizes the Duchess's devotion to freedom and contentment by having her suffer death for remarrying. Some readers may understand this decision as an aim to scorn female sexuality, but upon closer examination of the play, it becomes clear that there is something much more complex going on. The Duchess wishes to fulfill her truest desire for freedom of expression in love. To explain the nature of her wooing she discloses to Antonio:

so we

Are forced to express our violent passions

In riddles and in dreams, and leave the path

Of simple virtue which was never made

To seem the thing it is not.

(1.1.436-440)

The Duchess conveys to Antonio that she feels like a bird in a cage and is not free to express her desire. By divulging her "violent passions" to Antonio and proposing to him, she inverts the gender stereotype and positions them on equal terms. Linda Woodbridge explains how her reading of *The Duchess of Malfi* celebrates the Duchess's sexuality rather than damning it (162). Woodbridge asserts that the Duchess is a female hero for courting, proposing to, and marrying the man she loves despite her incestuous and controlling brothers' orders to remain an unmarried widow. She also explains that

just because Webster's female hero is murdered for remarrying, it does not mean Webster and the play's audiences condemned the play's openness to female sexual desire. Woodbridge reminds us that a tragic hero usually has a tragic end, and in choosing a woman as a hero with real desires, Webster ran the risk of having people think the play should damn female sexuality.

The Duchess's wooing of Antonio is an *en*-acting of the Duchess's plan to make Antonio her husband. She has not planned what she will say to him nor has she planned the moment she will present the ring; she simply knows that she is going to propose to him. In this scene, she makes the marital union between the two of them real, which is what the Duchess most desires. Joan Lord Hall follows this thought by explaining that the Duchess "stage-manages the scene magnificently, picking up the cues on the key word 'marriage' and using her wedding ring as a prop to secure Antonio at the right moment"[3] (167). Hall describes the Duchess's ability to portray a feminine figure with self-assurance and incredible control over her actions and words impeccably. The discourse that ensues between her and Antonio comes naturally to the Duchess.

The historical practice of courtship and marriage in early modern England reveals how radical Webster is in his decision to have the Duchess propose to Antonio. The method the Duchess uses when she gives him her ring and places it on his finger is playful and drenched in double meanings. However, when Antonio kneels in front of her, she incites him to stand by affirming, "Raise yourself. / Or if you please, my hand to help you: so" (1.1.410-411). She insists that Antonio and she stand at the same level because

[3] I reached this conclusion independently from reading Hall's chapter.

she considers them to be equals even though he is her steward. The Duchess declares to Antonio, "You have left me heartless, mine is in your bosom, / I hope 'twill multiply love there," signifying that she has earnestly given her heart over to him (1.1.441-442). Lawrence Stone explains that marital practices had many stages. The exchange of verbal promises between a couple in front of a witness, also called the spousals, was considered to be "as legally binding as the church wedding" (31). The Duchess's idea behind having Cariola eavesdrop on their conversation makes her the witness to this marriage ceremony. It is radical and brave for the Duchess to initiate and conduct this formal oral promise of marriage between her and Antonio. Not only is it radical because she is a woman who performs the ceremony and she pursues a man of much lower social rank but also because the marriage will be secret since the Duchess has two deranged brothers who are obsessed with controlling her sexuality.

In *The Duchess of Malfi* and *As You Like It*, we see a parallel between the way the female heroines' love is given to their husbands. The Duchess discloses to Antonio that her heart is in his bosom. In Act 5, Scene 4, of *As You Like It* during the final wedding ceremony, Hymen refers to Rosalind and Orlando when he expresses to Duke Senior, "That thou mightst join her hand with his, / Whose heart within his bosom is" (5.4.112-113). Hymen affirms that Rosalind's heart is in Orlando's bosom, for she has given it over to him just as the Duchess has given her heart to Antonio. The images of a heart moving from one person's chest cavity to another convey that Rosalind and the Duchess are committed to the men they love. They view love as a comprehensive exchange in which a person gives all of his or her feelings, affection, and desire to another person. Because Rosalind and the Duchess care so much for these men, it is not as if they lose a part of

themselves whilst giving their hearts away. Conversely, their lives are made even more rich and meaningful with the inclusion of their husbands.

In Act 1 Scene 1 Cariola has just withdrawn behind the arras in the Duchess's room. The Duchess has asked her to overhear the conversation she is about to have with Antonio. Antonio enters the room and is ready to write down whatever the Duchess dictates to him. The Duchess announces that she forgot what she was just discussing and then utters, "Oh, I remember: / After these triumphs and this large expense / It's fit−like thrifty husbands−we enquire / What's laid up for tomorrow" (1.1.356-359). The "husbands" that the Duchess speaks of are conscientious male managers of the court, and she implies that acting as sagacious as them in planning for the future would be wise. However, she also gently brings up the idea to Antonio of a "husband" in the sense of a marriage partner while he is supposedly the only other person in the room. It is also significant that the Duchess declares that "we," both she and him, should be like thrifty husbands because it places them on equal terms. The Duchess plans to propose marriage to Antonio and in that sense performs the behavior typical of a man. She also knows that it is unusual for a person of high social rank such as herself to marry someone from a much lower class, such as Antonio. By saying that they should act like husbands in jest, she acknowledges the real possibility of them acting as equals and breaking through the expected roles allocated to them by gender.

To the Duchess's response, Antonio replies, "So please your beauteous excellence" (1.1.359). Then, the Duchess thanks him for calling her beauteous and assures him that she looks young for his sake (1.1.361). This utterance is another hint that the Duchess is going to choose Antonio as her husband. Her flirtatious comment suggests

that she only looks young because Antonio sees her that way, that her love for Antonio causes her to exhibit a youthful demeanor, and that she looks young to match him in age and what soon will be in affection.

The Duchess explains to Antonio that she is making her will. To offer a reason why she wishes to prepare it so early, she asks Antonio if it is not better that one make it smiling as she is now "than in deep groans and terrible ghastly looks, / As if the gifts we parted with procured / That violent distraction?" (1.1.370-373). She strategically brings a positive mood to the generally ominous topic of will-making because she does not want to put a damper on the conversation between the two of them. The Duchess illustrates her point about will-making in such an optimistic, constructive way that it is charming she is able to make a gruesome subject seem like a task worth doing in good spirits. In the second part of this passage, she asserts that one would not rather make his or her will while old and sick because it would seem as though the person was all the more disheartened because of the wealth he or she will part with. This would display what may seem like an obsession with material objects, revealing a most unappealing personality trait of the will-maker. This statement is particularly significant because it establishes that material possessions are not what the Duchess places value on. She knows that material objects and wealth are temporary pleasures that cannot bring us true contentment. The Duchess places utmost importance on things that cannot be evaluated for monetary value. Honor, truth, and love are the Duchess's principle interests, and she will take these things with her even in death.

Antonio agrees that her reasoning for making the will while she is relatively young surpasses others' approaches to will-making. Then, the Duchess instigates another

inventive conversation with Antonio. She discloses, "If I had a husband now, this care were quit: / But I intend to make you overseer" (1.1.374-375). In this statement, the Duchess again chooses her words extremely carefully. She knows that her response means that if she were married, she would not have to worry about creating a will; nevertheless, if she must make one, Antonio will oversee it. It is also a clever and discrete way of revealing that she also intends to make Antonio the authority of her will in the spousal sense, meaning that if something were to happen to her, he would be in charge of her wealth. The Duchess also suggests that she plans to make him *her* overseer in the sense that husbands and wives live together and are witnesses to each other's everyday routines and behavior.

Following the Duchess's election of Antonio as overseer of her will, Antonio responds that they should begin with the first good deed completed in the world after man's creation, the sacrament of marriage (1.1.377-378). He states, "I'd have you first provide for a good husband, / Give him all" (1.1.379-380). Like Rosalind and Orlando in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, the Duchess and Antonio have a discussion about marriage that is filled with joking banter. This discussion, however lighthearted it may seem, is actually indicative of a particular emotional intimacy that is precious and shared only by the two of them. The Duchess asks if she would truly need to give her husband all, and when Antonio confirms this, the Duchess asks if she would have to give herself in a winding sheet (1.1.381). With this clever question, the Duchess keeps the conversation about marriage going and gives herself the opportunity to say that if she gave it all to her previous husband, she would have to be wrapped in their wedding sheets and buried with him according to early modern custom. Antonio plays along and decides she should be

wrapped in two sheets (1.1.382). The Duchess exclaims that this is a strange will, punning on the word "will" (1.1.383). She comments on the bizarre declaration of the method by which her wealth may be dispersed after death as well as the unusual turn this conversation has taken with Antonio's joke that she should be wrapped in two sheets instead of one.

The Duchess openly proceeds to ask Antonio what he thinks of marriage. This scene reminds the audience of *As You Like It* a second time when Orlando is informed about Ganymede's view on marriage when Rosalind-as-Ganymede tells him that Rosalind's changes in moods would be unpredictable and make him insane. The Duchess's opportunity to ask Antonio about his thoughts on marriage naturally arises in the conversation which allows the Duchess to remain calm and not make Antonio suspicious before the time is right for her to incite marriage. Though the Duchess's question is a natural development in the discourse between the two of them, it is also a last-minute chance for her gauge Antonio's reaction and make sure it matches up to her ideals of how her future husband would respond, revealing her tendency to be deliberate and astute about her decisions.

Antonio's response to her question is intriguing. He posits that if a man never marries or has children, it only takes away the title of "father" from him and the unsatisfying and fleeting happiness of seeing the child play (1.1.390-394). Antonio makes this claim before he suspects that the Duchess will propose to him. As the scene progresses, we realize that Antonio is delighted to marry the Duchess. We also remember from the beginning of the play that he thinks her "nights, nay more her very sleeps, / Are more in heaven than other ladies' shrifts" and that all women should dress themselves in

her (1.1.196-199). In the play's beginning he also asserts that her discourse is "so full of rapture / You only will begin then to be sorry / When she doth end her speech" (1.1.184-189). Antonio is well-attuned and attracted to the Duchess's alluring discourse. Because he finds her so virtuous, admirable, and quick-witted he goes on to comment on how unworthy he is to be her lord, and the Duchess immediately assures him that she does not flatter him when she calls him a "complete man" (1.1.422-427). Her question with regard to how he feels about marriage is also a casual hint of what is to come. This continual hinting in Act 1 Scene 1 contributes to the Duchess's charming of Antonio.

Later in the conversation the Duchess interjects by saying that one of Antonio's eyes is blood-shot and handing him her ring to hold up to it. She plays with the idea that gold was able to cure a sty on an eyelid. She explains, "They say 'tis very sovereign: 'twas my wedding ring, / And I did vow never to part with it / But to my second husband" (1.1.397-399). The Duchess's speech is loaded with double meanings. In her explanation of the background of the ring she lets him use to cure his sty, she cleverly adds that she promised never to part with it unless with her second husband. Antonio does not yet realize that he is her second husband. He voices, "You have parted with it now" and she replies, "Yes, to help with your eyesight" (1.1.400-401). The Duchess brings Antonio's attention back to healing his eye. When he declares that there is a saucy and ambitious devil dancing in the circle of the ring, she says to remove him (1.1.404-405). Antonio asks how he may do this, and she explains that his finger may do the trick (1.1.406-407). Then, she puts the ring on his finger. When she does this, he kneels and she responds:

Sir,

This goodly roof of yours is too low built,

I cannot stand upright in't, nor discourse,

Without I raise it higher. Raise yourself,

Or if you please, my hand to help you: so.

(1.1.407-411)

The Duchess insists that he stop kneeling and offers her hand to help him up. Antonio expresses that he is unworthy of being made her wealthy lord (1.1.422). The Duchess's refusal to let Antonio kneel before her demonstrates her belief that they are equal to each other in status and worth. She does not condone ideas of hierarchy in her relationship and goes as far as to blatantly reject them. The Duchess surprises him when she raises him up and expresses this unusual idea of them as equals.

William Gouge, a Puritan rector in London of Blackfriars at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century, had a popular household manual called *Of Domesticall Duties*. Gouge presented sections of this book in the form of mini-sermons and dedicated it to his parishioners. Gouge's lectures reveal how important it was to display the behavior designated to one's social class. Susan Amussen, a feminist historicist, relates that Gouge "explains with care the criteria for selecting a spouse and insists that spouses should be equal in 'Age, Estate, Condition, Piety'" (45). She goes on to explain that according to Gouge, equality in age was least vital "because he is a head, a governor, a protector of his wife" (45). The Duchess's desire to marry a servant as opposed to a man of equal wealth is striking. Gouge addresses what the situation would

be like if a man of substantial wealth married a poor woman. He iterates, "if a man of great wealth be married to a poor woman, he will think to make her as his maid-servant, and expect that she should carry her self towards him as beseemeth not a yoke-fellow, and bed-fellow" (Amussen 45). Gouge's explanation elucidates how difficult it would be for a wealthy person to consider their poor spouse to be anyone other than a servant simply because he or she was poor. Gouge conveys that the wealthy party would think of her this way but also expect her to behave according to her social standing instead of an equal and loving wife. This example demonstrates the strength of social expectations and rules for marriage and reminds us that these guidelines were popular in many homes and even followed by the well-known chronicler of politics and history, Nehemiah Wallington when he wished for instruction on how to conduct matters of his household (Amussen 45). The Duchess swiftly ruptures this guideline by choosing to marry her steward. This situation becomes even more unconventional because she is a woman of wealth who chooses this "poor servant" for marriage. The idea of a woman simply choosing her own husband was unusual. The artistry in the Duchess's selection of Antonio is profound because she makes it clear to both Antonio and the audience that she will not tolerate the hierarchy in marriage that Gouge speaks of. Though Antonio was once her servant and is not wealthy in the slightest means, the Duchess fully intends to treat him as though he is equal in wealth, worth, and character. To the Duchess, he certainly is equal according to these terms, and she will not allow societal rules to determine how Antonio shall behave around her while they are married. The first indication of this view is when the Duchess cajoles Antonio to stand as she stands when

she conducts the marriage ceremony. After they are married, she remains true to her efforts to treat him as a passionate equal.

Barbara J. Todd, a feminist historian, explains that early modern drama was "a genre that discouraged the playwright from showing any sympathy for the pain and loneliness of widowhood" (54). Instead of sympathy, audiences were encouraged to feel contempt for widows who remarried on the stage. Todd asserts that the woman who chose to remarry was censured because as men knew, a widow's remarriage symbolized every man's mortality and the loss of his position to another man (55). Although Todd explains that remarrying widows were increasingly less common in the seventeenth century when stage widows flourished, she asserts that "the independent widow was also an anomaly" (55-56). She relates that they disrupted patriarchal theory in a different way, threatening the social order by having a woman heading her own household (55). Webster's portrayal of the Duchess as a courageous woman who risks her life to be with the man she loves undermines the harsh stereotype of the remarrying widow and calls for audiences to reassess their ideas about a woman who remarries. Webster's duchess is so authentic and her audience witnesses such a unique marriage proposal on her part that it is difficult to deny that her love for Antonio is real or that she does not care about him deeply.

Instead of having disdain for the Duchess's decision to remarry, we are intrigued by her wooing, method of engagement, and conduct of the ceremony. Webster incites his audience to feel hope for the Duchess and Antonio in their new, secret marriage so that her brothers do not find out and punish them for it. Webster's creation of the Duchess's two evil brothers, especially Ferdinand's arguably incestuous obsession over her

sexuality, his forbidding her to remarry and eagerness to kill both Antonio and the Duchess when he finds out they have married, makes the Duchess easier to sympathize with as a remarrying widow than previously imagined possible. Webster's decision to make the remarrying widow a martyr-like figure is radical and contests with the trendy early modern portrayals of widows who remarried and were demonized for it. In this way, he illustrates that ideas of womanhood, love, and desire are more complicated than they have been portrayed in other plays in which husbands died, widows remarried, and these women went on to be depicted as societal financial burdens or threats to a man's mortality (Todd 55). Clearly, this characterization was inadequate, stereotypical, and lacked the woman's perspective vital to understanding why on earth a widow would ever remarry.

Another moment which demonstrates the Duchess's wooing is her response when Antonio remarks on his presumed unworthiness. She expounds, "If you will know where breathes a complete man−/ I speak it without flattery−turn your eyes / And progress through yourself" (1.1.427-430). She tells him not to darken his worth by saying he is not worthy to be her husband and honestly conveys to Antonio how precious he is to her. If Antonio only looks inside himself, she promises he will find just how worthy he is. The Duchess goes on to say:

> Go, go brag,
>
> You have left me heartless, mine is in your bosom,
>
> I hope 'twill multiply love there. You do tremble.
>
> Make not your heart so dead a piece of flesh

To fear more than to love me.

(1.1.440-444)

As the Duchess notices Antonio trembling, she encourages him not to fear or worry and assures him that she is not too vulnerable from the loss of her previous husband to begin a relationship with him. The Duchess reassures him that if he feels hesitant because he thinks she is in the same mental state she was in when she knelt over her husband's tomb, he has nothing to fear because she is not the same person she was then. The Duchess is truly in love with Antonio and desires to share with him her wealth, mind, body, and soul. She maintains, "I do here put off all vain ceremony / And only do appear to you a young widow / That claims you for her husband; and like a widow, / I use half a blush in't" (1.1.448-451). Although she honors one of the traditions of the marriage ceremony by verbally exchanging vows with a witness present, she rejects adhering to conventional proposals in which the male party is the wooer and proposes to the woman. When she affirms that she abandons the superficial, or "vain ceremony," and only appears to him as a young widow who claims him for her husband, she conveys to Antonio that she presents herself as who she truly is: widowed, infatuated with him, and devoted to adhering to her personal values of love and respect.

The Duchess even comments on her wooing of Antonio toward the end of Act 1 Scene 1. She refers to those of the nobility when she discloses:

We are forced to woo because none dare woo us:

And as a tyrant doubles with his words,

And fearfully equivocates, so we

Are forced to express our violent passions

In riddles and in dreams, and leave the path

Of simple virtue which was never made

To seem the thing it is not.

(1.1.343-440)

The Duchess asserts that because she is a woman of nobility and her brothers will not allow anyone to marry her, she has no other option when it comes to love than to woo someone herself. She expresses this truth with an air of modesty, seeming to suggest that this "courting" is the best she can do when left to her own devices; however, her wooing of Antonio is all the more powerful because she is so skillful at it. This passage reveals how strongly the Duchess wishes this marriage did not have to be a secret. Because of her natural inclination toward honesty, by wooing Antonio in secret, she feels like her freedom in expressing love is being stifled, and this bothers her. She is the kind of woman who strongly desires to be open about her happiness and invite others to share that contentment instead of shielding her love from those in the court. The only reason she decides to have this secret union is because she feels pursuing the man she loves is worth any punishment her brothers could possibly inflict on her if they ever found out about it. In this scene, she emphasizes how passionate she is about matters of love and desire and her unwillingness to allow herself to be robbed of those things by corrupt authoritarian members of her family.

The Duchess adds to their wedding ceremony when she expresses:

I would have you lead your Fortune by the hand

Unto your marriage bed

You speak in me this, for now we are one.

We'll only lie, and talk, together, and plot

T'appease my humorous kindred; and if you please,

Like the old tale in Alexander and Lodowick,

Lay a naked sword between us, keep us chaste.

(1.1.483-486)

In the beginning of this passage the Duchess establishes that she feels they belong together so strongly, that as she proposed to Antonio, she felt she was working alongside destiny. It is as if she knew that she and Antonio should be wedded and desired them to be united so much that she would have felt confident in having him lead Fortune assuredly by the hand to their marriage bed. When she adds, "You speak in me this" she conveys that it is his immense romantic influence over her and her consumption in him that urges her to speak so candidly and confidently (1.1.485). Her pronouncement that they are now one entity emphasizes the official nature of the marital union and confirms that they are now fused together both emotionally and spiritually. The Duchess is direct and passionate in her orchestration of the ceremony, portraying the precise character traits of the perfect suitor. To successfully charm a lover, a wooer must be tactful,

strategic, and verbalize his or her devotion effectively. In her witty exchanges with Antonio, her honest praising of his virtue, and confident orchestration of the engagement and wedding, the Duchess proves that she is a master of courtship.

The Duchess conjures up images of mutual affection when she promises that she and Antonio will only lie and talk together, meaning that they will be true to one another in marriage and share an intimacy based on much more than physical attraction. It is important that the Duchess includes talking as one of the activities she and Antonio will do together while they are married because it indicates that she places a high value on moments of shared dialogue. She has no intention for the conversations filled with double meanings or the discussions in which they convey their truest emotions for each other to cease. The Duchess is an intelligent woman who thrives on stimulating conversation and will surely continue this trend in marriage. She understands that communication constitutes a form of intimacy equally important as physical intimacy.

When the Duchess explains that they will plot to appease her humorous kindred she informs Antonio that they must be sure not to let her corrupt brothers know about their marriage since Ferdinand and the Cardinal would likely punish them for it (1.1.486-487). She mentions her villainous brothers to acknowledge that she will not allow what others think of their marriage to stand in the way of her desire to fulfill her need for love. Her inclusion of the word "plot" signifies that even the efforts to make sure her brothers do not find out about the marriage will be a private activity that they will partake in, which implies an inherent intimacy. Even in the Duchess's rhetoric about how they will handle her evil brothers, a captivating, seductive tone pervades.

The Duchess uses the story of Alexander and Lodowick to further illustrate the incorruptible kindness and passion she feels that she and Antonio possess. In the story, Alexander and Lodowick are friends who have an uncanny similarity in physical appearance. Lodowick eventually marries a princess in Alexander's name. Because he and Alexander look so much alike, he places a sword in bed between himself and the princess for fear of wronging his friend (2.1.486-489). Lodowick values their friendship so much that he does everything in his power not to sleep with his wife and make him a cuckold. The Duchess's allusion to this old story informs Antonio that she has thought considerately about the matter of their love and that it is grand enough to compare to a classic tale from European folklore. It is also significant that her comparison draws on the friendship between the two males in the story and not just the dynamics between Lodowick and the princess, the married couple, especially since she and Antonio are newly married. She observes the devotion that Lodowick and Alexander have for each other in Lodowick's determination to be chaste with Alexander's wife and wishes to correlate that faithfulness and sincerity to the bond between her and Antonio. The Duchess considers them equal citizens of the court as well as equal partners in their relationship. The similarities between the sincere friendship in her story and the honest, intense closeness she and Antonio share signifies the strength of their love.

After the Duchess describes how she would have Antonio come to their marriage bed and lay a sword between them to keep them chaste, she expresses her love for him in a brilliant metaphor. She confesses, "Oh, let me shroud my blushes in your bosom, / Since 'tis the treasury of all my secrets" (1.1.490-491). In the end of this scene she makes Antonio's heart out to be the valuable holder of her deepest desire of love, emphasizing

his importance in her life as principle love interest. In pressing her blushing face to his bosom while feeling both triumph and fear for what may come, she finds comfort in his touch in the very first moments of their marriage. In these lines where the Duchess refers to Antonio's knowledge of their secret marriage, she underscores the power behind the treasury of all her secrets, his heart.

The Duchess concludes her marriage ceremony when she refers to Cariola's presence in her bedroom and declares to Antonio:

> Be not amazed, this woman's of my counsel.
>
> I have heard lawyers say a contract in a chamber,
>
> Per verba de presenti, is absolute marriage:
>
> Bless, heaven, this sacred Gordian, which let violence
>
> Never untwine.
>
> (1.1.467-470)

She even uses the phrase from canon law which means "by words, as from the present" in her instruction of the ceremony because she knows that lawyers consider this to be absolutely binding. The Duchess then goes on to bless their union with heartfelt language. She alludes to King Gordius who was known to have tied a knot that only Alexander the Great was able to break. Through this metaphor, she emphasizes the strength of their union.

The Duchess's will to pursue the man she loves despite the possibility of punishment if the marriage becomes known demonstrates her bravery and her integrity to uphold values of love, freedom, and self-respect. Eventually, when her brother Ferdinand finds out she married Antonio, he wants him to be killed. In Act 4 Scene 1 Ferdinand gives her what looks like a dead man's hand and explains that it is the hand which she has vowed much love: the ring upon it she gave (4.1.42-43). In this moment, Ferdinand wishes to terrify the Duchess and see her cry and wail over the heinous bodily crime committed against her husband. Instead of exhibiting a frantic emotional reaction, she boldly declares, "I affectionately kiss it" (4.1.44). With this calm disposition, the Duchess refuses to appear psychologically broken. She is clearly upset during her entire interaction with Ferdinand but not only accepts the dead hand when he gives it to her but says something which further demonstrates her ceaseless love for Antonio. She confirms that if it is his severed hand as he tells her, she should kiss it tenderly because of her closeness to the person it belonged to. By including the word "affectionately" in the way she would kiss it, she reminds the audience of the tender moments shared by her and Antonio in the beginning of the play. In the Duchess's response to kiss the hand Ferdinand gives to her instead of wincing and crying upon the sight of it, she subverts his cruel aim to control her.

Though the Duchess has a perfectly calm and honest response to Ferdinand's tactics, it does not take away from the horror she feels as a result of his evil behavior. She muses to herself, "What witchcraft doth he practise, that he hath left / A dead man's hand here?" (4.1.53-54). Then, hidden behind a curtain, she finds the wax figures shaped to look just like Antonio and her children as if they were dead. This is the major test of her

assurance and sanity. After Ferdinand departs the stage, Bosola and the Duchess share a discussion. She remarks on her desire to die so that she could join Antonio. Bosola reminds her of her Christian faith and that she should not contemplate suicide (4.1.72-72). The Duchess expresses:

Good comfortable fellow,

Persuade a wretch that's broke upon the wheel

To have all his bones new set: entreat him to live,

To be executed again. Who must dispatch me?

I account this world a tedious theatre,

For I do play a part in't 'gainst my will.

(4.1.77-82)

The Duchess thoughtfully explains to Bosola that encouraging her to continue to live when her loved ones are dead is like telling an unlucky person who has many broken bones from hard labor to have all of them restored just so he may be killed again. The Duchess decides that enduring such a loss as living without her family would render life meaningless. She likens a life like this to playing a part in a play against her will. This meta-theatrical invocation is unexpected and makes the audience feel the Duchess's sincerity in the situation where one must play a painful role. It also makes the audience conscious of the production's self-awareness as a humanistic performance that must aim to please the audience's craving for wit as well as their expectation to see realistic portrayals of emotion on stage.

Ferdinand's treatment of the Duchess is repulsive, but the Duchess's reaction to it does not cease to rise above the horror he wishes to incite in her. Ferdinand orders Bosola to get her tomb ready. The Duchess is being held as a prisoner when Bosola begins to prepare for her death and insults her with gruesome verbal abuse. He calls her "a box of word-seed, at best" and tells her that her hair has turned grey twenty years sooner than the hair of a merry milkmaid (4.2.118- 130). He goes on to say that if a teething infant were to sleep in the same bed as her, he or she would be the one wailing because the Duchess would be louder than the baby in bed (4.2.130-133). With this spiteful rhetoric, Bosola wishes to indicate that the Duchess is belligerent and wails in her bedroom. He suggests that she enjoys sexual intercourse and uses her second marriage as evidence for this insult. The Duchess utters, "I am the Duchess of Malfi still" as her response to this cruel and misogynistic tirade, displaying that she will not have her sanity and honor dismantled by Bosola's malicious rhetoric (4.2.134). This courageousness reminds us of the daring attitude behind her wooing of Antonio in the beginning of the play.

One reason the Duchess is so calm and confident about her honor and identity in this scene is because with her decision to marry Antonio, she willingly chooses freedom. To the Duchess, freedom is valuable and worth fighting for. Despite the torture and death that Ferdinand makes her suffer, the Duchess conveys that she would rather remain true to her decision to be with the man she loves than live according to her brothers' efforts to control her life and ability to love. The Duchess's reaffirmation of her identity proves that she refuses to feel guilty, unchaste, disloyal, or insignificant for marrying against her brothers' orders. She truly knows that she possesses none of these qualities and asserts that she is a woman who is not afraid or ashamed to give up everything she has if it

means she has a chance to be with the man she loves. Now, aware of her impending death, the Duchess knows that despite the horrific circumstance of her end, she will be united with Antonio and her children in heaven one day.

The Duchess's martyr-like behavior at the end of the play emphasizes that the language of women wooers does not have to be bawdy or impure. The Duchess is known for her chastity, and yet she still makes full use of punning language with Antonio. During the will-making scene she expresses to Antonio, "If I had a husband now, this care were quit: / But I intend to make you overseer" (1.1.374-373). In James MacTaggart's film version of *The Duchess of Malfi* Eileen Atkins plays the Duchess. When she utters these lines she makes intense eye-contact with Antonio, signifying to the audience that she means to make him overseer of much more than just her wealth. The martyr-factor also underscores that with wooing comes more than entertaining moments and hints at what is to come: the bravery to pursue the things that render life meaningful. To the Duchess, these things are love and the strong mental and spiritual connection she shares with Antonio and her desire to be intimate with him. The stoicism that the Duchess exudes during the torture scenes with Bosola and Ferdinand signifies that she knows she did nothing wrong in choosing to marry the man she loves. It also signifies how strong her love for Antonio is because she knows that she risked her life by pursuing him.

Some scholars have criticized the Duchess for being short-sighted or naive about the risk she takes in her marriage since she knows there will be dire consequences if her brothers ever found out about it. These scholars blame her for causing her own dreadful death. However, it is not that she is thoughtless, but she would rather pursue someone meaningful and be with someone she truly loves than be a figure doomed to obey

unwarranted patriarchal orders designed to control her actions and sexuality. She maintains incredible composure when she sees Ferdinand in her mirror and realizes that he has found out about her secret marriage. The Duchess retains stoicism in this scene as well as in the ones in which Bosola chastises her and when she is executed because she knows that Ferdinand and Bosola would take pleasure in seeing her cry or beg for her life. The Duchess refuses to give them what they desire since what they desire is to dismantle her nobility, sanity, and hope. The Duchess is strategic and admirable for her ability to uphold her values and not display a shred of anxiety in the moments her enemies wish to see her squirm the most.

Bosola becomes confused that the Duchess is not afflicted or terrified by the cord the executioners will use to kill her (4.2.203-204). The Duchess explains:

> Not a whit.
>
> What would it pleasure me to have my throat cut
>
> With diamonds, or to be smothered
>
> With cassia, or to be shot to death with pearls?
>
> I know death hath ten thousand several doors
>
> For men to take their exits [...] Tell my brothers
>
> That I perceive death, now I am well awake,
>
> Best gift is they can give, or I can take.
>
> I would fain put off my last woman's fault,

I'd not be tedious to you.

(4.2.206-217)

The Duchess explains to Bosola that it does not matter that the method of her execution is not expensive or glamorous and does not fit the lifestyle of a duchess. She mentions ways of dying that sound absurd such as having her throat slit by diamonds, being smothered by luxurious perfume, and being shot with pearls instead of bullets to illustrate that pretty details do not make dying any more honorable. She also demonstrates that it does not matter to her how she dies. Her worth is not tied to the elegance of her death ceremony. She acknowledges the uncountable ways in which men die and that it is impossible to control one's own fate. Instead, the Duchess considers what good can come of this tragedy and reasons that in death she will be able to meet many kind people in heaven who she would have otherwise never had the occasion to meet. At the end of this passage, the Duchess adds that she is going to stop talking now because she will not be stereotyped as a chatty woman. She, of course, does not fall into this female stereotype, because each phrase she utters is full of meaning. However, she does not want to bore Bosola with any more dialogue about this subject. By asserting that she would like to "put off" her last woman's fault, she insists that there is much more to her than her gender and the expectations that accompany it.

In *As You Like It* Rosalind's approach to wooing allows her to mentor Orlando in how he should conduct himself around his lover. This is all the more interesting because we see Rosalind disguised as Ganymede explaining how Rosalind likes to be treated by a man for Orlando's benefit. For instance, when Orlando is late to the appointment with

Ganymede, Rosalind-as-Ganymede chastises him for it and explains that a lover who is not on time is one who a lady does not consider sincere. She also imparts to him that concerning the matter of greetings, many women, including her, prefer to be spoken to before being kissed. In her explanation, Rosalind-as-Ganymede is honest but also humorous. She asserts, "You were better speak first, and when / gravelled for lack of matter you might take / occasion to kiss (4.1.67-69). Dusinberre's footnote indicates that "gravelled" alludes to falling from a horse onto gravel (55). Rosalind uses a gentle, joking tone to tell him that an immediate kiss could offend a woman and that a more wise time for Orlando to kiss his love would be when he blunders, as a means to distract her from his mistake.

As opposed to Rosalind's aim to tutor Orlando in matters of love and women's perspectives, the Duchess's aim in wooing Antonio does not include a teaching factor. Her approach is selfless in this way. The Duchess's lack of disguise does not allow her to secretly examine Antonio's ideas about love and marriage before she proposes to him. Because of this circumstance, the Duchess must rely on her own identity alone, inherently making her more vulnerable than Rosalind could imagine to be. The Duchess's truest feelings are exposed to Antonio and she has no ability to shield her identity from her controlling brothers. Though Rosalind is disguised as a man when she woos Orlando and the Duchess exhibits her true identity, both of the heroines inquire about their loves' views on marriage. The Duchess asks, "What do you think of marriage?" (1.1.384). This question is the Duchess's way of hinting at the idea of marriage but also finding out what the man she plans to propose to thinks about it. Both Rosalind and the Duchess incorporate a wise investigation of Orlando and Antonio's perspectives on marriage into

their wooing scenes. In both of these cases, their inquires into their men's ideas of marriage do not disrupt the power of the wooing scenes. Conversely, compared to the entire wooing dialogue, these moments seem minute and do not distract Orlando or Antonio from the women's task at hand in the slightest way.

One of the most significant methods of wooing carried out by both Rosalind and the Duchess is the use of clever speech. Their usage of speech full of double meanings is inherently captivating. The multiplicity of language used by these women functions as a means to allure Orlando and Antonio. Accustomed to the tiresome, bland, and even corrupt speech of politicians, courtly friends, and relatives, Orlando returns to Rosalind when she is disguised as Ganymede because he wishes to prove his love for Rosalind and also because he finds the dialogue shared between the two of them enticing. Antonio must return to the Duchess because he is her steward, but audiences know that he finds her speech captivating from the way he expounds about her to Delio. He explains that her speech is so full of rapture, that her listeners become sorry when she finishes speaking (1.1.185-187). Antonio also cannot help but notice the purity that exudes from the Duchess as she speaks. Antonio assures his friend that:

> Whilst she speaks,
>
> She throws upon a man so sweet a look,
>
> That it were able raise one to a galliard
>
> That lay in a dead palsy, and to dote
>
> On that sweet countenance; but in that look

There speaketh so divine a continence

As cuts off all lascivious and vain hope.

(1.1.189-195)

Antonio's description reveals the power behind the Duchess's speech. He explains that with just one sweet glance, a man plagued by paralysis would be moved to a spirited dance carried out in triple rhythm. He also describes that her sweet facial features expose such honor with regard to sexuality. Antonio asserts that the Duchess's honor and expression of purity is so strong that it seems to put an end to all indecency and false hope. It is the Duchess's affinity to truth and her witty interactions with Antonio that possess him and cause him to fall in love with her.

Epilogue

Shakespeare and Webster participate in emergent discourse that allows for female subversion of societal norms with regard to courtship. Marxist scholar Raymond Williams discusses dominant, emergent, and residual discourses to explain economics, culture, and human action. Emergent discourses challenge dominant discourses. They represent "new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships and kinds of relationships" (Williams 123). By poking fun at the Petrarchan lover and instilling the idea in Orlando's mind that women are multi-dimensional human beings, Rosalind dismantles the power of the Petrarchan abstraction. Once we eradicate notions that suggest women must be nothing more than objects of the "love-prate," we can acknowledge women as capable wooers. In this new vision, the person being wooed is no longer an ideal abstraction, but an individual who has the ability to feel contentment, joy, pain, uncertainty, and dissatisfaction. This change represents a shift from unrealistic expectations to acceptance and heightened sensitivity to a love interest's natural tendencies.

The implication from these plays for women wooing men in the present is that it creates equality between couples. If women are portrayed as masters of courtship in literature, it is certainly encouraging for the contemporary woman to unleash her creative inclinations and woo her love interest. If women feel confident enough to woo their male love interests, it sets a standard for open communication and mutual entertainment for both parties before the relationship is even formed. In this way, honesty, courtship, and creativity are exchanged between couples equally, and precedents are set for the future relationship. The marriage proposals carried out by Rosalind and the Duchess present a

new possibility for the contemporary woman. She can conduct a marriage proposal and ensure that it is carried out in way that makes her feel comfortable. Women are no longer restricted to waiting for men to propose. As we read in these plays, a strategic woman who knows what she wants can woo her man and even propose to him despite what dominant discourse tells us about courtship. By giving women the freedom to woo the men of their choosing, these playwrights allow them to control their own destinies under the constraints of a conservative patriarchal world.

The ability to woo represents a freedom that both men and women are entitled to in love. The freedom to woo a lover designates the freedom to choose a mate as well as the entitlement to express one's desires. Rosalind and the Duchess use flirtatious puns in some of the wooing scenes to express their sexual desire. This ability to express one's sexual needs and feelings is a liberty that all women wooers can take by engaging in witty exchanges with their men. Rosalind and the Duchess refuse to feel guilty for outwardly expressing their desires for Orlando and Antonio. The Duchess even sees wooing Antonio as the pursuit of freedom as it represents something worth fighting for. If she does not take this opportunity to woo the man she loves, she is doomed to a life without love in which she will succumb to her controlling brothers' rule. As we see with many female characters in early modern English drama, the Duchess inverts the gender stereotype and pursues her man.

Rosalind and the Duchess demonstrate intelligence, senses of humor, and unrelenting passion for the men they woo. The audience witnesses these attributes during the wooing scenes as well as when the lovers are apart. When Rosalind reads the love poems dedicated to her that "had in them more feet than the verses could bear" she does

not know who wrote them (3.2.162-163). Rosalind finds out that Celia knows who wrote them and demands to know who the love-struck poet is. When she finds out it is Orlando, Rosalind questions what she should do with her man's attire and exclaims:

> What did he when thou sawst him? What said he? How looked he? Wherein went he? What makes he here? Did he ask for me? Where remains he? How parted with thee? And when shalt thou see him again? Answer me in one word.
>
> (3.2.213-217)

Rosalind asks a multitude of questions at once about Orlando because she is so ecstatic that he is the one writing about her. The news is so exciting that she grows impatient and must know Orlando's feelings, demeanor, intentions, and location in one word, which Celia cannot provide. Celia jokes that to answer her in one word, she would need to borrow Gargantua's[4] mouth, emphasizing Rosalind's overwhelming amount of questions. Rosalind wants to know what her wooer was doing when Celia saw him, what he said, what he looked like when he said it, if he asked for her, and when she might see him again. In this passage, Rosalind has a single concern which nothing can distract her from, and this is Orlando. While this behavior is typical of someone in love, it also reveals Rosalind's frenetic passion for Orlando, which perfectly aligns with the "careless desolation" a lover possesses often involving disheveled clothing, a lean cheek, sunken eyes, an unquestionable spirit, and neglected beard which she educates Orlando that a true lover has during one of their "curing" scenes.

[4] In Rabelais's *Gargantua,* a giant of the same name consumes vast amounts of food and drink.

The Duchess plans to propose to Antonio, affirming that she has admired Antonio for a substantial time and would love nothing more than to make him her husband. In Act 1 Scene 1 the audience watches the Duchess and Cariola, her waiting-woman, prepare for the Duchess's proposal. The Duchess reminds her that by making her a part of this secret engagement she has given up more than her life, but also her fame (1.1.341-343). Cariola confirms that both shall be safe because she will guard her secret from the world (1.1.343-344). This moment divulges the trust between the Duchess and Cariola as well as how serious and passionate the Duchess is about Antonio. For her, his love is worth the risk of a ruined reputation, chastisement from her brothers, and possibly even worse punishment. At the end of the play, a few moments after the executioners strangle the Duchess, she stirs and Bosola seems relieved that she shows signs of life. Weak and dying, she utters "Antonio" (4.2.339). The well-being of her love is on her mind in her last moments on earth. Bosola answers, "Yes Madam he is living, The dead bodies you saw were but feigned statues, / He's reconciled to your brothers, the Pope hath wrought / The atonement" (4.2.340-343). The Duchess voices, "Mercy" signifying that though she will die, it is a blessing that Antonio and her children are alive and safe (4.2.343). Her romantic and spiritual devotion to Antonio is visible up until the very moment of her death.

In *As You Like It*, we see a great deal of jokes made about the weaknesses of males and females. In the beginning of the play, when Rosalind and Celia decide that Rosalind will don a man's disguise for safety as they roam through the forest, Rosalind explains that she should in all respects seem like a man. She declares:

A gallant curtal-axe upon my thigh,

A boar-spear in my hand, and in my heart,

Lie there what hidden woman's fear there will,

We'll have a swashing and a martial outside,

As many other mannish cowards have

That do outface it with their semblances.

(1.3.114-119)

Rosalind assures Celia that they can pretend to be respectable men just as many men pretend to be. Rosalind pokes fun at men who are not brave in their hearts. They are "cowards" who are only "mann*ish*" and therefore not even truly men. She makes this clever joke to convince Celia and herself that their plan will withstand the judgment and unpredictability of the forest. However, Rosalind is perceptive to know that bravery is often a matter of looking brave. She too will outface danger with her semblances when they encounter strangers in the forest.

Later Celia cautions Rosalind about becoming a victim of love in marriage. She declares, "Marry, I prithee do, to make sport withal—but love no man in good earnest, nor no further in sport neither than with safety of a pure blush thou mayst in honour come off again" (1.2.26-29). Celia advises Rosalind to amuse herself in marriage and not to say anything that she cannot laugh off with an innocent blush. In another scene, Celia teases Rosalind for being so in love with Orlando. When Rosalind is trying to get Celia to tell her who left love-notes on the trees dedicated to her, she begs her to tell her who it is promptly and to speak quickly. Rosalind explains that she wishes Celia might stammer

and "pour this concealed man out of thy / mouth as wine comes out of a narrow-mouthed bottle/—either too much at once or none at all. I prithee take / the cork out of thy mouth that I may drink thy tidings" (3.2.193-197). Celia responds, "So you may put a man in your belly" (3.2.198). Behind Celia's joke about Rosalind's sexual desire for Orlando lies a warning about pregnancy, a far more serious aspect of getting involved with a man.

Celia warns Rosalind about getting involved with Orlando and Rosalind-as-Ganymede warns Orlando about women. When Ganymede explains how he cured a man of his lovesickness he assures him that when he wooed him he acted unpredictably and with unexplainable emotions ranging from happy, angry, proud, grief-stricken and shallow. He asserts that he "drave my suitor from his mad humour of love to a living humour of madness" (3.2.400-401). Susanne Woodford explains the chiasmus "his mad humour of love to a living humour of madness." She iterates that such a cure as "to lead the principal characters to the monastic cell (or to the cave of the convertite)" would be more contaminating than beneficial (155-156). Wofford argues that that such "curing" of infections associated with Orlando's narcissistic love, bad love poetry, and the tendency to literalize Petrarchan conceits "take a second seat to the more difficult task of warding off the threatening images or "contamination" that Rosalind enacts in the wooing scenes. These images would truly dispel any possibility of a comic ending (154-155). The warnings that Celia and Ganymede offer on matters of love also serve as ways to illustrate the many different interpretations of love that are available for one's choosing. There is Celia's idea to "love no man in good earnest" and to amuse herself with love, and there is the early modern English male's idea that views women as unchaste and emotionally unstable demonstrated by Ganymede.

By drawing upon and exaggerating the negatives of both sexes, this play emphasizes the limits of dominant discourse. A strong female character Rosalind makes fun of both men and women while simultaneously demonstrating that erotic performance and desire is not a contaminator. Both Rosalind and the Duchess teach us that the mental and physical intimacy between two people can be a catalyst for new discourses between men and women. Love does not have to contaminate or frustrate but can bring up new kinds of relationships between men and women and opportunities for valuable mental intimacies to thrive. Just because jokes pervade about the weaknesses of men and women does not mean they are not worth loving. When handled carefully, as Rosalind knows relationships need to be, they have the ability to bring out virtue in each person. The Duchess's risks in pursuing love are far more ominous than those that Rosalind and Orlando face. Nevertheless, the Duchess finds it is worth the risk. The power behind making her own choice is precious to her. The Duchess and Rosalind teach us about true love and its ability to transcend darker realities whether they are hurtful misrepresentations of men and women seen in *As You Like It* or corporal punishment in *The Duchess of Malfi*.

Both plays concern the brave act of making one's desires and feelings known. This act consists of taking the first steps to transforming a sexual or romantic fantasy into reality. It is setting an idea into action using chiefly one's words. *As You Like It* teaches us that role-playing does not have to imply the assuming of false identities. In a sense, role-playing reveals one's true desires and most honest feelings. When Orlando explains that he must leave for two hours to attend dinner with the Duke, Rosalind-as-Ganymede utters, "Alas, dear love, I cannot lack thee two hours" exposing Rosalind's genuine wish

to spend every possible moment with Orlando (4.1.165-166). Rosalind demonstrates this construction as she, dressed as Ganymede, explains to Orlando what her concerns are about his departure and how he must act so that Rosalind knows he truly cares for and respects her. She exclaims:

> If you break one jot of your promise or come one minute behind your hour, I will think you the most pathetical break-promise and the most hollow lover and the most unworthy of her you call Rosalind that may be chosen out of the gross band of the unfaithful.
>
> (4.1.178-183)

Rosalind successfully conveys a woman's desire for her man to keep the promises he makes to her no matter how seemingly insignificant. Rosalind wants to be with a man who will show up on time and be reliable. She uses this elaborate example to inform Orlando that women should be treated with respect and desire to know that they are appreciated. Orlando responds that he will keep his promise with no less faith than if Ganymede were indeed his Rosalind (4.1.185-186). Celia berates Rosalind when Orlando leaves and exclaims, "You have misused our sex in your love-prate!" (4.1.189-190). Rosalind assures her that she knows what she is doing. She wishes to emphasize to Orlando how important it is to Rosalind that promises are respectfully kept. She also declares to Celia that she need not worry and exclaims, "thou didst know how many fathom deep I am in love! But it / cannot be sounded—my affection hath an unknown / bottom, like the Bay of Portugal" (4.1.193-196). In this scene, the audience knows that Rosalind takes the time to guide Orlando in matters of love and wooing because she is

deeply in love with him. She discloses that her affection for him knows no end like an immeasurable body of water, emphasizing that her ultimate desire is Orlando.

The Duchess does not use play-acting to woo Antonio, but approaches him under her own identity. However, part of her strategy results in something that role-playing often yields. Through her wooing and proposal, she makes her fantasy to have him as her husband a reality. While the audience knows that Rosalind is enthralled with Orlando, she cannot praise his attributes while disguised as Ganymede. She does, however, disclose his greatness to Celia when he is gone. Though Rosalind is infatuated with this man, she does not know him entirely and strives to find out his treatment in matters of love. The Duchess praises Antonio and these expressions of love become part of her wooing scene. After the Duchess's proposal, he exclaims that he is unworthy of her hand in marriage. She immediately urges him not to speak ill of his worth. One of the reasons the Duchess chooses Antonio as her husband is precisely because she finds him so noble. She even affirms that she speaks "without flattery" when she tells him that he is a complete man (1.1.428). This affirmation confirms that she truthfully conveys her feelings to Antonio and convinces him that she loves him entirely. She expresses that she would be honored to have him as her husband. In this scene, the Duchess switches the roles allocated to them by gender and ensures Antonio that it is she who would be blessed to have him by her side as her spouse.

Both the Duchess and Rosalind's aim in wooing their love interests develop from internal desires to create meaningful personal dialogues laden with clever discourse. These female heroines value a particular intimacy with the men they are attracted to that also exists outside the bedroom. This connection is one of the minds, and Rosalind and

the Duchess are experts at enticing their men with words. However, Rosalind's motives in wooing Orlando are more self-serving than the Duchess's motives. This does not discredit her intentions but reaffirms her position as a determined woman capable of looking after herself when it comes to matters of romance. While Rosalind woos Orlando because her utmost desire is to be with the man she loves, her method of wooing, disguised as a young male magician, Ganymede, allows her to gauge Orlando's feelings for her before she marries him. This method allows her to decide if he is truly someone she would like to marry and educate him that it is unrealistic to compare a spouse to an unearthly, perfect figure as illustrated by the Petrarchan tradition. Rosalind emphasizes ideas of misogyny and ghastly ideas of marriage and waits for Orlando to do what he will with these images. If he decides that Ganymede's ideas about marriage and women are accurate or is deterred by them, Rosalind will not feel compelled to spend any more time wooing Orlando and will not feel like she has lost any opportunity for marriage. However, if he sees beyond the misogynistic stereotypes and wants to be with Rosalind knowing that women are not perfect creatures that have real feelings and urges, Rosalind knows that Orlando is being realistic about matters of love and is likely to accept Rosalind during both good and difficult times in marriage.

Rosalind and the Duchess's attraction to punning language and wooing allows them to demonstrate their creativity to the men they love. This vivaciousness, intelligence, and imagination is what Orlando and Antonio find so appealing in both women. The puns they use in their discourse make the conversation between lovers special and more meaningful than previously imaginable. The punning language also keeps the dialogue unpredictable, with Orlando and Antonio choosing to listen carefully

because if they are not tuned-in whole-heartedly, they are sure to miss some of this rich dialogue the women deliver to them. The role-playing that Rosalind participates in is different than the wooing strategy which the Duchess partakes in. Rosalind role-plays with Orlando under the guise of Ganymede because when she first encounters Orlando in the forest, she is disguised and considers it a waste of opportunity to not interact with her love when she sees him just because she is portraying a masculine identity. Rosalind's role as Ganymede allows her to speak truths to Orlando with the protection of the disguise, so that Orlando would never guess her true identity. This allows her to get acquainted with his personality and witness what it could be like if Orlando and she were together. Rosalind finds that they would get along swimmingly and even persists in teaching Orlando vital rules about love and women which he is not aware of. Though the Duchess does not don a disguise when she woos Antonio, her loyalty to her true identity makes her pureness and devotion to honesty even more apparent. The Duchess risks much more than Rosalind does in her wooing of Antonio. However, the Duchess has no impulse to disguise her identity, though she would have great reason to abandon her rule and live a life under a new identity with Antonio. Instead, she wishes to maintain her title as duchess and marry the man she loves. Despite her lack of disguise, she entices Antonio and lets her charismatic charm guide the discourse during her wooing scenes.

The Duchess's will to pursue the man she loves despite foreseeable punishment demonstrates her bravery and integrity to uphold values of love, freedom, and self-respect. The Duchess charms her love interest with clever discourse, tells him how noble he is in the most honest terms, and proposes marriage to him with confidence. She risks her life for love, revealing that the freedom to choose a husband is much more valuable

than to abide by her brothers' orders and live a life without love. The Duchess makes it clear that she is not concerned with wealth and hierarchies in court or in romantic relationships. To her, individuals are equal in worth no matter what their socioeconomic, gender, or familial background is. Not only do Rosalind and the Duchess completely disrupt women's roles in early modern England, but despite the patriarchal dramatic worlds which Shakespeare and Webster create for them, they construct an organic space for women wooers to fully realize and express their desires.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

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