"That Reason Wonder May Diminish": As *You Like It*, Androgyny, and the Theater Wars

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"That Reason Wonder May Diminish": 
As You Like It, Androgyny, 
and the Theater Wars

by Grace Tiffany

He was (indeed) honest, and of an open, and free nature: had an excellent fantasy; brave notions, and gentle expressions: wherein he flow'd with that facility, that sometime it was necessary he should be stop'd.

—Ben Jonson on Shakespeare, Discoveries

And will you have poor woman such a fixed Star, that she shall not so much as move or twinkle in her own sphere?

—Haec-Vir

An oblique line in the anonymous play The Return from Parnassus, Part II, produced early in 1602 at St. John's College, Cambridge, implicates Shakespeare in the "War of the Poets" that had recently enlivened the London stage. This famous quarrel raged most explicitly between Ben Jonson, John Marston, and Thomas Dekker, who—reviving a tradition as old as Aristophanes' The Frogs—satirically attacked one another in successive London stage productions between 1599 and 1601. But in a now famous passage from Parnassus II, an actor impersonating Will Kempe of the Lord Chamberlain's Men awards Shakespeare laurels in the dubious dramatic contest. "Kempe" begins, "Few of the university [men] pen
plays well; they smell too much of that writer Ovid, and that writer Metamorphoses, and talk too much of Proserpina and Jupiter," and then gloats, "Why, here's our fellow Shakespeare puts them all down, aye, and Ben Jonson too." "Kempe" further boasts that Shakespeare has given Jonson a much deserved "purge" (4.3.1766–73).3

The comment has prompted a wealth of interpretations within the numerous twentieth-century readings of the Renaissance poetomachia. In her biography of Jonson, Rosalind Miles suggests that the lines probably refer to Troilus and Cressida, but possibly to the 1601 staging by Shakespeare's Lord Chamberlain's Men of Dekker's Satiromastix, which viciously lampooned Jonson and ended the theater wars.4 Favoring Miles's latter suggestion, David Farley-Hills even speculates that the Parnassus lines refer to Shakespeare's skill not at writing but at acting: Shakespeare may have played the part of Jonson (as Horace) in Satiromastix.5 On another track, Henk Gras has recently argued that Twelfth Night was Shakespeare's foray into the conflict, designed specifically to respond to Jonson's insults regarding Shakespeare's Ovidianism. Gras asserts that in Twelfth Night "Shakespeare, using the means rejected by Jonson, shows that [Ovidian] romantic comedy as distinct from humour comedy can indeed reform men and manners."6 Like Miles, however, Alfred Harbage, J. B. Leishman, George Rowe, and James P. Bednarz think it likely that "Troilus and Cressida is the 'purge'" that "Kempe" mentions,7 since in that play the combative instinct is so discredited as to call all wars—real or literary—into serious question. Rowe sees in Troilus and Cressida's satiric treatment of competition the suggestion "that the goals sought by rival poets at the end of Elizabeth's reign might not be worth attaining."8 Most thoughtful and compelling of all these readings is Bednarz's recent essay, "Shakespeare's Purge of Jonson: The Literary Context of Troilus and Cressida." Bednarz documents Jonson's numerous literary assertions of his own "poetic authority," born of "an inner voice of conscience" that is "the sole arbiter of identity."9 He then carefully examines Troilus and Cressida's critique of Jonson's view, evident in the hollow grandiosity of Ajax's similar claims to self-sufficiency as well as in Ulysses' countervailing demonstration of "the dependence of the individual on the 'applause' of spectators who determine his significance."10

My purpose here is not to refute these critical positions (with the qualified exception of Gras's argument), since all are arguable hypotheses that are not, in any case, mutually exclusive. Indeed, given the lively inter-theatrical conversation regarding dramatic method that informed the world of the early Jacobean stage, it is likely that audiences would have expected a play to comment on rival dramatic approaches almost as a matter of course: Rosencrantz's famous mockery of the performing "children, little eyases"—popular boys' companies like Jonson's—is a
case in point. In fact, though our tendency has been to isolate and examine particular Shakespeare comedies in competitive attempts to solve the *Parnassus* mystery, it now seems likely that Shakespeare’s “purge” consisted of a barrage of joking theatrical responses to Jonson delivered in several plays produced around 1600; and even that more than one play was indicated in “Kempe’s” remark. Thus, rather than countering other critical speculations, I want to propose the addition of another play, *As You Like It*, to the list of probable Shakespearean interventions in the theater wars, one that would be a likely referent of the *Parnassus* remark. Produced, like *Twelfth Night*, at the height of the *poetomachia*, in late 1599 or early 1600, *As You Like It* (also like *Twelfth Night*) uses mythic romantic comedy to mock the methods and aims of Jonsonian satire. Further, analogies between *As You Like It* and Jonson’s 1599 *Every Man Out of His Humour*—Jonson’s first salvo in the war—indicate that Shakespeare fashioned *As You Like It* in part to reject the satiric method demonstrated and championed by that play.12

*As You Like It*’s pervasive antagonism not just to satire but to the Petrarchan strain of much Elizabethan poetry links it with other Shakespearean plays of 1599–1601, all of which attack men’s idealization of women. And when we take into account Shakespeare’s almost obsessive focus in this three-year period on the twin evils of Petrarchan idolatry and humoral satire—variously personified by Troilus and Thersites, Orsino and Malvolio, and Orlando and Jaques, among others—the first lines of “Kempe’s” comment, “Few of the university pen plays well, they smell too much of that writer Ovid, . . .” become clear. As noted above, Gras reads the *Parnassus* comment as a defense of, not an attack on, Ovidianism (it is indeed difficult to conceive how a criticism of Ovid could be logically linked by the *Parnassus* playwright to praise of Shakespeare, a writer so obviously influenced by Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*).13 However, despite *As You Like It*’s clear investment in “erotic beast” myths, the play manifests equally a skepticism regarding another Ovidian motif. The following lines from Ovid’s *Amores* provide an example of the particular poetic mode and mind-set that Shakespeare, in the late 1590s, was increasingly to reject:

What shall I say this means, that my couch seems so hard, and the coverlets will not stay in place, and I pass the long, long night untouched by sleep, and the weary bones of my tossing body are filled with ache?—for I should know, I think, were I in any wise assailed by love. (I.2, lines 1–8)

No love is worth so much—away, Cupid with the quiver!—that so often my most earnest prayer should be for death. (II:6, lines 1–2)
she was dazzling fair, and her fairness was mingled with rosy red—the rosy red still glows in her snowy cheeks. Her foot was small—her foot is stil of daintiest form. . . . She had sparkling eyes—like stars still beam the eyes by which she has often falsely lied to me. Surely, even the immortal gods indulge the fair in swearing false, and beauty has its privilege divine. (III:3, lines 1–13)¹⁴

As early as the 1593 *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Shakespeare had mockingly questioned the Petrarchan melancholic mode that derived from Ovidian verses like these (*TGOV* 1.1.30ff., 3.269–70).¹⁵ Even more significantly, as far back as the early comedy *Love’s Labor’s Lost* Shakespeare had begun to associate this mode with the scholarly, satirical bent of the social critic (for an example we may note Berowne’s hybridized satiric/romantic discourse in *Love’s Labor’s Lost* 3.1, revealing a self-indulgence that is mocked by the events of that play). The linkage was a venerable one: although Shakespeare was doubtless more familiar with Ovid than with the Greek poet Archilochus, that primal satirist’s work suggests the origin of critical invective in frustrated erotic longing like that expressed in the Ovidian verses quoted above. In lines predating Ovid’s by eight centuries, Archilochus complained of “the passion of love that has twisted its way beneath my heartstrings, . . . stealing the soft heart from inside my body”; his next verse fragment beseeches Apollo to “single out the guilty ones; / destroy them.”¹⁶ Thus, the earliest satire provided a paradoxical model for both the Ovidian/Petrarchan love-sufferer and confrontational satiric speakers like Berowne, who reclaim masculinity in defiance of Cupid’s theft of their “soft heart.” As *You Like It*, more overtly than any other Shakespearean play, stages this age-old connection between love-longing and satiric spleen, dramatizing the paradoxical link between the romantic poet’s self-obsessed, anti-relational discourse and the social reformer’s angry rhetoric. In doing so, the comedy expresses Shakespeare’s complex but coherent ambivalence toward the romantic attitudes found in the work of “that most capricious poet, honest Ovid” (*AYLI* 3.3.7).¹⁶ Shakespeare’s play also discloses his antipathy toward both Petrarchan and satiric dramatic formulas. Dismissing both the anti-comic impulses of romantic idealization and satiric misogyny, Shakespeare dismisses—or “purges”—Jonson.

The poets’ war was, in fact, inspired by such broad theoretical differences regarding comedy as this thesis suggests. The playwrights’ staged caricatures are properly regarded as embodiments not merely of one another’s techniques but also of their own competing comic strategies; the attacks are also defenses.¹⁷ By lampooning mythic romance in *Every Man Out*, Jonson argues the artistic superiority of his new humors drama; con-
versely, by mocking satire in As You Like It, Shakespeare champions mythic comedy. Because the playwrights’ assertions of methodological superiority rest on their differing views of the moral effect their plays had on theater audiences, it will be helpful to clarify the distinctions between them in this regard.

I

Jonson’s emphasis on scholarship as the avenue to moral health secured his position in a tradition of antifeminist writing originating with the classics and running through medieval patristic writers to Renaissance scholastics. According to this tradition (mocked by Shakespeare in Love’s Labor’s Lost), disdain for feminine charm is a feature of male psychological strength. The satirist’s writings in particular were to be “strong and manly” (8:585, 797), and the distinguishing characteristic of mind that made “manly” satire possible was continual defensiveness. Jonson required both himself and his audience to be perennially armed, not only against women’s charms but also against the seductive power of ignorant views. The prologue to the 1600 Cynthia’s Revels, Jonson’s second blast in the poets’ war, makes the satirist’s standard exclusionary plea for the reasoned approval of the wise few: Jonson’s Muse “shuns the print of every beaten path,”

Nor hunts she after popular applause,
Or foamy praise, that drops from common jaws:
The garland that she wears, their hands must twine,
Who can both censure, understand, define
What merit is.

(Lines 10–20)

Jonson’s satiric approach, which criticized social foolishness from a learned, isolated, embattled, and intrinsically misogynistic perspective, invoked tension and distance between playwright and audience as well as between audience members themselves. His plays are frequently introduced by authorial spokesmen who urge male audience members to judge the plays from a detached, reasoning perspective, and to avoid the seductive, “feminizing” corruption of opinion-sharing. For example, the 1614 Bartholomew Fair’s Scrivener, an authorial spokesman, proposes to his hearers that

every man here, exercise his own judgment, and not censure by contagion, or upon trust, from another’s voice, or face, that sits by him; . . . also, that he be fixed and settled in his censure, that what he approves, or not approves today, he will do the
same tomorrow . . . and not . . . be brought about by any that sits on the bench with him, though they indict, and arraign plays daily.

(Ind., lines 97–104)

Jonson's courtroom metaphor and the appeal to "every man here"—both of which exclude women from the Hope Theatre audience—correspond to his warning against compromised or mutable judgments. For Jonson, allowing one's judgment to be influenced by others is an effeminate weakness that radically threatens one's integrity. To try on another's viewpoint is to affect a humor, an action which, like wearing a false costume, is "feminine . . ., / And far beneath the dignity of a man" (Poetaster [1601], "To the Reader," lines 178–79). Thus Every Man Out of His Humour's inductive spokesman Asper, like Bartholomew Fair's Scrivener, criticizes the "infectious" (line 174) playgoer who

... us[es] his wryed looks
... to wrest, and turn

The good aspect of those that shall sit near him,
From what they do behold.

(Ind., lines 181–84)

Such a playgoer is "monstrous" (line 177) in that his presence fosters an illegitimate, hybridized opinion of the play; those sitting near him are moved to praise or blame not by their own judgment but by his. It was just such mindless opinion-sharing that (to Jonson's mind) ruined the critical reception of The New Inn, some thirty years later. Jonson's folio version of that play included poems ridiculing unthinking playgoers and the "weak, sick, queasy age" that produced them (which suggests that Jonson's famous encomium to Shakespeare, beginning "Soul of the Age!" [8:390ff., line 17], was not as generous a compliment as it seemed). Recoil from the mingled, effeminate response that occurred in the moment of theatrical production underlay Jonson's repeated warnings to audience members to ignore each other's responses: to pretend, in effect, that they weren't a theater audience.

But when we turn from Asper's stern directives in Every Man Out's induction, which demand the playgoers' mutual disregard, to Rosalind's friendly address to the audience in the epilogue to As You Like It, we encounter their radical antithesis. For through the boy playing Rosalind—himself a kind of hybrid sexual "monster" (to recall the Scrivener's word from Bartholomew Fair)—Shakespeare urges the commingled audience response that Jonson abhors: "I charge you, O women, for the love you bear to men, to like as much of this play as please you; and I charge you, O
men, for the love you bear to women . . . that between you and the women the play may please," Rosalind “conjure[s]” the Globe playgoers (lines 12–17, 11). Rejecting the satirist’s isolated, scholastic, rational, masculine model of moral education as inappropriate for the theater, Shakespeare proposes that the fundamentally irrational erotic sensibility that connects audience members should serve as a communal basis of judgment. Rosalind’s promise that As You Like It’s experiential lesson will transcend sexual barriers is framed in procreative terms: pleasure in the play, inspired by sexual love, will be engendered “between you [men] and the women.” Rather than establishing distinct, rationally derived masculine identities, the Shakespearean method will unite audience members as well as actors in nonintellectual and double-gendered erotic consensus (Rosalind himself/herself even offers to kiss the men to achieve it [lines 18–20]).

I suggest that Rosalind, both in her double-gendered Ganymede role and in her invitation to others, here and within the play proper, to embrace erotic relationship as the antidote for human suffering, represents and validates the Shakespearean mythic comic method and specifically rejects the detached, misogynistic, and isolating satiric approach of Every Man Out of His Humour. Rosalind’s victory is achieved on two fronts. First, she vanquishes the satirical Jaques, who in his vain attempts to reform men and manners constitutes Shakespeare’s mocking response to Asper/Macilente, Every Man Out’s cynical hero and authorial spokesman. And second, she repudiates the Ovidian/Petrarchan inclination that has frozen As You Like It’s lovers in postures of frustrated longing and replaces it with dialogic engagement. In Every Man Out, Asper—who becomes “Macilente” in the play proper—shatters the romantic idealism that motivates lovers but puts nothing in its place: thus his satire rejects not only idealistic love-longing but also the possibility of love itself. Rosalind/Ganymede, however, takes the next step, not only associating isolated Ovidian/Petrarchan yearning with the sterile self-love of the satirical reformer, but also banishing both in favor of romantic relationship. As You Like It thus incorporates and then dismisses a complex of values intrinsic to Every Man Out’s satiric mode: frustrated romantic idealism and its corollary, cynical misogyny.

II

Anne Barton’s observation that in As You Like It “a structure of cunningly juxtaposed characters and attitudes . . . becomes a substitute for plot”\(^\text{20}\) applies equally to Every Man Out’s great stage-parade of fools. In Every Man Out’s court and country, characters wander alone, in pairs, or in groups, combining, recombining, and spying on one another; their en-
counters stimulate, expose, and ultimately deflate their swollen humors. Romantic fantasy is a central butt of ridicule, as worshipful longing impels the love-lorn Punarvolo, Deliro, and Fastidious Brisk to extremes of absurd posturing before scornful mistresses.

Every Man Out repudiates these characters’ romantic delusions through the schemes of a witty intriguier, introduced in the induction as Asper. Described in the character list as “eager and constant in reproof, without fear controlling the world’s abuses,” Asper embodies Jonson’s Juvenalian impatience with the world’s “hateful luxuries” (Ind., line 24) and “lusts” (line 36), vowing to “strip the ragged follies of the time, / Naked” (lines 17–18). To this end he calls for a detached, discriminating audience who will respond rationally to his dramatic lesson: “attentive auditors” who have “come to feed their understanding parts” (lines 201, 203). Asper also presents himself as a doctor, calling on the individual audience member to be a “patient” who does not “reject all physic, / ’Cause the physician tells him, you are sick” (lines 189–90).

To achieve his cures Asper enters the play as Macilente, a deserving, “well travail’d” (2.6.74) but unappreciated scholar bent on exposing the vanities of the uneducated. Macilente is, in the courtier Carlo Buffone’s words, a “lean mongrel” who “carries oil and fire in his pen, will scald where it drops” (1.1.212–15); a “lank raw-bon’d anatomy” who “walks up and down like a charg’d musket, no man dares encounter him” (4.4.25–26). Buffone’s mockery of Macilente’s thin frame recapitulates what were apparently insults directed at Jonson (in Satromastix, Dekker calls Jonson a “hungry-faced” and “hollow-cheeked scrag”). By associating these insults with Buffone’s cowardly recoil from Macilente’s “scald[ing]” pen, Jonson turns the tables on his rivals, suggesting that they are buffoons and “invalid” audiences for his satire (“patient[s]” who “reject . . . physic”), effeminate cowards who shrink from manly physical combat. (Significantly, the play’s final line, wherein Asper claims that audience applause may “make lean Macilente as fat as Sir John Fal-Staf” [5.11.86–87], confirms Shakespeare’s inclusion among the rivals addressed.)

Curiously, however, Buffone and the other humors characters cooperate with Macilente’s satiric project, which is the medicinal indictment of romantic illusion through the moral devaluation of women. Though themselves infected with vanity and love-longing, Buffone and Fastidious Brisk jeer at the knight Punarvolo’s courtly idolatry of his “splendidious” wife (2.2.79): Buffone calls it “a tedious chapter of courtship, after Sir Lancelot and Queen Guenever” and wonders “in what dull cold nook he found this lady out? . . . ‘Slud, I think he feeds her with porridge, I: she could ne’er have such a thick brain else” (2.3.67–73). Conversely,
Puntarvolo helps Macilente expose the ignorance of Saviolina, the “self-conceited” gentlewoman Fastidious Brisk blindly worships (4.8.56). Puntarvolo’s scheme, which reveals Saviolina’s inability to recognize a disguised farmer posing as a nobleman, links seductive feminine posturing with other forms of invalid social role-play, and indicts both.22

The curious division in the roles of Brisk, Buffone, and Puntarvolo—victims of romantic delusion who yet function dramatically to dispel such delusion—is mirrored in Macilente’s own ambivalence toward romance. Macilente’s chief design is to expose Fallace, Deliro’s adored but unfaithful wife, as shallow and unworthy, thereby puncturing Deliro’s romantic obsession with her. To Deliro’s claim that Fallace is so “rare,” “true,” and “pure” (2.4.38) that “no man can be worthy of her kindness” (2.4.31), Macilente objects, “Is’t possible, she should deserve so well, / As you pretend?” (2.4.49–50). Later he interrupts Deliro’s rapturous praise of “such a wife as mine” with

Such a wife? Now hate me, sir, if ever I discern’d any wonder in your wife... I have seen some that ha’ been thought fairer then she, in my time; and I have seen those, ha’ not been altogether so tall, esteem’d properer women; and I have seen less noses grow upon sweeter faces... the gentlewoman is a good pretty proud hard-favour’d thing, marry not so peerlessly to be doted upon.

(4.4.45–54)

But Macilente’s plot to expose Fallace is, in fact, motivated by his own frustrated passion for her (“How long shall I live, ere I be so happy / To have a wife of this exceeding form?” he complains in an aside [2.4.135–36]). Macilente’s ultimate reduction of Fallace is thus a self-curious process. Through her public devaluation he dispels not only her husband’s romantic obsession but his own. Having provided Deliro with ocular proof of his wife’s infidelity and witnessed her banishment from the stage (“Out, lascivious strumpet” [5.11.17]), Macilente pronounces himself cured of the envious desire that prompted his satiric surgery. “Why, here’s a change,” he observes,

Now is my soul at peace.
I am as empty of all envy now,
As they of merit to be envied at.
My humour (like a flame) no longer lasts
Than it hath stuff to feed it.

(5.2.54–58)
For Macilente, as for his fellow intriguers, distrust of women is strangely connected to the fantasy of feminine perfection. When Every Man Out of His Humour was played before Elizabeth I, Macilente's epilogue, quoted above, was followed by a speech in which he praised the queen's "perfections" (line 13) and credited her with a sovereign power over his soul:

Never till now did object greet mine eyes
With any light content: but in her graces,
All my malicious powers have lost their stings,
Envy is fled my soul, at sight of her,
And she hath chas'd all black thoughts from my bosom,
Like as the sun doth darkness from the world.

(Lines 1–6)

The idealized vision of Elizabeth is not occasionally inspired but fully anticipated by the play's sardonic recoil from women. The movement indicated by these paired speeches, from satiric disgust to stunned admiration, prefigures the pattern of Jonson's much later poem repudiating the stage, "Ode to Himself," which turns from scornful mockery of playgoing imbeciles to grandiose compliment of an idealized Charles I. Like "Ode to Himself," the two Every Man Out epilogues demonstrate a Jonsonian dualism joining the contrary impulses of scornful withdrawal and awe-struck adoration.23

Romantic longing is thus the contradictory subtext of Macilente's satiric misogyny—and is likely what produces the misogyny. The woman's inevitable failure to live up to the Ovidian/Petrarchan standard implicit in male desire triggers the profound cynicism at the heart of humors satire. Paradoxically—and cyclically—this cynicism gives way to veneration of a remote asexual deity. In worshiping such a figure, the satirist maintains both his solitude and its perfection, avoiding the compromise of erotic interplay. The counterpart to this veneration is the public debunking of romantic relationship (Deliro's "cure" necessarily involves his repudiation of his wife). Like the wise audience member whose solitary judgment is untainted by the "contagion" of another's presence, the masculine satirist's victory is achieved when he finally stands alone, untainted by the desire for connection, especially with women. So far is Asper/Macilente from human relationship at the play's end that he longs for the other characters' annihilation: "It grieves me / To think they have a being . . . / let them vanish, vapors" (5.11.62–65).

Macilente's self-liberating release of Fallace and company has its counterpart in Troilus's mental dismissal of Cressida in Troilus and Cressida, the play Bednarz suggests is a specific Shakespearean rejoinder
to *Every Man Out*. After witnessing Cressida’s incriminating tryst with Diomedes, Troilus tears up her love letter and throws its empty words into the air, declaring, “Go, wind, to wind” (5.3.110). Initially the very type of the Petrarchan idolater, suffering in the “open ulcer” of his heart for a “pearl”-like and “stubborn-chaste” Cressida (1.1.53, 100, 97), Troilus is now a world- and woman-hating soldier: an Archilochan battle-seeker who misperceives wise Cassandra as a “foolish, dreaming, superstitious girl” (5.3.79). Bednarz’s analysis of *Troilus* does not include Troilus’s transformation, focusing instead on the rebuttal, in the Ulysses plot, of *Every Man Out*’s claims for self-determined authorial identity. But the Troilus plot is an essential part of this play’s anti-Jonsonianism: Troilus’s swing from idolatry to misogyny mimics the anti-erotic path taken by Asper/Macilente, restaging Macilente’s journey, not as a progression but as a fruitless shuffle between the walls of a blind alley. Thus Troilus’s characterization challenges equally the Ovidian/Petrarchan ethos of woman-worship and *Every Man Out*’s suggestion that rational virtue is achievable through a profound distrust of feminine charm. Further, while Ulysses’ mockery of boastful Ajax and Achilles in *Troilus* demonstrates “the social determination of [male] value” in defiance of Jonson’s “aggressive self-assertiveness,”24 Cressida’s virtual disappearance into the category of “whore” (TC 5.2.114) once Troilus rejects her argues for a balance between self-definition and social valuation. For while Ulysses’ revelations mock the satirist’s belief in a world where value is entirely self-generated, Cressida’s story dramatizes the pathetic erasure of feminine selfhood in a world where human worth is entirely defined by men who have only two alternatives, Petrarchan idealization and satiric misogyny.

*As You Like It* presents a more hopeful response to Macilente’s satiric ethic. The last act of *Troilus and Cressida* presents a Cressida who, accepting male-authored judgments of her worth, becomes radically inaccessible, speaking fewer and fewer lines until she disappears from the script entirely nine scenes before the play’s close.25 But the female hero of *As You Like It* resists such erasure by conspicuously foiling masculine attempts to define her or her gender. In the process, she undermines both the Ovidian/Petrarchan and satiric claims for the isolated male self, shattering the oppositional paradigm of self and other on which both depend. Asper/Macilente, we recall, defends the self-made man when in the conclusion of the play he reclaims his own psychic stability by imaginatively dismissing both feminine and feminized influences. In *As You Like It*, Shakespeare chooses a mythic warrior to destabilize the limited and lonely vision of self thus constructed: the powerfully connective androgynie, Rosalind/Ganymede.
III
Like *Every Man Out*’s characters, those of *As You Like It*’s Arden wander aimlessly through their fictional world, highlighting each other’s foolishness. However, the results of their interactions differ radically from the Jonsonian outcomes described above. Romantic humors such as Orlando’s “quotidian of love” for Rosalind (3.2.365), Silvius’s inordinate passion for Phebe, and Phebe’s obsession with Rosalind/Ganymede are dispelled, not, as in Jonson, to restore lovers to singleness and sanity, but to allow sexual connection in marriage to occur between appropriate partners. The primary agent by whom *As You Like It* repudiates Jonson’s repudiation of romance is, of course, Rosalind/Ganymede, the androgynous hero who combines all humors and antitheses within her own person and employs them medicinally to “cure” the socially alienated characters around her. As Anne Barton observes, Rosalind is able to resolve others’ conflicts because within herself, “warring opposites are reconciled and live at peace.”26 Rosalind is a doting lover who yet possesses a detached, amused perspective on love; she is also a female fugitive whose male costume enables her to exercise a masculine boldness and authority. Though like Macilente a kind of social physician, Rosalind heals herself and other characters in a manner radically different from his. Unlike the voyeuristic, marginal Macilente, Rosalind works from the center. She is from the start involved in human relationships—first with her cousin Celia, with whom she is “coupled and inseparable” (1.3.76), and increasingly with Orlando, whom she finally marries. Impelled and empowered herself by erotic feeling for Orlando, she initiates Phebe’s and Silvius’s “cures” by (inadvertently) arousing Phebe’s sexual interest. Macilente, in contrast, positions himself in psychological isolation from a vain social world, ultimately disentangling himself from it emotionally as well by ceasing to envy it; additionally, so far from embodying love-longing, he is, as we’ve seen, the instrument by which Jonson ridicules romantic yearning. Rosalind too deflates romantic “delirium,” calling Phebe’s Ovidian/Petrarchan love-verse “railing” (4.3.46) and Orlando’s analogous poeticizing a “tedious homily of love” (3.2.155–56). However, Rosalind differs fundamentally from Macilente in that she enables actual love, involving friendship and erotic fulfillment, to replace poetic illusion.

Thus, while Macilente’s satiric treatment of Deliro’s obsession with Fallace (“Such a wife? Now hate me, sir, if ever I discern’d any wonder in your wife”) has its analogue in Rosalind’s mockery of Silvius’s passion for Phebe, Macilente’s and Rosalind’s goals differ. Macilente’s satiric manner objectifies the adulterous woman, treating her as an aspect of her husband’s humor: Deliro is the patient, Fallace the disease. Macilente’s lance, medicinal lines are accordingly directed to Deliro, their aim
being (in the manner of the later *Epicoene*) to divest him of both unwhole-
some fantasy and unwholesome wife. In contrast, Rosalind’s blunt claim
that she “see[s] no more in [Phebe] than in the ordinary / Of nature’s
sale-work” (3.5.42–43) is directed at “proud and pitiless” Phebe herself
(line 40) and is intended, by puncturing the shepherdess’s inordinate self-
regard, to prepare her for a relationship with the doting Silvius.

But, mistress, know yourself, down on your knees,
And thank heaven, fasting, for a good man’s love,
For I must tell you friendly in your ear,
Sell when you can, you are not for all markets.
Cry the man mercy, love him, take his offer;
Foul is most foul, being foul to be a scoffer.

(3.5.57–61)

*As You Like It*, by replacing inauthentic human bonds with legitimate
ones, also replaces the anti-romantic action of *Every Man Out*, which only
destroy false connections between sham lovers.

Like Jonson’s *Asper*, who becomes Macilente, Shakespeare’s Rosalind
assumes an alternative persona to achieve a social cure. But Shakespeare’s
cure is Jonson’s disease. *Every Man Out*’s dialogue presents eros as an
unhealthy contaminant, to the point where Sogliardo, a “new-created
gallant” (like the newly gentrified Shakespeare in 1601) is derided for his
“villainous Ganymede,” his attractive male companion (4.3.81, 83). *As
You Like It* turns the tables on both Jonson’s language and his diagnosis
of social ills by making Ganymede the disguise that cures all the lovers in
the play, including Rosalind herself. In *As You Like It*, Ganymede is the
curative androgynous principle: the paradoxical double-gendered male
costume permits the heterogenous erotic community which its wearer
creates, and to which he/she appeals in the play’s epilogue. Rosalind’s dis-
guise enables her to orient herself as well as Phebe toward nonillusory sex-
ual relationship, for it allows her to befriend and talk with Orlando and
thus to explode the static image of the remote and beautiful female autho-
rized by both Ovidian and Petrarchan convention (3.2, 4.1).27 Such a figure
emerges in Orlando’s logorrheic versifying, as he “carve[s] on every tree / 
The fair, the chaste, and unexpressive she” (3.2.9–10), and for only a mo-
ment Rosalind falls into that role (“Cupid have mercy, not a word?” Celia
tees her when she first falls in love [lines 1–2]). But through her androg-
ynous persona, both within the play and in the epilogue, Rosalind indi-
cates the symbiotic joining of male and female opposites—marriage—as
the mechanism that can end self-obsessed longing and resolve psychic
conflict. *As You Like It* is less concerned with the reformation of men and
manners than with the transformation of both male and female psyches,
so that all are drawn from isolated solipsism into relationship.

This action necessarily involves the comic deflation of the two misogynistic modes of male thought characterized in Every Man Out: Ovidian/Petrarchism and satiric posturing. As You Like It links and then repudiates both modes, first by exposing the dehumanizing stereotypes of conventional romantic discourse, and next by replacing that discourse with the action and symbols of erotic engagement—the Rosalind/Ganymede–Orlando dialogue and, ultimately, the four on-stage marriages—in defiance of the satirical standoffishness of the play’s own “melancholy Jaques” (AYLI 2.1.41). It is, in fact, through the presentation of Jaques, and Rosalind’s repudiation of what might be called his “Petrarchan satiric mode,” that Shakespeare completes his response to Every Man Out’s isolationism.

Both James Bednarz and O. J. Campbell have noted a relationship between Jaques’s railing melancholy and the dominant disposition expressed by “the English satirists whose works streamed from the press during the years from 1592 to 1599.” Bednarz even notes the repetition of Jaques’s name in that of Ajax—“a jakes”—the Jonson analogue in Troilus and Cressida. As were the Elizabethan satirists Hall, Marston, Chapman, Guipin, and Jonson, Jaques is “melancholy’s own,” voicing “profound dissatisfaction with life in bitter diatribes.” He is a Jonsonian character tellingly out of place in Arden. Like Macilente, who enters Every Man Out railing against social injustices—the unworthy man “thought wise and learn’d,” the man who is “rich, / And therefore honour’d” (1.21, 22)—Jaques first appears on stage deriding the evils of the “infected world” (AYLI 2.7.60). And like Asper, Macilente’s initial persona, Jaques appeals to an audience of wise men capable of recognizing and reforming their own faults. Asper vows to show “Good men, and virtuous spirits, that loathe their vices” the “time’s deformity / Anatomiz’d in every nerve, and sinew” (EMO Ind., lines 134, 120–21); Jaques similarly claims that “The wise man’s folly is anatomiz’d / Even by the squandering glances of the fool” (AYLI 1.7.56–57). Jaques justifies his attacks with a standard Jonsonian expedient, asserting their lack of specificity: “What woman in the city do I name, / When that I say the city-woman bears / The cost of princes on unworthy shoulders?” (2.7.74–76). Jonson, staging himself as “The Author,” speaks similar lines in his epilogue to the 1601 Poetaster, where he claims to have “used no name” and that he “spare[s] the persons, and . . . speak[s] the vices” (lines 84–85). This defense is authoritative within Jonson’s own dramatic context; however, in chaotic Arden, Jaques’s confrontational posturing seems absurdly free-floating, unconnected to other characters’ experience or discourse. Jaques preaches not to a wise, engaged audience but to a band of festive lords
more concerned with merriment than moral improvement. In other words, Jaques talks to Jaques. He functions as both questioner and respondent in his solitary satiric diatribe:

... they that are most galled with my folly,
They most must laugh. And why, sir, must they so?
The way is plain as way to parish church.  
(Lines 50–52)

Or what is he of basest function,
That says his bravery is not on my cost,
Thinking that I mean him, but therein suits
His folly to the mettle of my speech?
There then! how then? what then? Let me see wherein
My tongue hath wrong'd him.  
(Lines 79–84)

Jaques’s verbal floundering in the penultimate line of this passage suggests a pedantic speaker vainly searching for another interested discussant. Jaques evades the dialogue in which other Arden characters engage: of the Duke he says, “I have been all this day to avoid him. He is too disputable for my company” (2.5.34–35); and when Rosalind tries to talk to him, he leaves (4.1).

Jaques continues his one-man dialogue throughout the play, to no effect. His melancholy set pieces fall like stones to earth, ignored by those around him: his famous twenty-seven-line exposition of the seven ages of man concludes, not with applause or assent, but with an interruption, as Orlando and old Adam enter and are welcomed by Duke Senior (2.7.139ff.). When Jaques does appear on stage with other characters, his isolation and ineffectuality in their world are even more evident—for example, when he eavesdrops and jeers as Touchstone successfully woos Audrey (3.3). While Macilente’s cynical voyeurism in Every Man Out is instrumental to revelations that resolve his and the play’s plot, Jaques’s spying, like his satirical pronouncements, has no effect on the marital action of As You Like It. Touchstone will wed Audrey with or without Jaques’s “counsel” (3.3.95), and Orlando will not be talked out of his “mad humor of love” (3.2.418), despite Jaques’s mockery of his obsession (3.2.253–92).

Jaques’s mockery is at times completely baffling to both the characters and the Globe audience. For example, his chant

Ducdame, ducdame, ducdame!
Here shall he see
Gross fools as he
And if he will come to me
provokes Amiens’s puzzled question, “What’s that ‘ducdame’?” (2.6.54–58). Jaques’s response, “‘Tis a Greek invocation, to call fools into a circle” (lines 59–60), seems meta-theatrically to suggest Asper’s self-imposed satirical duty in Every Man Out, a play that was performed by the Lord Chamberlain’s Men at the Globe to a “circle” of playgoer-fools (it was not until after the production of Every Man in His Humour that Jonson defected to the indoor theater across the Thames, Blackfriars).31 Arthur Gray has suggested that the mysterious “Ducdame” was Shakespeare’s way of parodying Jonson’s continual “Damme,” and even (somewhat cruelly) Jonson’s alleged stutter.32 Whatever the word’s true meaning (if it has one), its irreducible mystery within the scene reinforces the play’s suggestion of Jaques’s inability to communicate his satirical ethos, as he vainly tries to persuade the altar-bound lovers that they are fools.

As You Like It’s third act confirms the crucial link between this satirical perspective on love and the obsessive, idealistic Ovidian longing that impels Orlando, Silvius, and Phebe. Rosalind’s rejection of Phebe’s Petrarchan verses puzzles the love-struck Silvius:

\[
\text{Rosalind (Read.)} \quad \text{“Art thou god to shepherd turn’d,} \\
\text{That a maiden’s heart hath burn’d?”} \\
\text{Can a woman rail thus?}
\]

\[
\text{Silvius:} \quad \text{Call you this railing?}
\]

\[
\text{Rosalind (Read.)} \quad \text{“Why, thy godhead laid apart,} \\
\text{Warr’st thou with a woman’s heart?”} \\
\text{Did you ever hear such railing?}
\]

\[
\text{Silvius:} \quad \text{Call you this chiding?}
\]

(4.3.40–64)

But the association of Phebe’s worshipful poetry with “railing”—a standard Elizabethan description of satiric language—is an inevitable one, as we have seen. Both are discursive modes that objectify their subjects and disengage their authors from conversation. As You Like It’s Jaques and Every Man Out’s Macilente regard, from their respective margins, a world of fops and fools that they have no wish to join (Macilente is in fact “cured” when he sees other characters as “vapors,” or unreal things, and “begin[s] to pity ’em” [EMO 5.11.65, 62]). Rosalind’s jeering at Phebe’s verses points to the fact that ridiculous idealization of the beloved similarly marginalizes the lover: Ovidian/Petrarchan discourse, by presenting a static image of the beloved as a cruel and remote deity, traps the speaker in a condition of separateness and discontent, an isolated melancholic stance mirroring that of the satirical reformer.33
The link between love-longing and satirical melancholy is most evident in the thematic association the play forges between Orlando and Jaques. Orlando's love verse to Rosalind (more accurately, about Rosalind) sounds strikingly like Jaques's rehearsal of the "seven ages" of man that end in "mere oblivion" (2.7.143, 165):

Tongues I'll hang on every tree,  
    That shall civil sayings show:  
Some, how brief the life of man  
    Runs his erring pilgrimage,  
That the stretching of a span  
    Buckles in his sum of age;  
Some, of violated vows  
    'Twixt the soul of friend and friend;  
But upon the fairest boughs  
    Or at every sentence end,  
Will I "Rosalinda" write.  

(3.2.127–37)

Orlando's scornful litany followed by his sudden reversion to the idealized name of "Rosalinda" rehearses Every Man Out's final swing from satiric disgust to reverential worship of an idealized image. Thus Orlando's love poetry itself prepares us to view him and Jaques as analogues when they meet later in this scene. Despite their mutual dislike, "Signior Love" and "Monsieur Melancholy" emerge as opposite sides of the same coin (3.2.292, 294). The pair's mutual indictment does little more than reinforce their likeness, as does their reduction of each other to two-dimensional humors characters.

Jaq. . . . Will you sit down with me? And we two will rail against our mistress the world, and all our misery.  
Orl. I will chide no breather in the world but myself, against whom I know most faults.  
Jaq. The worst fault you have is to be in love.  
Orl. 'Tis a fault I will not change for your best virtue. I am weary of you.  
Jaq. By my troth, I was seeking for a fool when I found you.  
Orl. He is drown'd in the brook; look but in, and you shall see him.  
Jaq. There I shall see mine own figure.  
Orl. Which I take to be either a fool or a cipher.  
Jaq. I'll tarry no longer with you. Farewell, good Signior Love.  
Orl. I am glad of your departure. Adieu, good Monsieur Melancholy.  

(3.2.277–294)
Orlando’s weariness with Jaques’s sermonizing recapitulates Rosalind’s impatience, expressed earlier in this scene (lines 155–56), with Orlando’s own “tedious homily of love” that “wearie[s its] parishioners.” Further, Jaques’s word “rail” and Orlando’s “chide” prefigure Rosalind’s and Silvius’s conversation in the following act, where they describe Phebe’s love poetry in these terms. Like Rosalind’s and Silvius’s dialogue, Jaques’s and Orlando’s links the melancholic modes of love-longing and satiric enmity. Jaques describes the despised world as a “mistress,” invoking the likeness between his melancholy and the misery of the distressed Petrarchan lover. The characters’ position by the reflective brook further suggests their mirroring, and Orlando’s insulting advice to Jaques recalls Narcissus, the archetypal paradigm of self-obsessed longing (Jaques, we recall, was first introduced as a man alone with his reflection, standing “On th’ extremest verge of the swift brook, / augmenting it with tears” [2.1.42–43]).

Through Orlando and Jaques, Shakespeare re-presents Every Man Out’s Deliro and Macilente, personifications of the socially detached modes of love-longing and satiric melancholy. But Shakespeare places his characters in a context that mocks Macilente’s (and, by extension, Jonson’s) satire, repudiating its medicinal benefits. In Every Man Out, the humors formula works: Macilente cures Deliro’s obsession and his own by disclosing Fallace’s deceptiveness. But in As You Like It, “Macilente” and “Deliro” collide ineffectually, and separate, unaltered, in a condition of mutual antipathy.

What Jaques the satirist can’t do, however, Rosalind the androgyne can. On the heels of Jaques’s exit from this scene, Rosalind accosts Orlando. Their ensuing dialogue initiates her “remedy” for the “quotidian of love” that shakes them both (lines 368, 365). Rosalind’s cure is not the fickle response of the cruel Petrarchan mistress, which she threatens to enact in order to “wash [Orlando’s] liver . . . clean” of any “spot of love” (lines 422, 424). Rather than “now like him, now loathe him; then entertain him, then forswear him,” Rosalind instead persistently engages Orlando in a witty dialogue that cynically recapitulates the tropes of Ovidian/Petrarchan convention in order to highlight their fictionality. Rosalind/Ganymede’s words here and her subsequent impersonation of Orlando’s “‘fair . . . Rosalind’” (3.2.95) consistently present the “cruel mistress” in histrionic terms, as something “imagine[d]” and “apish” (i.e., performed; 3.2.408, 412). Thus the mistress’s image is displaced by an active agent capable of involving Orlando himself in the dramatic process. Unlike Every Man Out’s Macilente, who presents a sermon to deflate Deliro’s romantic obsession (EMO 2.4), Rosalind uses baffling dialogic give-and-take to dissolve the barrier between lover and beloved en-
forced by the Ovidian/Petrarchan model. She discharges the androgynous principle she represents, so that the lovers' mutual transition from self-enclosure to relationship can begin. Macilente's satiric scheme is completed by Deliro's repudiation of his marriage ("Out, vile strumpet"); Rosalind's "cure," in contrast, ends with her wedding, which dramatically registers the unity she and Orlando have achieved.

A passage in Rosalind's and Orlando's initial dialogue also confirms As You Like It's association between the invalid discourses and postures of satirical and amorous melancholy. Rosalind/Ganymede tells Orlando how, posing as a woman, she once drove a former "suitor" from "his mad humor of love to a living humor of madness, which was, to forswear the full stream of the world, and to live in a nook merely monastic" (3.2.418-21). The lines recall Jaques's repudiation of the merging of self and stream in 2.1, where he absurdly reproves a deer sobbing into a stream for "giving thy sum of more / To that which had too much" (lines 48-49). The lines also predict Jaques's ultimate removal to a "nook merely monastic" at the play's end. There, he vows, he will join the "convertite" Duke Frederick, who—according to Rosalind's weirdly inverted chronology—is the "old religious uncle" who

was in his youth an inland man, one that knew courtship too well, for there he fell in love. I have heard him read many lectures against it, and I thank God I am not a woman, to be touch'd with so many giddy offenses as he hath generally tax'd their whole sex withal.

(3.2.344-50)

Courtly lovers and melancholic woman-haters are both "inland men," moored in recalcitrant misogyny, unable or unwilling genuinely to interact with the female objects their discourses frame. Their final condition is figured in Jaques's stubborn position at As You Like It's end as, retreating from the wedding celebration, he sits alone in an abandoned (but dry) cave (5.4.196).

The verbal and stage tropes in these scenes enact an interpretive battle between Jaques and Rosalind over the valences of land and water images. For Jaques, groundedness is safety, and watery dissolution is perilous surrender to a corrupt and feminized world. For Rosalind, to be safe is to be landlocked and alone, whereas to risk watery self-abandon is to gain a larger and more powerful relational identity. Rosalind's willingness to assume, and her ability to promote, such risk is figured in her own cross-dressed body. To Rosalind's voluntary immersion in the "full stream of life" we may apply Gayle Whittier's words regarding the ancient symbolic configuration of water and androgyny (one example of which is the
Greek tale of Hermaphroditus, erotically joined to Salmacis in a magic pool:34

The androgyne’s body seems still in motion, challenging the perceived world of settled objects, replacing stability with progressive activity. . . . That is why many representations of sublime androgyny place the androgyne near a pool or stream of water, fluid, elementally essential, and shapeless.35

In As You Like It, the presence of the androgyne alters the symbolic valence of water. In the presence of Jaques and Orlando the brook signified their narcissism (3.2); in Rosalind’s presence it comes to represent flowing conjugality. Rosalind’s enigmatic story about her landlocked uncle, her transvestism, and her physical proximity to the stream combine in a subliminal invitation to Orlando—who has also claimed to be “inland bred” (2.7.96)—to leave his solitary life. Orlando accepts, choosing to acquiesce in the compulsion of authentic eros and to abandon fatuous amor—or perhaps the compulsion of eros overrides his power to choose. For Orlando is saved, not through his reasoned absorption of a “tedious homily,” but through his willingness to be absorbed by a mythic paradox: to forsake his self-constructed “Rosalinda” and engage with the real girl. Thus Rosalind wins her interpretive battle with Jaques—and with Jonson—through erotic subliminal suggestion. Both Macilente and Jaques, who have come to represent an alternative choice, reasoned but ultimately sterile and anti-relational, end high and dry. Rosalind returns Orlando (and herself) to “the full stream of the world.”

Thus As You Like It confronts the repentant, de-monsterized Macilente, cured both of his satiric frenzy and his emotional bondage to society in Every Man Out’s final scene, with the unrepentant, healthy “monstrousness” of the androgynous Rosalind, whose cross-dressed body symbolizes heterosexual marriage. At Every Man Out’s close Macilente acknowledges that he “was Asper at the first” (5.11.76); Rosalind similarly invokes the audience’s sense of her doubling by beginning her final speech as “the lady the epilogue” (Epil., line 1) and ending it as a boy actor (“If I were a woman . . .” [line 18]). But Macilente’s doubling—his twin romantic and satiric passions—have both been removed by means of his satiric cure; thus his final lines cement him in his present single identity, disclosing that he will not resume the role of Asper, furious poet. In visual as well as thematic contrast to the solitary, black-garbed, obviously male Macilente, the white-wedding-gowned boy-girl Rosalind who delivers As You Like It’s epilogue asserts both the power and the possibility of reconciliation between genders and other warring opposites through the agency not of scorn but of love. Her lines present not a ra-
tional “masculine” argument but an irrational “feminine” conjuration (“My way is to conjure you, and I’ll begin with the women” [Epil., lines 11–12]). Neither Asper nor Macilente, concerned to get “every man out of his humor,” begins or ends with the women. For Jonson, audiences who count are male, and among them opinion-borrowing, like mind-changing, is capitulation to emotion, which is moral illness. To submit to such seductive conjuration is (to recall Poetaster’s epilogue) “feminine . . . , / And far beneath the dignity of a man.” We recall the erotic suggestion of Rosalind’s familiar paired charges from the epilogue and their contrast with Jonson’s appeal to individual judgments from the male Hope Theatre audience. In short, Rosalind’s epilogue prescribes the emotional audience consensus that Jonson’s dramatic spokespersons explicitly rejected.

The epilogic boy Rosalind in drag repudiates the moralistic satire of a specific passage in Every Man Out’s second act. There, the courtier Fastidious Brisk defends his ornate, effeminate attire with this comment: “your good face is the witch, and your apparel the spells, that bring all the pleasures of the world into their circle” (3.2.6.37–39). Brisk, of course, is the butt of Jonson’s mockery here. Jonson fashioned Brisk’s remark—just as Jaques fashions “Ducdame!”—to strike at the vanity of a circle of fools: specifically, the Globe’s feminized clothing-obsessed audience, some of whom, seated on stage, might have resembled Brisk.36 But Rosalind’s final conjuration, reminiscent of Brisk’s lines as well as Jaques’s earlier “Greek spell to call fools into a circle,” inverts the negative suggestion of both. Recuperating the age-old symbolism of the mythic hermaphrodite, Rosalind/Ganymede’s charm displaces Jonson/Jaques’s curse, investing both her boy actor’s feminine apparel and the Globe’s circle of heterogenous playgoers—and actors—with creative relational power, or eros.

That Jonson was not amused—or perhaps that he was—is evident in the 1601 Poetaster, his next and most violent salvo in the poetomachia, delivered from the hostile ground of Blackfriars. Poetaster was introduced by an “armed prologue” (later mocked by Shakespeare in his prologue to Troilus and Cressida)37 who faced down the “dangerous age . . . / Forty-fold proof against the conjuring means / Of base detractors, and illiterate apes” (lines 6, 8–9). The reference to “conjuring means” recalls Rosalind’s final address to the Globe patrons, tempting us to read the subsequent line as an insult to Shakespeare: the socially climbing Sogliardo, the “base detractor” and “illiterate ape” who had recently mocked Jonson by an illegitimate theatrical method, appealing to an effeminate “trans-sexual” audience consensus rather than to reasoned manly discretion. In any case, the distance between As You Like It’s androgynous Rosalind and
Poetaster’s prologue militant, like that between Rosalind and Every Man Out’s Macilente, is the distance between a mythic location of identity in double-gendered erotic relationship and a satiric construction of identity as concrete, isolated, embattled, and resolutely male.

Through the androgynous Rosalind, Shakespeare thus both confronts Jonson the vir iratus and inverts a militant and masculine satiric tradition. Shakespeare’s action in the theater wars linked Jonson’s satiric stance with the very Ovidian/Petrarchan dazzlement Jonson’s Every Man Out mocked, suggesting that satiric spleen, like the stylized mournfulness of conventional love discourse, was sterile, self-reflexive, and socially useless.

In dramatizing the cultural bankruptcy of both Ovidian/Petrarchan idolatry and satire at the turn of the seventeenth century, Shakespeare involved himself in social currents that extended beyond the theater world. It is likely that at this moment in the reign of a visibly aging queen, the once potent image of a celestial virgin beauty had lost much of its political and theatrical power. As You Like It discloses the intrinsic instability of the symbol that had legitimized Elizabeth I’s rule for four decades. And in combining its general attack on this symbol with a specific jab at Jonson’s satiric method, As You Like It may have enacted a still larger historical inevitability. D. A. Beecher has recently surmised that erotic melancholy was destined to lose its credibility as a motivational force in theatrical love plots at the same general moment in medical history that the system of humoral medicine upon which it was based itself came under professional attack. But it is more probable that the entire sequence of pathological causation lost its viability through literary over-exposure and metamorphosis, through the creation of increasingly urbane, witty and sceptical heroines, and through the discovery of a possible reinterpretation of the entire paradigm.38

Shakespeare, however, in staging Rosalind and his other mythic androgynes, was not discovering a new paradigm but recovering and reinterpreting an old one. The stage revival of mythic androgyny necessarily involved the rebuttal of the equally ancient tradition of learned misogyny that underlay the humors comedy still popular in 1599. Rejecting Jaques, As You Like It also rejects as “tedious homily” (3.2.155) both the sterile litanies of love and the “physic of the mind” that Every Man Out’s Asper promises (Ind., line 132). In their place, As You Like It offers a closing “wedlock-hymn” in order “That reason wonder may diminish” (5.4.137, 139). This last line’s amphibology is consistent with the play’s central argument. On one level, the last line refers to the characters’ impending comic anagnorisis, as disguises are dropped and questions answered. On
another level, consistent with Rosalind's reference to "conjur[ing]" in the play's epilogue, it suggests the diminishment of reason, tool of the satiric reformer, by the introduction of wonder, aroused by the contemplation of eros in action. As You Like It's final lines may not have pleased Jonson; they did, however, conform to the poetic standards of Jonson's other adversary Thomas Dekker, who urged the "perfect poet" to inspire his audience "T'Applaud, what their charm'd soul scarce understands."39

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NOTES

1. All references to Ben Jonson's work are to the text in Ben Jonson, ed. C. H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson, 11 vols. (Oxford, 1925–52). Poems are cited by volume, page, and line numbers, prose by volume and page; and plays by act, scene, and line numbers. I have modernized Jonson's spelling. The epigraph from Discoveries is on 8:584.

2. Hic-Mulier, or the Man Woman: Being a Medicine to cure the Coltish Disease of the Staggers in the Masculine-Feminine of our Times. Also Haec-Vir, or The Womanish Man: Being an Answer to a late Book entitled Hic-Mulier (1620; facsimile reprint, Yorkshire, 1973). I have modernized the spelling.


8. Rowe, *Distinguishing Jonson*, 175.
10. Ibid.
11. Leishman states that *As You Like It* "must have been acted before 4 August 1600, that is to say, almost a year before *Poetaster*, when, together with three other of 'my lord Chamberlens mens plaiers,' it was entered in the Stationers' Register 'to be staid.'" (*Three Parnassus Plays*, 70).
12. In the introductory volume of their edition of Jonson's work, Herford and Simpson suggest that "possibly enough Jonson may be glanced at" in *As You Like It*, but conclude that the play "was clearly no 'purge'" (1:28). Arthur Gray, however, in a 1928 pamphlet, argues, as I do here, that *As You Like It* was a none-too-veiled response to Jonson's new humor method. Although apart from this shared thesis Gray's arguments and mine do not overlap, additional insights were made available to me through his close reading of Shakespeare's play. See Gray, *How Shakespeare "Purged" Jonson: A Problem Solved* (Cambridge, 1928).
13. J. A. K. Thompson's *Shakespeare and the Classics* (London, 1952) catalogues many of Shakespeare's Ovidian references. A new book on this subject is Jonathan Bate's *Shakespeare and Ovid* (New York, 1993). As Jeanne Addison Roberts notes, "It is a truth universally acknowledged that Shakespeare was well versed in Ovid and that Ovidian literature shaped and permeated his writing" (*The Shakespearean Wild: Geography, Genus, Gender* [Lincoln, Neb., 1991], 58).
15. All quotations from Shakespeare are cited from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans (Boston, 1974).
18. Ian Maclean's *The Renaissance Notion of Woman* (Cambridge and New York, 1980) discusses the link between misogyny and scholasticism; Peter Holbrook treated the connection in "Lyly, Shakespeare, and the Poetics of Gender" (paper presented at the Shakespeare Association meeting, 1992, Kansas City, Mo.).
19. Stephen Orgel has observed: "The English stage was a male preserve, but the theater was not. The theater was a place of unusual freedom for women in the period; foreign visitors comment on the fact that English women go to the
theater unescorted and unmasked, and a large proportion of the audience consisted of women" ("Nobody's Perfect, Or Why Did the English Stage Take Boys for Women?" South Atlantic Quarterly 88 [1989]: 8).

20. See Anne Barton, introduction to As You Like It in The Riverside Shakespeare, 365.

21. Thomas Dekker, Satiromastix, or the Untrussing of the Humorous Poet, in Jonson's "Poetaster" and Dekker's "Satiromastix," ed. Josiah H. Penniman (Boston, 1913), 1.2.289ff. These insults, obviously, were levied before Jonson achieved his famous girth.

22. This episode reinforces an earlier one that associates the same country bumpkin, Sogliardo, with Shakespeare, whose purchase of a coat of arms had occurred five years before (see Peter Levi, The Life and Times of William Shakespeare [New York, 1988], 149). Encountering Buffone and Puntarvolo, Sogliardo describes his newly purchased coat of arms, whose "variety of colours" (3.4.57) associates it with the fool's motley. Puntarvolo immediately suggests the motto "Not without mustard" (line 86), a mocking reference to Shakespeare's motto "Non sans droict" ("Not without right"). Bednarz, too, notes this Jonsonian joke ("Shakespeare's Purge," 179). Touchstone's fanciful tale of the "knight, that swore by his honor they were good pancakes, and swore by his honor the mustard was naught," but who actually "never had any honor" (As You Like It 1.2.62–63, 78), may have been Shakespeare's self-mocking rejoinder to Jonson's slight.

23. Alice Lotvin Birney comments on "the old golden ideal every satirist has within him or the utopian vision which he at some time conceives" (Satiric Catharsis in Shakespeare: A Theory of Dramatic Structure [Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1973], 124). For Jonson, this vision became the static image of what was in his terms the perfect female, perhaps a disillusioned response to the flesh-and-blood ones he knew. This "golden ideal" is indeed "conceived within" the satirist, to use Birney's words: a male-generated phantom, it, like satire, is born of the frustrating conflict between the fantastic and the real.


26. Barton, introduction to As You Like It, 366.

27. Barbara Bono provides an excellent discussion of Rosalind's repudiation of Petrarchism, "Mixed Gender, Mixed Genre in Shakespeare's As You Like It," in Barbara K. Lewalski, ed., Renaissance Genres (Cambridge, Mass., 1986), 189–212. Peter Erickson also demonstrates how Rosalind deflates and escapes Orlando's Petrarchism, although Erickson contends that Rosalind ultimately succumbs to
other social stereotypes (see Erickson’s Patriarchal Structures in Shakespeare’s Drama [Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1985], 22).

28. The sentence is O. J. Campbell’s, from Shakespeare’s Satire (New York and London, 1943), 53; also see Bednarz, “Shakespeare’s Purge,” 189.


30. Campbell, Shakespeare’s Satire, 46.


33. Twelfth Night, probably produced, like As You Like It, in 1600, continued Shakespeare’s and Jonson’s dramatic debate regarding the relative social values of romance and satire, as Henk Gras and Nancy Leonard have both pointed out (see Gras, “Twelfth Night, Every Man Out of His Humour, and the Middle Temple Revels”; and Leonard, “Shakespeare and Jonson Again: The Comic Forms” Renaissance Drama 10 [1979]: 45–69). Twelfth Night continues the association between satiric and romantic melancholy that As You Like It initiates. In the first scene of Twelfth Night, Orsino’s call for a surfeit of music, the “food of love” (1.1.1), to feed his romantic obsession recalls Jaques’s request for “More, more” music to “make [him] melancholy” in As You Like It (2.5.9–10). The solitary would-be lover and the melancholy satirist both “feed” their humors in a sensual, self-indulgent fashion: “I can suck melancholy out of a song, as a weasel sucks eggs,” Jaques exults (2.5.12).

34. The story is retold by Ovid in Metamorphoses.


\[
\begin{align*}
&\ldots \text{you would have me} \\
&\text{(Like to a puddle, or a standing pool)} \\
&\text{To have no motion, nor no spirit within me.} \\
&\text{No, I am like a pure, and sprightly river,} \\
&\text{That moves forever, and yet still the same.}
\end{align*}
\]

(2.4.110–14)

Through Fallace’s lines, Every Man Out ironically records Shakespeare’s more sympathetic view of the changeable female, just as Jaques’s moralizing incorporates Jonson’s alien satiric viewpoint into As You Like It’s romantic context. In Jonson’s play, however, it is Macilente’s misogynistic viewpoint that finally triumphs, as Fallace is banished.

37. The lines in question, which cast subtle aspersions on Jonson’s overconfidence, are as follows:

... and hither am I come,
A prologue arm’d, but not in confidence
Of author’s pen or actor’s voice, but suited
In like conditions as our argument.

(Troilus and Cressida, prol., lines 22–25)
