University of Nebraska - Lincoln
DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Dissertations & Theses, Department of English | English, Department of

5-1-2013

"IN COUNTERFEIT PASSION": CROSS-DRESSING, TRANSGRESSION, AND FRAUD IN SHAKESPEARE AND MIDDLETON

Anastasia S. Bierman
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, anastasia.bierman@huskers.unl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/englishdiss

Part of the Literature in English, British Isles Commons, and the Women's Studies Commons

Bierman, Anastasia S., "“IN COUNTERFEIT PASSION”: CROSS-DRESSING, TRANSGRESSION, AND FRAUD IN SHAKESPEARE AND MIDDLETON" (2013). *Dissertations & Theses, Department of English.* Paper 73.
http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/englishdiss/73

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the English, Department of at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations & Theses, Department of English by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

“IN COUNTERFEIT PASSION”: CROSS-DRESSING, TRANSGRESSION, AND FRAUD IN SHAKESPEARE AND MIDDLETON”

by

Anastasia Bierman

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of

The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts

Major: English

Under the Supervision of Professor Julia Schleck

Lincoln, Nebraska

May, 2013

“IN COUNTERFEIT PASSION”: CROSS-DRESSING, TRANSGRESSION, AND FRAUD IN SHAKESPEARE AND MIDDLETON

Anastasia S. Bierman, M.A.

University of Nebraska, 2013

Adviser: Julia Schleck

This thesis examines the way women cross-dressing as men functions as a crime in Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker’s *The Roaring Girl* and William Shakespeare’s *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*. While many modern scholars have discussed cross-dressing in these plays, many look to the end of the plays as the foundation for their analysis rather than the play as a whole. Because of this oversight, scholars deem the characters in the plays not transgressive, when, in fact, cross-dressing is transgressive. They ignore the way cross-dressing is often presented in writing in the Renaissance, i.e. as a type of crime, alongside thieves, adulterers, and vagabonds amongst others. If cross-dressing is synonymous with these other crimes, it is then a transgression, no matter if a person were to suddenly stop cross-dressing. While all cross-dressing is transgressive, not all cross-dressing is fraudulent, as in the case of Moll Cutpurse in *The Roaring Girl*. Since she does not hide her cross-dressing, she is not a fraud. Shakespeare writes Rosalind and Viola to both transgress their prescribed gender roles and deceive other characters within the respective plays. Therefore, while Shakespeare overlooks it by ignoring the early modern English concerns about cross-dressing, using it as a comedic device, Middleton and Dekker directly pry apart transgression from fraud. In doing so, Middleton and Dekker’s Moll ultimately has more agency for she is able to become a

self-actualized character who can maintain the hold and position her cross-dressing gives her even at the end of the play in women's clothing.

© 2013, Anastasia S. Bierman

I would like to thank my committee members Professors Stephen Buhler, Julia Schleck, and Kelly Stage who have not only guided me through this project and education at UNL, but also often humored me in my ceaseless curiosity. I especially thank Professor Schleck, for her always thought-provoking feedback, sage advice, and continuous encouragement and mentoring, without whom I would be lost and unchallenged. Her passion as both a teacher and a scholar inspire me to model after her laudable example.

Table of Contents

Introduction…….……..1

II: Fraud on the Streets: Pamphlet Literature on Crime…….……..…5

III: "Where Vice Does So Excel": Crime in *The Roaring Girl*, *Twelfth Night*, and *As You Like It*….....11

IV: Intent to Deceive: Cross-dressing in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*……....21

V: "Two Shadows to One Shape": the Freedom of Moll in *The Roaring Girl*…….….34

Bibliography……...…….……...47

In the midst of early modern England's boom of plays, pamphlets, tracts, and broadsides, cross-dressed men and women emerged amongst cautionary tales, comedies, declamations, and ballads.[1] First physical beings on the street and then immortalized into printed culture, cross-dressed individuals represented a tear in the tight social fabric.[2] In a letter written by John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, two members of the court close to James I in 1620, Chamberlain discusses the king's alleged command to the church ministers to include in their sermons a denouncement of cross-dressed women in order to argue against the "insolence [of] our women, and theyr wearing of hats, pointed doublets, theyr hayre cut short or shorne, and some of them stilettos or poniards, and such other trinkets of like moment."[3] In this, Chamberlain clearly articulates the power of the crown and the church along with the issue of cross-dressing to explain the extent to which these women go in order to complete their perceivable gender change.

Clothing is another way of expressing oneself, and as Rachel Warburton notes, "Bodies are not considered bodies if they are not gendered/sexed, and clothing provides one apparatus for the social sexing of bodies."[4] Though the clothing marks the body, the

---

[1]Anxiety over cross-dressing is evident in such works as Philip Stubbes's *Anatomie of Abuses* from 1583, *Hic Mulier* and *Haec-Vir* written in 1620, and King James's denouncement of cross-dressing in 1620 as well as the dramatic works. For a discussion of cross-dressing in general during the Early Modern period, see *The Tradition of Female Transvestism in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Rudolf M. Dekker and Lotte C. van de Pol (London: Macmillan Press, 1989).

[2] The anonymous pamphleteer of the 1620 *Hic Mulier: or the Man-Woman: Being a Medicine to cure the Coltish Disease of the Staggers in the Masculine-Feminines of our Times. Exprest in a Briefe Declamation* directly addresses women who dress as men within the pamphlet. "Hic" means masculine and "mulier" means woman, purposely switched in order to address this specific issue. Another anonymous pamphlet "Haec-Vir" continues with this purposeful change with "haec" meaning feminine and "vir" meaning man.

[3] E.P. Statham. *A Jacobean Letter-Writer: The Life and Times of John Chamberlain*, 182. John Chamberlain wrote a letter to Sir Dudley Carleton on 25 January 1620 discussing James I's denouncement of cross-dressing. Though written after *The Roaring Girl, Twelfth Night,* and *As You Like It*, this is one of many cultural artifacts documenting the issue of cross-dressing in England dating back to 1580.

[4]Rachel Warburton. "Travestied Hermeneutics: Social and Semiotic Instability in *Hic Mulier* and *Haec Vir*." *Social Semiotics* vol.16, no.1 (2006): 152. Another scholar, Tim Reinke-Williams, discusses woman's clothes specifically, delineates the connection between honor, the body as a commodity, and gender in his

type of clothing—as in social rank—is inextricably linked to the task of fashioning a person's outward, physical persona. In such plays as Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker's *The Roaring Girl* and William Shakespeare's *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, though earlier than James's reported desire for denunciation, cross-dressing makes up an essential part of the plot. At a time when men play women on stage, cross-dressing is expected, but in the cases of these three plays, cross-dressing is more than simply the convention. It is important to note that men are the only ones allowed to cross-dress according to the rules of the theater, however. Therefore, cross-dressing in the theater deals more with male privilege and position rather than a woman's desire to gain privilege or position. Using the characters Viola, Rosalind, and Moll, the playwrights think through this historical phenomenon within the theatre.

In cross-dressing, an individual exchanges his/her assumed gender, for another gender—which makes the individual's "real" gender ambiguous to others. Many scholars have looked to analyze the various reactions of abhorrence, curiosity, admiration, desire, and fear of cross-dressing in the Renaissance through examining social trends, gender power struggles, sexual relations, and economics. In the past three decades, Natasha Korda, Jean E. Howard, Jonathon Dollimore, Mary Beth Rose, Margo Hendricks, and Jane E. Baston have all weighed in on Early Modern cross-dressing with Shakespeare and/or Middleton within their analyses to argue that Moll Frith, Viola, and Rosalind—the cross-dressers—are ultimately not transgressive: the characters falter in their rebellion at

---

article, "Women's Clothes and Female Honour in Early Modern London." *Continuity and Change* 26, no.1 (May 2011): 69-98.

the end to return to the preexisting social order.[5] They argue that Moll is, at the conclusion of Dekker and Middleton's play, a harbinger for marriage, the gender/class hierarchy, and social order by wearing woman's clothing rather than the men's clothing she has donned the entire play, making her recuperation complete. She is, therefore, not as much a revolutionary as a theatrical device, making the way gender functions in the play much more important than the clothes she wears or the gender she impersonates. In the same manner, Viola and Rosalind change back to their female selves in order to marry males, albeit Viola's re-transformation is deferred

These and other scholars have successfully argued that cross-dressing is depicted as lewd, sexually promiscuous, and transcendent of the gender boundaries leading to social mobility and freedom as well as opportunity for economic success within these plays. Another argument surrounds gender as a site for social power struggles for cross-dressing allows women cross-dressed as men the same advantages men already have. Similarly in their arguments, these scholars look to the end of the plays as the foundation for their analysis rather than the play as a whole. Because of this oversight, scholars deem the characters in the plays not transgressive.

---

[5] For further study on these scholars and articles, please refer to: Jane Baston, "Rehabilitating Moll's Subversion in *The Roaring Girl*." *Studies in English Literature* 37.2 (1997): 317. Margo Hendricks, "A Painter's Eye: Gender and Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girl*." *Women's Studies* 18.2/3 (1990): 191. Jean E. Howard, "Cross-dressing, the Theater, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England," in *Crossing the Stage: Controversies on Cross-Dressing*, ed. by Lesley Ferris, 20-46. London: Routledge, 1993. Natasha Korda, "The Case of Moll Frith: Women's Work and the "All-Male Stage,"" in *Women Players in England, 1500-1660*, ed. by Pamela Allen Brown and Peter Parolin. New York: Ashgate, 2005. Jonathan Dollimore, "Subjectivity, Sexuality, and Transgression: The Jacobean Connection," *Renaissance Drama* 17 (1986): 53-81. Mary Beth Rose. "Women in Men's Clothing: Apparel and Social Stability in *The Roaring Girl*," *English Literary Renaissance* 14.3 (1984): 367-391. Katy Emck. "Female Transvestism and Male Self-Fashioning in *As You Like It* and *La vida es sueño*,"in *Reading the Renaissance: Culture, Poetics, and Drama*, ed. by Jonathan Hart (NY: Garland Publishing, 1996), 75-89.

Modern scholars who focus on the issues described above ignore the way cross-dressing is often presented in writing in the Renaissance, i.e. as a type of crime, alongside thieves, adulterers, and vagabonds amongst others. If cross-dressing is synonymous with these other crimes, then it is transgressive, no matter if a person were to suddenly stop cross-dressing. Because of the action, the transgressivity cannot disappear. Transgression, however, is not the same as fraud. Shakespeare writes Rosalind and Viola in ways that allow the characters to both transgress their prescribed gender roles and deceive others within the respective plays. Middleton and Dekker write Moll Cutpurse to transgress her gendered role, but since she does not hide her cross-dressing, she is not a fraud. Therefore, Shakespeare overlooks the early modern English social concerns of cross-dressing by using it as a comedic device while Middleton and Dekker directly address it through Moll and the reactions to Moll from the other characters in the play. Because of this difference, Middleton/Dekker extricate transgression from fraud through Moll's lack of deception. She does not trick anyone, though characters may confuse her for a man or a woman.

In doing so, Middleton and Dekker's Moll ultimately has more agency for she is able to become a self-actualized character who can maintain the hold and position her cross-dressing gives her for she really is neither a man or a woman, thus making the social and gender differences hard to determine or even carry out. She is able to "act" like a man through participating in commerce but can also wear partly women's clothing in doing so. Even at the end of the play in women's clothing, Moll keeps distinctions, and therefore restrictions, at bay.

Chapter II: Fraud on the Streets: Pamphlet Literature on Crime

The OED dates the use of the word "fraud" back to 1330, with the definition for a noun as "the quality of disposition of being deceitful; faithlessness, insincerity"[6] and a second definition of "criminal deception; the using of false representations to obtain an unjust advantage or to injure the rights or interests of another."[7] In both definitions, fraud is a type of intentional deception, and it may also indicate the desire to gain or take from another person. The fraudulent acts in the early modern period varied from money swindling and peddling to cuckolding, among others. In every case, however, an individual's intention to deceive, and the subsequent personal gain from that deception, still remains apparent. I posit that by examining other types of early modern fraud, the similarities between such crimes as counterfeiting for money and cross-dressing will be undeniable.[8] In doing so, the criminality of cross-dressing coupled with the reactions to cross-dressing within *The Roaring Girl, Twelfth Night, and As You Like It* will be able, ultimately, to debunk the notion that Moll, Viola, and Rosalind are not transgressive.

---

[6] "fraud, n.". OED Online. September 2012. Oxford University Press. http://0-www.oed.com.library.unl.edu/view/Entry/74298?rskey=VMEEIH&result=1 (accessed November 08, 2012). Also spelled as "frawde" or "fraude", in both Old French and Latin.

[7] "fraud, v." OED Online. September 2012. Oxford University Press. http://0-www.oed.com.library.unl.edu/view/Entry/74299?rskey=VMEEIH&result=2 (accessed November 08, 2012).

[8] I am using the OED definition for "counterfeit" as a verb which means "To make an imitation of, imitate (with intent to deceive)." "counterfeit, v.". OED Online. March 2013. Oxford University Press. http://0-www.oed.com.library.unl.edu/view/Entry/42788?rskey=MXPAzy&result=2&isAdvanced =false (accessed April 12, 2013).

To handle fraud during the early modern period, individuals wrote pamphlets as a way to discover and incriminate the counterfeiters. In their works, pamphleteers like Thomas Harman use writing as a way of public shaming which not only condemns these crimes in every way, but also allows subjects to police themselves. One of his pamphlets on the subject, *A Caveat or Warning for Common Cursitors, Vulgarly Called Vagabonds, set forth by Thomas Harman, Esquire, for the utility and profit of his natural country* of 1566, exposes and names these criminals: ruffler, a fresh-water mariner, a counterfeit crank, a bawdy-basket, and an autem-mort amongst others.[9] They ask for money, using such excuses as being poor, formerly serving in wars, or perhaps losing a house to fire or a boat to natural disaster. By putting names to these criminals, Harman separates them from other members of society, but the names also teach the common reader to avoid future crimes by making the public more aware.

Amongst the cony-catchers, peddlers, prostitutes, thieves, and canters in early modern England, Thomas Harman includes imposters, people who pretend to be someone else. In his address to a patron, Thomas Harman articulates the purpose of his work:

> I thought it good, necessary, and my bounden duty, to acquaint your goodness with the abominable, wicked, and detestable behavior of all these rowsey, ragged rabblement of rakeshells, that—under the pretense of great misery, diseases, and other innumerable calamities which they feign—through great hypocrisy win great alms in all places where they will wander, to the utter deluding of the good givers…[10]

---

[9] Thomas Harman, "Caveat for Common Cursitors," in *The Elizabethan Underworld*, ed. A.V. Judges (London: George Rutledge & Sons, Ltd., 1930), 67-100. According to Harman, a ruffler is one who pretends to have served in the war, but then wanders and lives an idle life, a fresh-water mariner is one who pretends he/she lost everything due to a shipwreck, a counterfeit crank is a young man or woman who pretends to be poor, a bawdy-basket is a woman who carries a basket and steals things—predominantly clothing—in order to resell the items, an autem-mort is a married woman who does not stay with her husband and engages in stealing and will perhaps use their children in order to steal as well.
[10] Harman, "Caveat for Common Cursitors," 61.

Positing this work as a "duty," Harman highlights the intense need for this type of guide to crime, but also the disdain he (and presumably others) have towards those people who feign in order to "work" in the world. As Harman says, these criminals act, "under the pretense of great misery…which they feign" in order to "gain alms in all places"—deceiving whoever they need to in order to reach their goals. In these situations, these criminals impersonate for gain, much like the definition of fraud. Though Harman does not specifically admonish women who cross-dress, he does admonish any person who dresses out of their station in order to gain alms or favor. Since there was no greater determinant of social place than gender, Harman's work, then, allows us to see his intent as solidifying already existing social views of gender.

These criminals, then, directly challenge the laws set to govern over them. Martine Van Elk maintains that, "The counterfeiter refuses to accept the identity that has been socially prescribed for him or her, but constructs an alternative identity instead."[11] With these alternative identities, these counterfeiters are able to gain money, food, and perhaps shelter. These alternate identities, however, are ones that categorize counterfeiters as exceptions to society, for without adhering to the social environment and structure in which they live, counterfeiters become excluded, as the pamphlets singling out criminals show.

In 1576, George Gascoigne's satire entitled *The Steele Glas* asks in the epilogue about the monstrousness of cross-dressed women:

---

[11] Martine Van Elk, "The Counterfeit Vagrant: The Dynamic of Deviance in the Bridewell Court Records and the Literature of Roguery," in *Rogues and Early Modern English Culture* , eds. Dionne, Craig and Steve Mentz, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004), 125.

> What be they? women? masking in mens weedes?
> With dutchkin dublets, and with Ierkins iaggde?
> With Spanish spangs, and ruffes set out of France?
> With high copt hattes, and fethers flaunt a flaunt?
> They be so sure euen *VVo* to *Men* in dede.[12]

As Gasciogne's speaker notes, these women are not anything of the sex they imitate. The questions from the speaker bring forth different foreign goods as well as a general variety of the types of clothes: doublets, jerkins, and hats—all clothing that women are not allowed to wear—with a tone of sarcasm and outrage. Though this piece predates any of three plays in question, it does show the growing cultural anxieties about cross-dressing.

Similarly, William Harrison's *The Description of England* of 1577 says, "In women also it is most to be lamented that they do now far exceed the lightness of our men…What should I say of their doublets with pendant codpieces on the breast?"[13] Harrison shares his disdain for women who change their dresses for doublets, chaste clothing for pendant codpieces, but he also shows a certain sense of anxiety concerning shifting genders. No longer can women appear as women by their clothing because the physical markers of their womanly clothing disappear from view.[14] For those like Harman, cross-dressing—in any form—is simply one among a variety of like crimes, but for William Harrison, George Gasciogne, Phillip Stubbes and the anonymous pamphleteer of *Hic Mulier*, cross-dressing is, in itself, a sort of crime worth noting.

---

[12]George Gasciogne, *Steele Glas*, in *The Complete Works of George Gascoigne*, ed. John W. Cunliffe. Vol. 2. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910): 173-74.
[13]William Harrison, *The Description of England*, ed. George Edelen. The Folger Shakespeare Library. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968), 147.
[14]Warburton, "Travestied Hermeneutics," 152.

Almost forty years before *The Roaring Girl* appeared on stage in 1583, Philip Stubbes, a Puritan social reformer, wrote a book named *The Anatomie of Abuses*[15] that besides giving a detailed picture of the social and cultural milieu of the time admonished cross-dressing and those that cross-dressed. Stubbes writes, "Our Apparell was giuenvs as a signe distinctiue to discern betwixt sex and sex, & therefore one to weare the Apparel of another sex, is to participate with the same, and to adulterate the veritie of his own kind."[16] Stubbes's issue with cross-dressing is that clothes or markers for gender are specifically geared towards identifying an individual. If a woman dresses as a man, she is obscuring the specified distinction. With this, however, Stubbes also points out that if a woman were to cross-dress as a man, that woman would share the same privileges and opportunities a man has, such as participating in business, holding a government position, etc., thus disturbing the gender divisions of the society. Clothing, therefore, is a marker of sex that, as Stubbes argues, keeps the power dynamic between the two in check.

Only two months apart in 1620, two pamphlets with the subject of cross-dressing appeared in tandem in the Stationer's Company Register in London, with the latter a reaction to the former. Labeled as a declamation, answer, and apology, the two respective and anonymously written pamphlets, *Hic Mulier: or the Man-Woman* on February 9,*Haec-Vir: or the Womanish-Man* on February 16, sparked a written interest into an already present cultural interest.[17] The anonymous pamphleteer of *Hic Mulier* maintains that cross-dressing is both transgressive and unnatural to the normative societal culture of

---

[15]Often quoted as an example of contemporary attitudes towards cross-dressing.
[16] Philip Stubbes, *Anatomy of Abuses*, 1583.Quoted in Marjorie Garber's *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*. (NY: Routledge, 1992), 29.
[17] John Arber. A *Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London, 1554-1640*. Vol.3. 310-314.

early modern England. The pamphleteer says, "I present these Masculine women in the deformities as they are, that I may call them back to the modest comeliness in which they were."[18]Continuing with the disease motif, the pamphleteer wants women to return to their state pre-disease: "call them back to the modest comeliness in which they were." In this thesis, the writer seeks to call attention to wrongs of these women in order to shame them, or perhaps persuade them, back into normative early modern women.[19]

In the works of Harman, Gascoigne, Harrison, and Stubbes among others, commentary on cross-dressing lies on the same pages as those that admonish vices like feigning a social position or others like bear-baiting, fornication and adultery, Sabbath breaking, gluttony, and drunkenness, all symptoms of an immoral society. Many of these others are vices, but they are not necessarily fraudulent like cross-dressing is. Cross-dressing is a greater offense because it corrupts social, gender, and economic order in a time when physical appearance and gender are a predominant part of one's identity. By the nature of cross-dressing, one dresses outside of their prescribed gender expectations making it transgressive. Using cross-dressing to deceive, however, as the plays will show, makes transgression—the act of cross-dressing—quite different from deception/fraud. One can transgress by cross-dressing without seeking to deceive someone. It is intentional deception that makes it not only transgressive, but also fraudulent. What happens if the intent is not there?

---

[18]*Hic mulier: or, The man-woman: being a medicine to cure the coltish disease of the staggers in the masculine-feminines of our times. Exprest in a briefe declamation.*1620.*Early English Books Online*, A4^{r}.
[19] In the 5th section of this thesis, I discuss the latter pamphlet, *Haec-Vir,* with more depth.

Chapter III: "Where Vice Does So Excel": Crime in *The Roaring Girl*, *Twelfth Night*, and *As You Like It*

Cross-dressing, in the early modern world, is a crime punishable by law rather than merely a socially transgressive crime as it is in the twenty-first century. Therefore, it is important to remember the act of cross-dressing as one of the many different types of frauds committed in the plays; cross-dressing fits into the larger culture of fraudulent acts, many of which, the playwrights sanction even as the law reprimands. An analysis of the variety of crimes committed through the plays, and the lack of action any authorities take within the works, shows that though such writers as Harman, Harrison, and others condemn these crimes, Shakespeare, Dekker, and Middleton condone them. The extent to which, however, a crime is fraudulent is unclear, and therefore, problematic, especially considering the variety of crimes in the plays.

Hearkening back to the distinctions I made between fraud and transgression, those who only transgress within the works do so without willful intent to fool someone for gain. Transgression can be both social and lawful, but in the early modern period, transgression is, many more times than not, criminal. Those who commit fraud, however, do have that willful intent to deceive. In cross-dressing, Moll is the only character in any of the plays who transgresses socially without committing fraud while the other characters transgress and commit fraud, for they are deceiving for gain. In examining the

different types of crimes in the plays, I will be able to better separate transgression from fraud in order to allow for a conversation about the intents of the different playwrights.

In *As You Like It*, the eldest son of Sir Rowland de Boys, Oliver, commits a crime, in which transgression and fraud are prevalent. In order to keep all the wealth his father left the de Boys family for himself, Oliver deprives his brother of "essential" aristocratic privileges. Orlando, the younger brother, laments, "My father charged you in his will to give me good education. You have trained me like a peasant, obscuring and hiding from me all gentleman-like qualities"[20] (1.1.62-5). Oliver, then, seemingly commits financial fraud while also blatantly pretending as if he is upholding his father's wishes for Orlando motivated by some mixture of greed and/or jealousy. Orlando feels slighted, but he cannot do anything about it. In terms of fraud and transgression, however, Oliver commits fraud and transgresses against his father's final wishes for his younger son's upbringing. He is therefore, a criminal, someone who both commits fraud and commits a social transgression at the same time. Oliver's act parallels someone who changes her appearance in a socially unacceptable way with the explicit intent of deception, resulting in monetary gain.

Rosalind's Forest of Arden companion and cousin, Celia, also deceives—both a transgression and a fraud—through concealing her true identity in cross-class dressing. In order to venture into the mysterious Forest of Arden, they must ensure their own protection. Celia says, "Alas, what danger will it be to us, / Maids as we are, to travel forth so far! / Beauty provoketh thieves sooner than gold." (1.3.105-7). As two members of the aristocracy, they first must lower themselves by class and then Rosalind, fearing

[20] All references to *As You Like It* come from The Arden Shakespeare third series of *As You Like It*, ed. Juliet Dusinberre (London: Methuen Drama, 2006).

their youth and maidenhood, decides that in order for she and her cousin to fend off thieves and unwanted suitors, she must dress as a man while in the Forest of Arden. Celia's disguise, however, does not challenge gender differences as much as it does class difference since she is still a woman; her disguise transforms her from a duchess to a peasant woman:

> I'll put myself in poor and mean attire,
> And with a kind of umber smirch my face—
> The like do you; so shall we pass along
> And never stir assailants. (1.3.108-11)

Celia's self-assertion of "I" within the contraction, speaks of her firm and steady stance in her decision and her assertion to "put myself in poor and mean attire" clues us into her idea about social classes. In order to fit the part of a peasant, her clothes must look both inexpensive and average in order to play her part. Through going to the next level and sullying her face with dirt to stereotypically assert her social status, she does what many other counterfeiters do—ignore the impact of her actions in order to gain. Though her dress would "never stir assailants," according to Harman, both Rosalind and Celia would be female counterfeiters or general cony-catchers for changing their class statuses through their dress with the intention of tricking like any fresh-water mariner, ruffler, or upright-men would, even if they do not explicitly gain alms for their actions. In changing class through their appearances, the characters transgress the social and legal bounds of the sumptuary laws as well as commit fraud, thus, knowingly deceiving anyone who encounters these Duchesses in their peasant attire.

While in the Forest of Arden, the cousins' companion, Touchstone the fool, "falls in love" with the peasant Audrey and intends to marry her in order to bed her. Touchstone remarks, "I am not in the mind but I were better to be married of him than of

another, for he is not like to marry me well, and not being well married it will be a good excuse for me hereafter to leave my wife" (3.3.82-5) Touchstone's logic lies in the procedure of the ceremony. If the minister does not properly marry Touchstone and Audrey, Touchstone will not have to suffer the consequences for having extramarital sex, because he could assumedly be under the impression that the ceremony went without a flaw. Through this, Touchstone could have sex but then not ultimately stay in a marriage. The type of crime he commits, then, is both fraud and transgression, much like Celia. He knowingly transgresses against the system of marriage and the ideal of no pre-marital sex, and he commits fraud similarly for both knowing and intending to deceive Audrey.

Similar to *As You Like It*, the crimes in *Twelfth Night*[21] include deception in which one character is duped or deceived by another. In the case of Malvolio, many characters do the deceiving. Sir Toby Belch, Maria, Feste, Fabian, and Sir Andrew Aguecheek, all work together in order to fool (or "gull" as they say) Malvolio because of his blatant rudeness and his conceited personality. Maria says, "If I do not gull him into a nayword, and make him a common recreation, do not think I have wit enough to lie straight in my bed: I know I can do it" (2.3.132-35).Though they do not take money from Malvolio, they embarrass him in front of Olivia instead by making it look like he has poor mental health. Because of this, Malvolio loses any hope in wooing Olivia.

The characters in *Twelfth Night* engage in a number of instances of fraud throughout the play. Sir Toby, Olivia's uncle, swindles Andrew Aguecheek of his money

[21]All references to *Twelfth Night* come from The Arden Shakespeare Third Series *Twelfth Night*, ed. Keir Flam (London: Methuen Drama, 2008).For a more detailed discussion of the breach of norms in *Twelfth Night*, including that of gender and sex and how one transgression creates a ripple effect of others, and as a result, leaves the play much less of a comedy than otherwise known, see Dimiter Daphinoff's article, "None Can Be Called Deformed but the Unkind": Disruption of Norms in *Twelfth Night."*

by promising Olivia to him when in fact he uses Andrew in order to live as lavishly as Andrew does while also claiming that Olivia can be won through money presents. Toby knows Andrew to be a fool as we see in the fight Toby sets up between Andrew and Cesario where no conflict exists. After Sebastian enters into the conflict and actually injures Toby and Andres, in anger, Toby calls Andrew, "an ass-head, and a coxcomb, and a knave; a thin-faced knave, a gull?" (5.1.202-03), all words that imply "fool."

Money, however, again changes hands as Antonio gives Sebastian his purse, but when Antonio find himself in trouble, he asks who he thinks is Sebastian (Viola/Cesario) for the money back so Antonio can get himself out of trouble. Antonio, not knowing the difference, thinks Sebastian has swindled his money, then refuses to acknowledge he has it, thus committing an act of deceit laced with elements of fraud. *Twelfth Night*, therefore, persists in cases of vice with many of those vices involving counterfeiting.

In Dekker and Middleton's *The Roaring Girl*, crime varies from money laundering to impersonation to adultery—not all crime, however, is for financial gain. *The Roaring Girl*'s sometime setting of a market environment allows for the type of financial fraud the pamphleteers warned citizens about, but interlaced with money are crimes against laws defining marriage, dress, and position. Within the first act of the play, Sir Davy remarks, "Good tales do well / In these bad days, where vice does so excel" (1.2.61-2).[22] Davy's reference to action within the play itself, but also to vice as a growing concern in the larger society, gives audiences a peek into the coming action: vice shall play a large part.

---

[22] All references to *The Roaring Girl* come from the version edited by Coppélia Kahn in Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino's *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works.*(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007).

In the middle of the play, Moll with some friends encounters Tearcat and Trapdoor, two men she knows, who are pretending to be maimed war veterans in order to gain alms from sympathetic people who pass by them. Moll, however, exposes them as counterfeiters because she knows them to be so: "Soldier?—Thou deserves to be hanged up by that tongue which dishonors so noble a profession—Soldier, you skeldering varlet?" (10.114-116). For the whole of Scene 10, Moll exposes them as counterfeiters and explains to both the audience and other characters that, "A mere whip-jack, and that is, in the commonwealth of rogues, a slave that can talk of sea-fight…yet indeed all of his service is by land, and that is to rob a fair, or some such venturous exploit" (10.134-139). Besides naming "whip-jack" as a type of criminal, Moll and others refer to uprights, rufflers, doxies, wild rogues, and anglers—many of the criminals the pamphleteers discuss in detail. In doing so, Middleton and Dekker directly insert the known culture of criminality into their play.

Tearcat and Laxton are not only transgressing the ethical boundary of impersonating people of a more destitute status, however; they also commit fraud in willfully deceiving others to believe they are maimed war veterans. Their actions are close to cross-dressing in terms of criminality by disguising the real self to personify the feigned self with the goal of deceiving others into believing the feigned identity in order to gain alms.

Deception also factors into the play under the guise of adultery with two married women and two mischievous suitors. Wife of sempster Mister Openwork, Mistress Openwork is pursuing an affair with one of her husband's friends, Goshawk. In conversation with his "friend" Mister Openwork, Goshawk in an aside says, "and were it

not for a gift of treachery that I have in me to betray my friend when he puts most trust in me—mass, yonder he is too—and by his injury to make good my access to her, I should appear as defective in courting as a farmer's son the first day of his feather," (3.30-35). Goshawk declares there is a quality within him that explains his treacherous actions, even to someone he deems a friend. In the simile with which he ends the confession, Goshawk openly admits the simplicity of committing adultery; however obvious, though, he does not stop himself from gulling Mister Openwork. Both Mistress Openwork and Goshawk are committing fraud against Mister Openwork with the intention to deceive. Though adultery is a type of crime, the transgression aspect only lies in the fact that the marriage contracts specifying the monogamy between the Openworks no longer stand true.

Another secondary character, Laxton, pretends to have feelings for yet another married woman, Mistress Gallipot, the wife of the tobacco-shop owner, but only feigns love in order to swindle money from her. Not only does the affair in itself have a degree of criminality, but also Laxton's secondary plot in taking money from her, and later demanding more money from her, doubly characterizes his identity as a person who defrauds. In an aside, Laxton tells the audience:

> I put her off with opportunity still! By this light I hate her, but for means to keep me in fashion with gallants; for what I take from her, I spend upon other wenches, bear her in hand still. She has wit enough to rob her husband, and I ways enough to consume the money. (3.92-97)

Though he pursues her in order to receive money from her, Laxton has not yet committed physical adultery. Through "I put her off with opportunity still," he has promised sexual encounters and continues to entice, but has not yet followed through or rather cannot follow through with his name "Lacks stone" implying impotence. By doing this,

however, he is able to continue swaying Mistress Gallipot to give him money for his lavish lifestyle. Laxton says, "I know she cozens her husband to keep me, and I'll keep her honest, as long as I can, to make the poor man some part of amends. An honest mind of a whoremaster!" (3.146-150). Even though he does swindle, he also feels as if he owes Mister Gallipot enough to spare him the shame of becoming a cuckold, even if he becomes poor as the consequence.

Though Laxton privileges financial ruin over cuckoldry, in every way, he is transgressing. He transgresses socially by ignoring the sanctity of the Gallipots marriage by shamelessly flirting and promising sexual favors, but then both transgresses and commits fraud, i.e. a legal crime, by swindling the Gallipots without either of them knowing. Though the lines between emotional cheating and physical cheating are unclear, physical cheating, or cuckoldry/adultery is an actual crime. The severity of his crimes, according to the pamphlets of the time, would earn Laxton a spot as a named counterfeiter, open for anyone who can read his name in print to know who he is. Middleton and Dekker, in having such characters as Laxton, and to a lesser degree Tearcat, Trapdoor, and Goshawk, show that crime is simply a part of the play. In comparison to Moll's supposed "crime," however, hers is not equally as severe as those characters in any of the three plays who both transgress and commit fraud.

Though Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girl* discusses fraud and criminality most explicitly out of the three, in all three plays, trickery and cozening are comedic elements meant to entertain rather than be moral tales against fraud. These dramatic characters intend to gain in some way while other characters in the play, consequently, suffer. The extent to which the playwrights condone them, however, varies. Acts of

gulling to make a fool of another person without financial gain like those in *Twelfth Night* are much more socially acceptable than the acts that involve adultery or money like in both *As You Like It* and *The Roaring Girl* because the latter involves a broken marriage contract and/or financial issues while the former does not. Those engaged in fraud in *Twelfth Night* go unpunished by outside authorities, like the gulling of Malvolio by many other characters in *Twelfth Night*, and in *As You Like It*, they are corrected by the actor(s) him/herself like in the cases of Orlando and Oliver and the issues of primogeniture. The frauds in Middleton/Dekker's play, however, must have either the receiver or others intercede to stop the action, like in the case of Laxton and Tearcat with Moll exposing them to possible alms-givers and, Openwork finally figuring out that Laxton both swindled him and made him a cuckold.

Out of all the different types of fraud, however, Moll's cross-dressing in *The Roaring Girl* causes the most condemnation and conversation amongst the other characters in the play, though she is not the most criminal (the most fraudulent or transgressive) or an individual whose actions directly profit from another person's loss. In discussing fraud, Van Elk makes the argument that, "Theoretically, the possibility of counterfeiting assumes a subversive model of social exchange that allows for individual agency in the construction of identity, a process that does not take place prior to but in the course of a conversation between two individuals."[23] When one individual commits fraud against another character, the actor changes the dynamic of human interaction changes in favor of him/herself. And because of this, the individual committer obtains a new identity, and with that, more agency. The individual(s) who commit fraud is active while,

[23]Van Elk, "The Counterfeit Vagrant," 125.

because of the intention of deception, the one who is cozened (the receiver) does not know he/she is being cozened. Therefore, the actor is in control of the situation while the receiver must endure the act.

I would argue, however, that Van Elk's assertion of creative self-fashioning also applies to those who transgress social bounds but do not necessarily commit a crime. To transgress is less problematic than committing fraud because a person who commits fraud must involve other people while a person who transgresses (Moll), only involves him/herself. This is significant because Moll, unlike Tearcat, Laxton, Sir Aguecheek, and others, can ultimately and continuously fashion and refashion herself independently, thus allowing her more agency because she is acting on behalf of her own benefit as well as of her own expense.

Chapter IV: Intent to Deceive: Cross-dressing in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*

In *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, two characters, Rosalind and Viola respectively, cross-dress into male counterparts in order to disguise their perceivable femininity from their outward appearance. Though the situations differ slightly, cross-dressing is a quick fix to an immediate problem they face. They show, however, that no matter how much guilt they feel in deceiving others, their later intent (to win their lovers) proves triumphant. They are, therefore, manipulating others in order to gain in the same ways that street criminals/counterfeiters do to gain money; they commit fraud as well as transgress.

Scholars discussing cross-dressing in Shakespeare's work—specifically in *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*—tend to fall into three main camps. Some scholars have looked to the plays to discuss how the respective female characters dressed as men cause female homoerotic desire as well as homosocial relations; while others have examined the performative aspects of gender and how language, as well as clothes, can be gendered, and still others see cross-dressing as blurring gender and sexual differences.[24]Using the notion that gender is performed through clothing and the issues of

---

[24] Homoerotic and homosocial: Valerie Traub, "The Homoerotics of Shakespearean Comedy" in *Desire and Anxiety: Circulations of Sexuality in Shakespearean Drama,* 117-44. London: Routledge, 1992. Denise A Walen. "Constructions of Female Homoerotics in Early Modern Drama" *Theatre Journal* 54.3 (2002): 411. Jessica Tvordi, "Female Alliance and the Construction of Homoeroticism in *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*," in *Maids and Mistresses, Cousins and Queens*, eds. Susan Frye and Karen Robertson, 114-130 (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999). Lisa Jardine, "Twins and travesties: gender, dependency, and sexual

fraud and transgression, I hope to expand on how Shakespeare's cross-dressers perform their parts intentionally for gain. With the evidence of criminal acts in the plays as well as my expansion of Van Elk's idea of creative self-fashioning, looking to cross-dressing in both Shakespeare's and Middleton's works will allow me to distinguish between the characters who both commit fraud and transgress while cross-dressing (Viola and Rosalind) from Moll who only transgresses.

In *Twelfth Night*, Viola's character endures a violent tempest in which she, among only a few others, survives while her twin brother, Sebastian, is possibly lost at sea. Before arriving in the closest land, Illyria, with no money, Viola tries to decide on a plan that will allow her to earn, but also give herself long-term comfort. The countess, Olivia, is not accepting any guests or new ladies-in-waiting, so Viola's next idea leads her into deciding to cross-dress into Cesario, a eunuch, for the service of Duke Orsino. Viola, in enlisting and revealing her plot to the captain who rescued her, uses the word "intent" to describe her purposeful and deceptive cross-dressing:

> I prithee (and I'll pay thee bounteously)
> Conceal me what I am, and be my aid
> For such a disguise as haply shall become
> The form of my intent (1.1.52-55)

---

availability in *Twelfth Night*," in *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, ed. Susan Zimmerman. NY: Routledge, 1992. 27-38.; Gender as performance and word play: Hsiang-chun Chu, "'The Master Mistress of My Passion': Cross-Dressing and Gender Performance in *Twelfth Night*." *SEDERI: Journal Of The Spanish Society For English Renaissance Studies* 12 (2001): 181-191. Casey Charles, "Gender Trouble in *Twelfth Night*" *Theatre Journal*, 49, no. 2 (May, 1997), 121-141. James W. Stone, "The Transvestic Glove-Text of *Twelfth Night*." in *Crossing Gender in Shakespeare: Feminist Psychoanalysis and the Difference Within.* NY: Routledge, 2010. Blurring sexual and/or gender differences: Catherine Belsey, "Disruptive Sexual Difference: Meaning and Gender in the Comedies," in *Alternative Shakespeares*, ed. John Drakakis. London: Metheun, 2002. 166-190. Stephen Greenblatt, "Fiction and Friction," in *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*." (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

As Viola says, her cross-dressing is by happenstance, but her failure to consider all her possibilities seems to make cross-dressing a bit too convenient. Her disguise is the "form of her intent" or rather the venue of her purpose, but "disguise" here is also a character. She starts by using "I" in order to appeal directly to the captain rescuer, but as soon as she refers to cross-dressing as the act of fraud she would come to commit—"Conceal me what I am"—she allows disguise to be the "person" behind the intent. In asking someone to conceal her true identity instead of finding some other place in society, Viola willingly engages herself and the captain rescuer in a fraudulent scheme, along with the personified disguise, involving someone else in her and disguise's crime. Though working for a member of the nobility seems logical, Viola could reasonably have found employment with another noble, or tried to find work in a market. She did not have to cross-dress; she chose to do so, but smoothly does not assert herself as the lone actor in this scheme.

As a eunuch, Viola/Cesario can be male, but with a higher pitch than other males—making her unlikely to be threatening to Orsino's love interest. Viola quickly becomes one of Orsino's most trusted men, and because of this trust, Orsino asks Viola to play the intermediary to his unrequited love, Olivia. She follows her orders, but she does so in a way that undermines the purpose—for Olivia to fall in love with Orsino. Viola herself ends up falling in love with Orsino, but her twisted identity does not allow her to say anything to Orsino. Just after Orsino gives Viola orders to go on his behalf to Olivia, Viola says in an aside, "Whoe'er I woo, myself would be his wife" (1.4.40). Through this, Viola's intent to use her position as the eunuch Cesario to advance her homosocial relationship with Orsino as a precursor to her heteronormative relationship with him as

Viola, adds a further intent to deceive and scheme. At the same time, however, it also impedes the development of romance given her role as a man and a eunuch in particular.

Though still in her cross-dressed attire an act later, Viola's aside to the audience reveals her guilt about her cross-dressing. She acknowledges the love triangle she made as well as her jealousy towards Olivia for having Orsino's affections:

> Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness,
> Wherein the pregnant enemy does much.
> How easy is it for the proper false
> In women's waxen hearts to see their forms!
> Alas, our frailty is the cause, not we,
> For such as we are made of, such we be. (2.2.27-32)

Starting with an appeal to disguise, her personification of the act she commits, she allows the proper noun "Disguise" to take some of the blame. In taking on disguise, Viola sees how much trouble this act can cause through words like "wickedness." Using "pregnant" solidifies the many issues that cross-dressing creates, such as ambiguous moral and ethical implications, dissolution of gender boundaries, questions of criminality. In doing this, however, Viola also refers to the predicament that led her to cross-dress: supposed security. She has so much allowed her initial intent to hide her identity and protect herself in this new land to become the main reason for her illicit cross-dressing act even if she tells the audience in an aside that no matter who she has to woo on Orsino's behalf, her goal is to marry him herself. Not only is Viola negating one reason for another, but we can see the internal struggle she faces in trying secretly to be a man on the outside and a woman on the inside.

Her act is "wickedness" and is an "enemy" to her true sense of self. She blames herself and her action through the personal pronouns, but also her sex, purely for her not

being able to withstand the pressures of disguise in using the inclusive "we" and "our." Women, she claims, are able to see through falsities, but at the same time, are frail. This frailty, especially in the context of these lines, means fickleness and a natural leaning towards wrongdoing. Since women have "waxen hearts", they are malleable, making them easily swayed by evil—Viola's current predicament. In order to justify her act, however, she claims the overwhelming faults in all women when she says "For such as we are made of, such we be," rearticulating the idea of women's malleable hearts and consciences. In only six lines, we have three different entities to blame: disguise, Viola herself, and women in general. Viola is not, therefore, a triumphing female character with agency; she is quite the opposite in her demeaning and stereotypical associations of women.

She continues this diatribe against women and her individual decision to cross-dressing the next few lines. In making distinctions between herself "as I am man" and then "as I am woman" Viola reveals to the audience that the situation "is too hard a knot for me t'untie," displaying her guilt in counterfeiting her identity as Cesario and thereby her responsibility for some of this "knotting" (2.2.36). She proves, however, continuing forth, that this guilt is not enough for her to reveal herself until three acts later, when the other characters realize that there are two men who look like the same person—Cesario (Viola) and Sebastian.

Scholar Hsiang-chin Chu comments on this issue, arguing that "Viola's cross-dressing disguise illustrates the construction of gender identity through gender performance and clothing. The elusiveness of Viola-Cesario's gender identity suggests

the fashioning capacity with female/male attires"[25] Using Chu's argument then, Viola as Cesario is merely performing a gender rather than embodying it, as her confession-like asides show. Because of how well her disguise as a man is working, the "fashioning capacity" of her disguise features a man when she feels and even acts like a woman in every other regard.

As it is a comedy, marriage must ensue. After forcibly revealing herself and seeing that Olivia is now married to her brother Sebastian, Viola realizes that Orsino is available. The jump from seemingly male friendship to a heteronormative male/female relationship seems a bit odd in itself, but the fact that both Orsino and Viola need dress to be "correct" before they may embrace or see each other as lovers is equally as strange. The changed gender role allows Viola to love Orsino in an acceptable way, and Viola confirms her female dress as her "rightful" place and distinguishes between the gender roles as she explains to her brother Sebastian:

> If nothing lets to make us happy both,
> But this my masculine usurp'd attire,
> Do not embrace me, till each circumstance
> Of place, time, fortune, do cohere and jump
> That I am Viola… (5.1.245-49)

Viola does not become Viola fully until she is in the clothes a Viola should wear, with their happiness and "rightness" at stake. She acknowledges that the attire is stolen, and from the use of the word "usurp'd", she indicates that changing from feminine clothes to masculine clothes is a step up in position. Her conditional cause and effect sequence to use changing back clothes in order to assuage the chaos the clothes caused in the first

---

[25]Hsiang-chun Chu. "'The Master Mistress of My Passion': Cross-Dressing and Gender Performance in *Twelfth Night*." *SEDERI: Journal of The Spanish Society For English Renaissance Studies* 12 (2001): 190.

place reveals that clothing is simply that: conditional and able to be changed, no matter the circumstances. The caveat to this, however, is that happiness hinges on the correction of this cross-dressing chaos.

Happiness, or rather the assurance of the status quo, proves Van Elk's concept of self-fashioning. In returning to her former clothes, Viola is not fashioning herself into something new or improved, but rather refashioning or reverting back to her social place in the class and gender hierarchies. Refusing to allow Sebastian to embrace her as Cesario displays the anxieties surrounding the perception of same-sex relations—especially since Viola, Orsino, and those directly involved in the scene know that Cesario is Viola. Yet, the anxiety lies in the perception of on-lookers, much like the purpose of the pamphlets is to call attention to the criminals. For a person who commits fraud to be charged, on-lookers must report the criminal.

Orsino shares Viola's opinion of a "right" gender as he addresses Cesario/Viola:

> Cesario, come;
> For so you shall be while you are a man;
> But when in other habits you are seen,
> Orsino's mistress, and his fancy's queen. (5.1.376-80)

Twelfth Night, then, illustrates that physical identity must correlate with one's inner identity, proving that dress makes the person. In order for natural order to be once again natural, all must revert back. Olivia and Orsino, within their separate speeches, reveal the troubling aspect of cross-dressing in Shakespeare's play in that it creates an explicit choice to be a man or a woman. Cross-dressing becomes a means to an end, not an explicit choice to subvert gender roles.

In arguing that Twelfth Night is "most recuperative"[26] in terms of gender reversal and social change, Jean Howard further comments on this troubling gender issue by saying, "The play seems to me to embody a fairly oppressive fable of the containment of gender and class insurgency and the valorization of the "good woman" as the one who has interiorized—whatever her clothing—her essential difference from, and subordinate relations to the male."[27] Howard, then, expounds on the unrealistic and ultimately fantastical aspects of the situation. Because of Viola's cross-dressing, the entire plot falls into the realm of the unrealistic for she, or rather he as Cesario, is not truly real underneath the façade of Viola's acting. Therefore, when Viola seemingly takes on a masculine and assertive role, we must remember, as an audience, that eventually the fantasy must come to an end in order to assuage the chaos her cross-dressing created initially. In doing so, the change back to a calm world makes the social transgression of gender bending and fraud in deceiving seem null and void. I would argue, however, that even though Viola admits her crime to the other characters in the play, this does not excuse her actions. Though the fantasy of the Cesario plot is over, the implications of staging a cross-dressing woman who deceives most of the characters within the play—and escapes any social and legal punishment from that crime—are how Shakespeare overlooks the crime without truly depicting the effects of the crime. This conclusion also applies to another of Shakespeare's cross-dressing comedies, *As You Like It*.

In Shakespeare's *As You Like It,* Rosalind plays the role of the woman cross-dressing into a man, with again the idea of safety in mind. Because of her usurping uncle

---

[26] Out of three Shakespeare plays that she examines: *Twelfth Night, As You Like It,* and *The Merchant of Venice.*
[27]Howard, "Cross-Dressing," 32-33.

Duke Frederick, Rosalind's father, Duke Senior, lives in the Forest of Arden while she remains at court for the companionship of her cousin, Celia. When her uncle soon banishes her from the kingdom as well, the two cousins exile themselves to the Forest. They first must lower themselves by class and then Rosalind, in fearing for their youth and maidenhoods, decides that in order for her and her cousin to fend off thieves and unwanted suitors, she should dress as a man: "Were it not better, / Because that I am more than common tall, / That I did suit me all points like a man?" (1.3.111-13). Using her height as rationale, Rosalind, without much discussion, chooses to dress as a man. Though Rosalind's justification is that the two women will be travelling in the wilderness alone, it becomes null when the two cousins enlist the male fool to accompany them on their trip to the Forest of Arden. Either the women do not believe the fool manly enough, or Rosalind simply prefers dressing as a man. Therefore, Rosalind willingly chose to cross-dress and follow through with the act of cross-dressing, even with other options available to her.

Rosalind, like Viola, uses her costume as a way to befriend the man she loves, Orlando. The difference, however, is that Rosalind already knows that Orlando has feelings for her, and thus tricks him into wooing her all while dressed as Ganymede, a supposed doctor of lovesickness. She withholds her personal insight/information and uses him for her own personal gain in order to test his love towards her: "I would cure you, if you would but call me Roaslind and come every day to my cote and woo me" (3.2.408-9). In doing so, Rosalind tricks Orlando in order to take advantage and gain from him; she wants to be wooed by the man she loves, even if it means he suffers from lovesickness.

Rosalind continues to separate her identities with both the fool and Celia in order to continually reclaim her identity as a woman even if she is dressed as a man. Much like Viola's emotionally elevated aside, Rosalind, while waiting for Orlando to come woo her, asks Celia, "Dost thou think, / though I am caparisoned like a man, I have a doublet / and hose in my disposition?" (3.2.189-91). Even if she looks like a man and is dressed as man, Rosalind claims she is not for her internal personality is womanly. In the same lamenting fashion, Rosalind says later, "Do you not know I am a woman? When I think, I must speak. Sweet, say on" (3.2.242-3). In continually referring to herself as a woman in disguise, Rosalind rationalizes her crime. She refers to herself as a woman, but she also feels the need to remind Celia and Touchstone that she is, in fact, a woman. This necessary and continuous assertion allows Shakespeare's audiences to also remind themselves that though Rosalind appears to be a man, her clothing is the only aspect of her that is like a man, thus keeping the distinctions between the genders solid, at least within the realm of the play.

In a similar matter, in trying to explain to Orlando the moods and changes in women, Rosalind as Ganymede tells him that she shall act as a representative woman in order to better prepare Orlando for the real Rosalind. Even though Rosalind may take this opportunity to act as her "normal" female self, she perpetuates a stereotype of women instead. In doing so, she creates a negative image of women as ever changing and overly emotional, thus showing the audience the "true" image of women to London theatregoers. Because of this instance, we are reminded that Rosalind is, in fact, a woman disguised as a man. In *Twelfth Night*, Viola feels and shows a fair amount of guilt for deceiving and acting as a man when she wants to be a woman. Rosalind, however, does not feel this

guilt; Celia, her female cousin, dressed as a female, Aliena, is the one who questions the truth of her cousin's image of women with, "You have simply misused our sex in your love-prate! We must have your doublet and hose plucked over your head and show the world what the bird hath done to her own nest." (4.1.190-2). Acting as the moral and rational compass, Celia articulates the implications of Rosalind's cross-dressing juxtaposed with the misogynistic messages she tells Orlando as a man.

Though the misogynistic tones are obvious, I would argue that Rosalind's speech is a way Shakespeare articulates to his audiences the fallibility of this supposed strong, feminine, and powerful womanly presence. Howard, in speaking generally about the setting of the Forest of Arden and Rosalind's cross-dressing, shows the inverted world the fantastical element of cross-dressing can create: "The representation of Rosalind's holiday humor has the primary effect, I think, in dismantling it [social change] by making a space for mutuality within relations of dominance."[28]As much as the dynamics in the Forest of Arden dismantles social change in general, Rosalind's character, especially in this moment, further demonstrates this dismantling, but also the sameness of the gender distinctions. Because this supposed social change is only temporary, the gender distinctions shall not change either.

When Oliver comes to the Forest of Arden to recount Orlando's heroic actions against the wild lion, Rosalind acts in such a way that makes Oliver questions her façade as a man, even if her name "Ganymede" has the associations of a male same-sex relations. Replying to Oliver's charge about her crying, Rosalind says, "Counterfeit, I

[28]Howard, "Cross-dressing," 36.

assure you" of which he replies, "Well then, take a good heart, and counterfeit to be a man" (4.3.171-173). In order to play her part as the real Rosalind while being Ganymede, Rosalind/Ganymede alludes to the game she and Orlando are playing. Rosalind does not quite commit fraud against Orlando in this regard because Orlando thinks Ganymede is only acting like Rosalind in order for the lovesickness to recede. Then again, she must pretend that her real emotions (tears) as a woman are fake in order to continue her game with Orlando while also navigating the potential for the Orlando/Ganymede relationship. Oliver's response, however, directly addresses the apparent femininity Rosalind as Ganymede seems to show, thus provoking Rosalind's next response: "So I do. But i'faith, I should have been a woman by right" (4.3.173-175). Not only does Oliver question Ganymede's seemingly real appearance as a man, but he also coaxes the truth out of Rosalind, thus affirming Rosalind's innate and natural status as a woman, even if she is dressed as a man who is potentially a young, handsome male who has a male lover.

According to Rosalind, appearance and disposition have innate differences—one can change appearance quite readily, but disposition is foundational. In the end, however, she never reveals herself to either her lover, Orlando, or her father, Duke Senior. Her crime remains a secret except to Touchstone and Celia, especially since she changes back to Rosalind in appearance in order to properly marry Orlando. Because only two other characters know about her cross-dressing, she avoids exposure, criminal punishment, and any advancement of gender/social position.

In *Twelfth Night*, the characters agree that Viola shall return to her woman's clothes in order for her to marry Orsino, but she is never convicted of fraud. What she does throughout the play, however, is as much fraudulent as Rosalind's actions within *As*

You Like It. They both pursue cross-dressing under the guise of protection, but through circumstance and manipulation, use their positions as seemingly male characters to gain at the expense of other characters. Though they perhaps feel guilty in their respective plays, they do not feel guilty enough to give up their position ever (Rosalind) or until convenient (Viola). Rosalind differs from Viola in that Rosalind never has to admit she cross-dressed, and instead of using asides to reveal her uncertainties or regrets about cross-dressing like Viola does, Rosalind uses her dialogues with Celia in order to express herself. Though their expression differs, the overall effect of these women in unrealistic situations that are meant to be righted by the end of the play shines through. Their difference, however, does little to change the message Shakespeare expresses in these plays: that cross-dressing is a device to create comedic chaos.

Shakespeare's plays, then, condone the use of cross-dressing but do not address the true social/legal repercussions of the crimes; for without punishment or even reprimand from the other characters within the play, Viola and Rosalind are able to escape accusations of fraud or counterfeiting because of the comedic elements surrounding the confusion and plot of cross-dressing. They start cross-dressing for one reason, but through the plot, their marriage plots develop. In creating this, Shakespeare allows cross-dressing to remain as a way to gain for female characters in the play; they may have both their crime and their reward by intentionally acting as men in a counterfeiting fashion. But in order to seemingly "fix" the wrongs they commit in changing clothes, they must revert to their women's clothes by the end for their brief stints in Illyria and the Forest of Arden. Their normal positions as noble women dressed

as women and situations as noble women dressed as noble women only allows them the limited agency of the title of wife.

Chapter V: "Two Shadows to One Shape": the Freedom of Moll in *The Roaring Girl*

Returning to my modification of Van Elk's idea of self-fashioning, Middleton and Dekker's cross-dresser, Moll in *The Roaring Girl*, is ultimately less criminal for she only transgresses against social norms and does not commit fraud while also not implicating anyone else in her choice to cross-dress. Her independence in this matter reflects her independence in all of her other life choices as well. It is this agency that allows Moll to be the overall subject of the play as well as example of a moral being.

From the address to the reader, we know that a cross-dressed woman is the subject of the play: "For Venus [Moll], being a woman, passes through the play in doublet and breeches: a brave disguise and a safe one" (Epistle 14-16). This cross-dresser, Moll, however, does not conceal or deny her masculine clothes. Though the playwrights use the term "disguise", Moll really is not in disguise within the play—many know of her cross-dressing habits. She does not intend to defraud anyone with her gender and cross-dressing, but she does use her position to fool others, Alexander specifically, in a different sort of plot. Moll is an anomaly to cross-dressing as an open cross-dresser (although she was likely closer to the social practice in question than either of Shakespeare's characters). She is not, however, a pariah from society: Sebastian enlists her help to fix his engagement; a couple of characters become seduced by her seeming

lasciviousness; and she functions as a productive member in society through business exchanges.

Though they may know of her habits, some characters are somewhat cautious of her. Perhaps because her shape shifts, the characters are simply wary of the possibility of an oscillating—and untrustworthy—personality. Near the beginning of the play in the second scene, Alexander, Sebastian's father, notes:

> One knows not how to name: her birth began
> Ere she was all made. 'Tis a woman more than man,
> Man more than woman, and which to none can hap,
> The sun gives her two shadows to one shape;
> Nay, more, let this strange thing walk, stand, or sit,
> No blazing star draws more eyes after it. (1.2.131-6)

The reactions of the other characters to the cross-dressed Moll vary from sexual allure (Laxton) to confusion and disgust (Alexander). The use of chiasmus, "Tis a woman more than man / Man more than woman," shows both Moll's interchangeability between the sexes and Alexander's confusion. Those disgusted by "her" are nervous about gender-bending. She is at once human and inhuman, man and woman. This anxiety explains Alexander's absolute confusion regarding Moll's birth/existence: "let this strange think walk, stand, or sit." She is only one person, but seems to embody two linked shadows of one body. Jean Howard explains such a reaction: "[the] worries about the unruly cross-dressed women…are signs that early modern England [was] permeated not only by well-documented social mobility and unsettling economic change, but by considerable instability in the in the gender system as well."[29] In doing so, she brings to light the many anxieties and emotions that come along with cross-dressing.

---

[29] Howard, "Cross-dressing," 27.

The pamphlets admonish cross-dressers, grouping them in with other criminals. But as Middleton and Dekker present her in their play, Moll is not a criminal, but a character consistently referred to as "honest," and no punishment for any of her "crimes" ever occurs in the plays. Therefore, she is socially transgressive in not wearing clothes fitting for a woman but not insofar as warranting judicial punishment. Though not the norm, Moll is normal in the sense that her reputation as a woman cross-dressed as a man precedes her.[30]

Middleton and Dekker begin the play with Sebastian, a young lover, working to reverse his father's cancellation of an engagement between Sebastian and Mary Fitzallard. And because Alexander forbade the intended marriage between Mary Fitzallard and Sebastian, Sebastian courts Moll—and Moll assists in this twisted plot—in order to lure his father into accepting Mary Fitzallard as daughter-in-law. In this situation, however, Sebastian must trick his father into believing he wants to marry a woman cross-dresser in order for his father to repent the cancellation of Sebastian and Mary's betrothal, thus allowing the original two to proceed with their marriage.

Discussing his plans with his true beloved Mary, Sebastian says, "All that affection / I owe to thee, on her, in counterfeit passion, / I spend to mad my father" (1.105-107). With the use of "counterfeit" to describe passion, Sebastian acts as a lover to Moll in order to achieve his aim in provoking his father without actually loving Moll. He continues with, "Yet I'll go on / This crooked way, sigh still for her, feign dreams / In which I'll talk only of her" (1.109-11). The actions Sebastian will perform are those that a lover does for a beloved—ensuring that his father will believe this fake love plot. From

[30]Even if many of these preconceived ideas about her are not entirely true, as we will see.

the words, "this crooked way," "feign," and "counterfeit," we understand that truth and legitimacy do not factor into this deception plot. Sebastian uses Moll, but it is not clear why Moll volunteers for the situation even though she really has nothing to gain. By using Moll's appearance and personality, Sebastian harnesses Moll's power to produce a multitude of reactions from those around her—even the prologue deems her "Mad Moll."[31] Coppélia Kahn's footnote of the edition defines "mad" as, "mad in the sense of not conforming to conventions of behavior for women; spirited, wild. If Kahn's definition of "mad" is reliable, Moll is of course "mad" for she dresses in accordance to her desire, goes where she pleases, and acts as she sees fit. Within the play, however, Moll's name is frequently qualified with words like "honest", "mad", and "merry."[32] Mad as Kahn notes, means not conforming, but words like "honest" and "merry" are positive and amiable for any person. The playwrights accentuate Moll's character in order to convince the audience of her goodness, morals, and overall presence.

Cross-dressing is for Moll a personal preference, not an alternative to some extenuating circumstance. Because she is transparent about her cross-dressing however, the reactions of the other characters deserves some critical attention. Though she does not hide her identity as a cross-dresser to anyone within the play, she does, however, use the uncomfortable feelings of the other characters, like the tailor, the merchants, Sir Alexander, to her benefit. In doing so, she is able to provoke fear and desire, disgust and curiosity by doing nothing out of the ordinary. She does, therefore, have some agency in choosing her own actions without having to consult some sort of male family member or

---

[31]In line 30 of the Prologue, Dekker and Middleton write, "She is called Mad moll; her life, our acts proclaim."
[32]These instances are 2.103, 2.206, 3.183, 5.53.

husband—which is ultimately why Sebastian chooses her. As his father says, Moll is like a bright star that others cannot help but look upon.

In one of the market scenes later in the play, Mistress Gallipot says to other characters, “Some will not stick to say she’s a man, / and some both man and woman” (3.216-7). Middleton and Dekker use the confusion Moll creates through her cross-dressing as a way for Moll to create animosity and curiosity simply by being present. Moll, as an anatomic woman dressed in the clothing of an anatomic male, prevents the strict distinctions of clothing between the sexes that a person’s outward appearance shows.

Of the characters in the play, Sebastian’s father, Alexander, consistently gives some insight into the negative and disgusted reaction towards cross-dressing. Of his son’s infatuation with Moll, Alexander says, “This wench we speak of strays so from her kind / Nature repents she made her; ‘tis a mermaid / Has tolled my son to shipwreck” (2.221-3). A couple of scenes later, Alexander remarks on Moll’s dress: “What, will he marry a monster with two trinkets? What age is this? If the wife go in breeches, the man must wear long coats like a fool” (4.82-5). In using Alexander, Middleton and Dekker are able to oppose Moll’s friends and supporters with those who find her vile and unnatural. The result of this juxtaposition is a complicated, honest view of the real every day reactions of cross-dressing on the streets of London.

Furthermore, in the fifth scene in the play, a rogue, Trapdoor, mistakes Moll for a man. He refers to her as “sir” and makes the comment, “But if there were no more women in England you’d wait upon your mistress then” (5.173-4). She admits that she is a woman, not a man as he perceives. Though she does forgive him, she does not do so

before she draws her sword and humiliates him in front of a crowd of men. Through this, Moll uses her position as a woman to draw attention to the fact that she, a woman, beats up this man, Trapdoor—both a physical and mental beating. She is, therefore, perfectly honest in her gender and attire, but uses her shifting position just as much as the other characters do within the play.

While Moll in *The Roaring Girl* is an exception to the rule, she is supportive of the heteronormative relationship in which she plays a part. Gender scholarship concerning Dekker and Middleton's *The Roaring Girl* revolve around debates concerning Moll's transgressiveness and the place of gender.[33] Moll may transgress, but in transgressing, she ultimately reverses her transgression by casting off her cross-dressing clothes and assisting in the very issue (marriage) she rebels against. In cross-dressing, Dollimore notes, "The transvestite challenge to masculinity and sexual difference works in terms of transgressive inversion and reinscription, not a transcendence or the recovery of authentic selfhood."[34] Dollimore, then, favors Moll as a challenge to the social order rather than as an active, self-fashioned woman. Though I agree with Dollimore in that cross-dressing is "transgressive inversion and reinscription," I believe there is "a transcendence or the recovery of authentic selfhood" in the case of Moll. Moll's use of cross-dressing places her outside of the social/gender order. Because of this, she is able to "recover" or rather gain an "authentic selfhood" because as a woman in the early modern world, she did not have selfhood to regain.

---

[33] Natasha Korda, Jean E. Howard, Jonathon Dollimore, Mary Beth Rose, Margo Hendricks, and Jane E. Baston all argue that Moll, Viola, and Rosalind are not transgressive because they eventually reform—change back to women's clothes—by the end of the play.
[34] Jonathan Dollimore, "Subjectivity, Sexuality, and Transgression: The Jacobean Connection" *Renaissance Drama* 17 (1986), 77.

Hendricks, however, overlooks the purpose of Moll's full dress as a woman at the end of the play. Hendricks points out, "Moll, despite her garments and her awareness (or possibly because of them), becomes a collusive mending of the tear her inclusion in the play creates."[35] That this "collusive mending" is at once covert and reformative for her character seemingly undermines the social and gender order while also reaffirming it by the end of the play. According to Hendricks therefore, she is merely a temporary impediment to order, rather than a truly transgressive character that challenges the social order. Moll falters in her rebellion for her identity (as a woman) in the preexisting social order by dressing as a woman at the end of the play. But Hendricks overlooks, or least underestimates, the plot here: Moll Cutpurse is in woman's clothing because the jest/trick she is helping with—the marriage plot of Mary Fitzallard and Sebastian-- is a completely separate issue from her own choices in marriage or her choices in clothing. For Moll to be a convincing as Sebastian's fiancée, she must fit the part by feigning love and dressing to the part. As much as *The Roaring Girl* seemingly ends resolved to the "right" order, the evidence of the entire play suggests otherwise: Moll acquiesces in order to please briefly, not forever.

To transgress, then, means to alter or ignore the unwritten "rules" of the workings of dominant social structure. Dollimore explains that "identity is in-formed by what is not"; a person's identity then, finds influences in everything that is not the individual person. He claims, however, that to know one's self was to know his/her position in the preexisting social order.[36] Knowing the social order and transgressing against it leads to a quest of discovering the "real" self. The transgressor is not outside of this order, however;

---

[35]Hendricks, "The Painter's Eye," 199.
[36]Dollimore, "Subjectivity, Sexuality, and Transgression: The Jacobean Connection," 54.

he/she is essential to maintaining it. In relation to the theater and Moll, then, Moll challenges this gender identity by dressing as a man, thus perverting the social order. Moll does then oppose Dollimore's argument for she is outside this order because the characters in the play cannot define her sex/gender. With this as well, Moll does not, in the end, return to a completely woman disposition while in woman's clothes, despite the protestations of the other characters throughout the play.

Shakespeare's Viola and Rosalind, on the other hand, commit fraud because of how they use cross-dressing to deceive, influence, protect, and escape. Though Viola does reveal herself in the end as a cross-dresser, no punishment befalls her because of her reasoning of using cross-dressing as protection—even though she also uses it to win her eventual lover. Shakespeare's Rosalind, however, never confesses her crime. She uses her character as a man to deceive the man she is in love with and convinces him to woo her unknowingly as well as forefront her Ganymede to Rosalind switch before the weddings as a work of fate. In using these characters in his plays, Shakespeare points to the phenomenon of cross-dressing, but expounds on how a woman could use it to commit fraud as well as reaffirm the gender hierarchy by reverting back to lawful women at the end of the respective plays. Middleton and Dekker, however, show that cross-dressing is more than a device for gain.

Cross-dressing, to Moll, is a personal clothing preference. In keeping her name Moll and sometimes Mary, shifting between masculine and feminine clothing, and allowing others to see her shift, Moll does not hide anything; she is not cross-dressing in order to come closer to a lover, escape to a forest, or even find a stable lifestyle, unlike Rosalind and Viola. Indeed, Middleton and Dekker question cross-dressing as a crime in

comparison with the other crimes of counterfeiting, adultery, and money swindling within the play. Moll is not morally ambiguous as Trapdoor, Tearcat, Laxton, and even Alexander are, she is, as the play refers to her, "honest." Middleton and Dekker's Moll pries apart this distinction between fraud and transgression: Moll is not one who commits fraud, but she is transgressive—transgressive because she does alter the social boundaries of dress for women, but not criminal because she does not hide her cross-dressing.

Howard argues that female cross-dressing is not resistant to patriarchal systems, but often advocates for the differences between men and women—and further suggests that cross-dressing does not mean cross-gendering. Howard suggests,

> Rather than blurring gender difference or challenging the male domination and exploitation of women, female cross-dressing often strengthens notions of difference by stressing what the disguised woman cannot do, or by stressing those feelings held to constitute a "true" female subjectivity.[37]

Howard, then, suggests that Moll does not transgress but rather demonstrates what cross-dressing can accomplish as well as what it cannot. Shakespeare's Viola and Rosalind especially show this lack of change and affirmation of distinctions through the constant references to their "true" womanhood. Moll, however, does have this true female subjectivity because she is not cross-dressing in order to eventually come back to her "true" female self. She is her true self all throughout the play, even when in mixed male/female clothing or strictly female clothing.

Moll parallels the Hic Mulier character in the pamphlet *Haec-Vir*, in that Hic Mulier asks Haec-Vir, "How do I forsake my creation, that doe all the rights and office due to my Creation? I was created free, born free, and live free: what lets me then so to

[37]Howard, "Cross-dressing," 41.

spinne out my time, that I may dye free?"[38] In this argument, Hic Mulier touches upon free will, and in arguing that she has lived a free life from her birth, she extends that freedom to justify doing what pleases her—or being free to act how she wants. Moll does this as well in *The Roaring Girl*. In allowing herself the freedom to choose when she wants to marry or even engage in any sort of relationship, Moll is able to retain the position she had as a woman dressed as a man throughout the play, even if she is in a woman's dress. Moll may fluidly shift between the perceived genders without the guilt or deprecating condemnation that surrounds some of Viola and Rosalind's speeches in the Shakespearean plays. The Hic Mulier character, and thus Moll, does not so much subvert the rules of society as invert them; she wants the same rights men have to live how they choose. Raymond Joad notes, "The mannish woman develops the defence of female fashion into a defence of female freedom and of woman's equality, reviving the woman question in terms that the reader is presumably meant to find ironic."[39] While the opposing *Hic Mulier* pamphlet sought to embarrass, reprimand, and even threaten cross-dressing women with banishment from society, *Haec-Vir* conversely justifies cross-dressing for women.

Similarly, Moll justifies cross-dressing for women, but takes it further by justifying her power position. She masterminds the marriage subplot between Sebastian and Mary; influences the market environment of the shops as an equal consumer to that of males; and is a woman who may choose whom she marries or if she even wants to

---

[38]*Haec-Vir or The womanish-man: being an answere to a late booke intituled Hic-mulier. Exprest in a briefe dialogue betweene Haec-vir the womanish-man, and Hic-mulier the man-woman*. 1620. *Early English Books Online,* B1^{r}-B2^{v}.
[39]Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 293.

marry. The most substantial part Moll acts in the play, however, is as an enlightened and not criminal character that acts at her own behest without needing to gain financially from other characters.

Commenting on the culture around her, Moll in an aside remarks, “If they would keep their days as well with their mercers as their hours with their harlots, no bankrupt would give seven score pound for a sergeant’s placer. For would you know a catchpole rightly derived: the corruption of a citizen is the generation of a sergeant” (5.38-43). In articulating this, Moll sees these corruptions of order for what they truly are: pressing and every day threats to a stable socioeconomic world.

Moll acts as the voice of reason and morality for she does not engage in any type of fraudulent scheme for financial gain like many of the other characters do. Though Moll’s involvement in the marriage plot between Mary Fitzallard and Sebastian is essential, her role is not as lawful criminal but rather as influential mastermind. Through this, she is ultimately much more of an enlightened character because she is aware of her position in society and able to look at crime in a different light. No matter how she refashions her image, her position in society as virtually equal to the men does not change. She is not, like other scholars argue, recuperative or eventually adhering to the social constructs of gender within the play; she is rather an agent in her own life, controlling what she wills in every matter and above that of her female contemporary characters in the play who must adhere to their husbands and/or fathers.

Through the pamphlets and other non-dramatic works, we can see that cross-dressing certainly fits in—even without direct mention—with all of the other types of

crime in the London underworld. Writers like Stubbes, Gascoigne, Harrison, and the anonymous pamphleteers of *Hic Mulier* and *Haec-Vir* address and admonish women who cross-dress as men, but in Harman's work, cross-dressing as a crime within itself is not explicit. Because of the crimes he mentions, cross-class dressing, dressing as a maimed soldier, a person who has lost his/her house to fire or one who has recently lost his/her fortune, a woman who dresses as a man for gain is not a far stretch as similarly criminal.

In order to fully comprehend the likeness of the crimes in the pamphlets to the crime of cross-dressing, seeing that it is one among many sorts of crimes in *Twelfth Night, As You Like It,* and *The Roaring Girl* is necessary. In each of the three plays, crimes range from counterfeiting, adultery, dressing below or above one's station, and others pretending to be other than they are which all have the element of deception in common. All of these crimes, then, are very much intertwined because cross-dressing is a similar type of deception. Cross-dressing, however, adds an extra aspect to the severity of the crime since it is not only a crime for it blurs the lines of societally constructed difference at the same time, making it transgressive as well.

Viola and Rosalind commit fraud in purposefully deceiving with willful intent and, by the end of the play, turn to their womanly clothes and positions. Their frequent references to their true selves as women throughout their respective plays further indicate their coming reformation. Shakespeare directly ignores those pamphleteers who admonish cross-dressing by not addressing the issues at all in his comedies; he allows his characters to come back to their recuperative selves as women in order to marry and right the wrong their actions brought, approving and condoning the messages of the pamphleteers.

Shakespeare's concern seems to be with the homoerotic possibilities that the female characters' cross-dressing bring up, rather than with arguing for women's right to dress as men and consequently assume some of their privileges while Middleton/Dekker aim towards these privileges to some degree. Shakespeare's cross-dressers are protecting themselves and gaining husbands, as opposed to Moll, who is community-minded. She helps Alexander, she points out criminals, etc. She is part of a community that (overall) values her in spite of her cross-dressing, which she is open about. Shakespeare's plays end with no punishment for the various deceivers (Toby, Maria, Viola, Rosalind, Celia, Touchstone, Oliver) and a restoration of heterosexual order and rank. *The Roaring Girl* does not, maintaining some of its more egalitarian strains until the end.

Middleton and Decker directly address the issue of Moll's importance and morality by presenting a character who, from the start, is a known cross-dresser but not as a person who commits crimes, unlike many of the other characters in the play. Unlike Shakespeare, however, Middleton and Dekker are able to directly point to a positive and strong female character who stays consistent in her power and morals through the play while also distinguishing the great difference between fraud and transgression.

Moll's relentless confirmation of her cross-dressing as a choice and her identity as a woman despite her man's clothing allows her to be never-changing and reliable—even with her women's clothes at the end of the play. Because of this, Moll exemplifies herself as a woman who may transgress socially, but does not deceive anyone while doing so. This distinction, then, is vitally important to how we read Moll and her actions throughout the play. Indeed, the objections against cross-dressing only include those that deal with the other respective people in the social hierarchy. Women who cross-dress as

men threaten the position of men by also acting like and deceiving those around them, but the cross-dressed women make no offense towards women who do not cross-dress if they do not deceive. Those women—or even men—who deceive while cross-dressing, commit a fraud for the willful intent to deceive is there. In their clothing translation, the cross-dressing women who choose to cross-dress as a preference while also being honest about their cross-dressing seek to defeat the sumptuary laws as well as the unwritten laws coding male dominance in society, making them self-fashioned and independent.

Bibliography

Anon. *Haec-vir: or, The womanish-man: being an answere to a late booke intituled Hic-mulier. Exprest in a briefe dialogue betweene Haec-vir the womanish-man, and Hic-mulier the man-woman.* 1620. *Early English Books Online*.

Anon. *Hic mulier: or, The man-woman: being a medicine to cure the coltish disease of the staggers in the masculine-feminines of our times. Exprest in a briefe declamation.*1620.*Early English Books Online*.

Arber, Edward. *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London, 1554-1640.* Vol.3. London, 1875-94.

Baston, Jane. "Rehabilitating Moll's Subversion in *The Roaring Girl*." *Studies In English Literature* 37, no.2 (1997): 317-335.

Belsey, Catherine. "Disruptive Sexual Difference: Meaning and Gender in the Comedies." In *Alternative Shakespeares*, edited by John Drakakis, 166-190. London: Methuen, 2002.

Bullogh, Vern L., and Bonnie Bullogh."Playing with Gender: Cross Dressing in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries" In *Cross Dressing, Sex, and Gender*, 74-93. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993.

Charles, Casey. "Gender Trouble in "*Twelfth Night*"" *Theatre Journal* 49, no. 2 (May, 1997): 121-141.

Chu, Hsiang-chun. "'The Master Mistress of My Passion': Cross-Dressing and Gender Performance in *Twelfth Night*." *SEDERI: Journal Of The Spanish Society For English Renaissance Studies* 12 (2001): 181-191.

Cressy, David. "Gender Trouble and Cross-Dressing in Early Modern England." *Journal of British Studies* 35, no. 4 (Oct 1996) 438-465.

Daphinoff, Dimiter. "None Can Be Called Deformed but the Unkind": Disruption of Norms in *Twelfth Night."* In *On Strangeness,* edited by Margaret Jacobs, 99-112. Zurich: G. Nar Verlag, 1990.

Dekker, Rudolf M. and Lotte C. van de Pol, eds. *The Tradition of Female Transvestism in Early Modern Europe*. London: Macmillan Press, 1989.

Dollimore, Jonathan. "Subjectivity, Sexuality, and Transgression: The Jacobean Connection." *Renaissance Drama* 17 (1986): 53-81.

Emck, Katy. “Female Transvestism and Male Self-Fashioning in *As You Like It* and *La vida es sueño*.” In *Reading the Renaissance: Culture, Poetics, and Drama*, edited by Jonathan Hart, 75-89. NY: Garland Publishing, 1996.

Ferguson, Margaret W., Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers. *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986.

Garber, Marjorie. “The Logic of the Transvestite: *The Roaring Girl* (1608).” In *Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama*, edited by David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass, 221-234. New York: Routledge, 1991.

---.*Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing & Cultural Anxiety*. London: Routledge, 1992.

Gascoigne, George. *Steele Glas*. In *The Complete Works of George Gascoigne*, ed. by John W. Cunliffe. Vol.2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910.

Greenblatt, Stephen. “Fiction and Friction” In *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*.” Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.66-93.

Gushee O’Malley, Susan.*“Custome Is an Idiot”: Jacobean Pamphlet Literature on Women.* Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2004.

Hendricks, Margo. “A Painter's Eye: Gender and Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girl*.” *Women's Studies* 18, no.2/3 (1990): 191-203.

Howard, Jean E. “Cross-dressing, the Theater, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England.” In *Crossing the Stage: Controversies on Cross-Dressing*, edited by Lesley Ferris, 20-46. London: Routledge, 1993.

Hurworth, Angela. "Gulls, Cony-Catchers and Cozeners*: Twelfth Night* and the Elizabethan Underworld." *Shakespeare Survey: An Annual Survey of Shakespeare Studies And Production* 52 (1999): 120-132.

Jardine, Lisa. “‘Make they Doublet of Changeable Taffeta’: Dress Codes, Sumptuary Laws, and ‘Natural Order’” *Still Harping on Daughters*. Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1983.

---. "Twins and Travesties: Gender, Dependency, and Sexual Availability in Twelfth Night." In *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*. Edited by Susan Zimmerman, 27-38. New York: Routledge, 1992.

Judges, A.V., ed. *The Elizabethan Underworld*. London: George Rutledge & Sons, Ltd., 1930.

Kinney, Arthur F., ed. *Rogues, Vagabonds, and Sturdy Beggars*. Barre, Massachusetts: Imprint Society, 1973.

Korda, Natasha. “The Case of Moll Frith: Women’s Work and the “All-Male Stage.”” In *Women Players in England, 1500-1660*. Edited by Pamela Allen Brown and Peter Parolin, 71-87. New York: Ashgate, 2005.

Lucas, R. Valerie. “Hic Mulier: The Female Transvestite in Early Modern England.” *Renaissance and Reformation* 12, no.1 (1988): 65-84.

Middleton, Thomas and Thomas Dekker. *The Roaring Girl*. In *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works.* Edited by Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino, 721-778. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007.

Orgel, Stephen. “Call Me Ganymede”. *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare’s England.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Raymond, Joad. *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Reynolds, Bryan. *Becoming Criminal: Transversal Performance and Cultural Dissidence in Early Modern England*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002.

Reynolds, Bryan and Janna Segal. “The Reckoning of Moll Cutpurse: A Transversal Enterprise.” In *Rogues and Early Modern English Culture*. Edited by Craig Dionne and Steve Mentz. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004.

Rose, Barbara. “Cross-Dressed Women in the Reign of “Queen James”: *Hic Mulier, HaecVir, and MuldSacke.*” *Postscript* 2.1 (1995): 63-78.

Rose, Mary Beth. “Women in Men’s Clothing: Apparel and Social Stability in *The Roaring Girl.*” *English Literary Renaissance* 14, no.3 (1984): 367-391.

Segal, Janna. ““And browner than her brother”: "Misprized" Celia's racial identity and transversality in *As You Like It*.” *Shakespeare (1745-0918)* 4, no. 1. (2008): 1-23.

Shakespeare, William. *As You Like It*. Edited by Juliet Dusinberre. London: Methuen Drama, 2006.

---. *Twelfth Night*. Edited by Keir Elam. London: Methuen Drama, 2008.

Statham, E.P. *A Jacobean Letter-Writer: The Life and Times of John Chamberlain*. London, 1920.

Stone, James W. “The Transvestic Glove-Text of *Twelfth Night*.” In *Crossing Gender in Shakespeare: Feminist Psychoanalysis and the Difference Within,* 24-42. NY: Routledge, 2010.

Traub, Valerie. “The Homoerotics of Shakespearean Comedy.” In *Desire and Anxiety: Circulations of Sexuality in Shakespearean Drama*, 117-44. London: Routledge, 1992.

Tvordi, Jessica. "Female Alliance and the Construction of Homoeroticism in *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*," In *Maids and Mistresses, Cousins and Queens.* Edited by Susan Frye and Karen Robertson, 114-130. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.

Walen, Denise A. "Constructions of Female Homoerotics in Early Modern Drama." *Theatre Journal* 54, no.3 (2002): 411.

Warburton, Rachel. "Travestied Hermeneutics: Social and Semiotic Instability in *Hic Mulier* and *Haec Vir*." *Social Semiotics* 16, no.1 (2006): 151-72.