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At first glance, the festive world of Shakespeare's Twelfth Night and the dark world of his Othello, written a few years later, have little in common. There are, however, surprising similarities between two very unlike characters -- Viola and Iago -- and these similarities culminate in the assertion by each that "I am not what I am" (TN 3.2.141; O 1.1.65). (1) A definitive "am" (instead of the expected seem") produces a paradox -- absolute Being negated absolutely. This paradox results from the fact that both Viola and Iago "fashion" their own identities, Viola by means of overt physical disguise and Iago by means of manner and attitude. The "self" presented to other characters differs from that presented to the theater audience, and ambiguous identity finds expression in elliptical language that is simultaneously truthful and duplicitous. The two characters differ, however, in the way they respond to the potential power accruing from self-fashioning, a difference stemming from features related to gender and genre. Comparing these self-fashioners demonstrates how gender and genre transform meaning.

The term "self-fashioning," coined by Stephen Greenblatt in his seminal (2) book Renaissance Self-Fashioning, signifies "a willingness to ... transform oneself into another" (228-29). When this willingness takes the form of improvisational role-playing that results in the exploitative transformation of another person's reality -- a kind of "ownership" that conceals itself -- it can paradoxically involve self-cancellation (256-57). Viola and Iago are

improvisers in Greenblatt's sense, and their plays create worlds where self-fashioning can occur. Order, in both, is fragile, a thin veneer over powerful anarchic forces most apparent in the second of each play's major locations (Cyprus and Olivia's house). This order, grounded in the primacy of the individual, is threatened by that same primacy. Many characters in the two plays seem isolated within their own desires, struggling at cross-purposes to attain "what they will" (and the subtitle of Twelfth Night invites the audience into the fray). "Will" affects their vision, making them prone to what T.S. Eliot calls bovarysme -- "the human will to see things as they are not" (111). Although one play is a comedy and the other a tragedy, the genres of the two are less divergent than such terms would imply. Susan Snyder explores Othello's comic roots at length, and numerous critics have commented on the "dark" elements in Twelfth Night. (3)

Both plays have several self-fashioning characters. In Twelfth Night, Orsino fashions himself into a Petrarchan lover (constant to the image of "yond sovereign cruelty" [2.4.80]), and Olivia fashions herself into a romantic aggressor who "abuses" herself. Even Sir Andrew Aguecheek listens for words (like "odors" and "vouchsafed") that might help him become a more knight-like knight. In Othello, Desdemona, unbeknownst to her father (who thinks her a "maiden . . . so . . . quiet that her motion blush'd at herself" [1.3.94-5]), fashions herself into a poised public speaker. Othello fashions himself through the self-narrative that wins him Desdemona in the beginning and names him, at the end, both criminal and executioner.

Some characters, however, are more self-conscious in their self-fashioning. I will reserve the term "self-fashioner" for those who become split by that self-consciousness into a self-who-is-observer and a self-who-is-observed -- that is, an observing self who constructs the other self, which becomes a fiction, an artifact or a kind of "Other" (Heller and Wellberry 12). This kind of self-consciousness is empowering because it fosters a sense that one is not forever fixed in a "single divinely sanctioned identity" (Greenblatt, Self-Fashioning 235). One can see oneself in some other person's situation: from a few paces back, a pile of wood can be seen to contain all manner of "unrealized structural possibilities" (Kerrigan 13). Viewing oneself and others as raw material for transformation, however, divorces the head from the heart and makes a consistent personality impossible. A self underlying the roles tends to get lost, and "self-possession becomes a form of

self-alienation" (Kerrigan 61-2).

Shakespeare toys with such concerns in many of his plays. In the history tetralogies and Hamlet, several male characters reflect on the relation between self-creation and self-alienation. For instance, Richard III's identification of himself with his shadow (1.1.26; 1.2.263) suggests that his self-image is a kind of mirage. At the climax, when Richard wonders if he can fly from himself lest he revenge "myself upon myself," his "I" breaks into two people:

What do I fear? Myself? There's none else by.
Richard loves Richard, that is, I [am] I.
Is there a murtherer here? No. Yes, I am.
Then fly. What, from myself? (5.3.182-85).

Richard II, in prison, asserts, "Thus play I in one person many people" (5.5.31). He sees himself as a role-player embattled in the castle of his skull and his body is a little world that is, like the larger world, a prison. In Henry IV, Part I, Hal informs the audience that his image as a wastrel is a planned self-creation, a foil to his reformation (1.2.213), but his speech in Henry V on the emptiness of Ceremony (4.1.230-84) shows a kind of alienation. These same concerns surface in Hamlet, whose protagonist broods over the various meanings of actor and acting, appalled by role-playing yet attracted to it (Mack 90). He castigates himself for falling to heed his "cue," comparing himself first to the player-king who acts "for nothing, for Hecuba" (2.2.557), and then to Fortinbras who acts "even for an eggshell" (4.4.53). Insofar as he solves his problem, he does so by saying "the readiness is all" (5.2.222) and surrendering his power of planning to some greater force. The duel precipitating his revenge does not occur because of his manipulations.

Female self-fashioners are rarer, although many females besides Viola assume male disguises: Julia, in Two Gentlemen of Verona; Portia, Nerissa, and Jessica, in Merchant of Venice; Rosalind in As You Like It; and Imogen, in Cymbeline. All of these women appear, not incidentally, in comedies or romances, just as the male improvisers appear in history plays and tragedies. Only Rosalind, however, is self-conscious about her self-creation. Although she uses the power that accrues to her more actively (as do the male improvisers), she, like Viola, avoids ill consequences by being detached and vulnerable at the same time. Moreover, she establishes her identity early and

late in the play by appearing as herself in all of Act I and dressing as a woman again at the end. Her disguise therefore resembles the overt "play" of theater itself, a resemblance reinforced by the epilogue, where she is at once both female character and male actor. Such overt "play" does not result in the same consequences.

Shakespeare's most extraordinary self-fashioners, Viola and Iago (from plays composed around the same time, 1602 and 1604 respectively), illustrate the possibilities and dangers of gaining what Descartes calls "privileged access to one's own inner discourse" (Heller 5). Unlike preceding characters, both act in disguise throughout the plays; the audience is provided with scant motive and little sense of any prior or subsequent identity. (Viola differs markedly from other disguised female characters in this respect.) Comparing the two characters, who seem mirror images, illustrates the paradox that self-fashioning results in a kind of self-cancellation. Gender and genre, however, transform the emphasis. Othello's male, tragic world focuses on the cost of self-fashioning. Iago's role-playing, which exploits the reality of others, results in wholesale destruction and a self-imposed silence equivalent to self-extinction. Twelfth Night's feminine, comic world, however, emphasizes the positive aspects of self-fashi oning. Viola's strange passivity (her refusal, like Hamlet's, of the power conferred by her detachment and her submission to some greater power) helps transform self-loss into a new birth.

The world of Venice/Cyprus seems a tragic mirror of Illyria. Each offers a myriad of contingent possibilities. According to the duke, Illyria is a place where a lover can be transformed, like Acteon, and destroyed by his own desires. Olivia's house is a world where "nothing that is so is so" (4.1.9), where "not to be a-bed after midnight is to be up betimes" (2.3.1-2). Venice also -- though supposedly civilized -- is open to destabilizing possibilities. It is a night world where Brabantio can only explain what has occurred as magic and where the senators hear conflicting stories about where the Turk will attack. Cyprus is even murkier. There, Iago can present a conversation about Bianca as evidence of Desdemona's guilt and stab Roderigo in front of witnesses. In this world, "foolery," rather than the sun, "shines everywhere" (TN 3.1.38-9). Even terms like honest, which should remind us of stable norms, appear in contexts destabilizing their meaning.

One possible stance toward such an unstable, precarious world is to operate

"under cover," to hide beneath a role. In other plays role-playing is directed toward some end or meets some crisis. The disguises of Viola and Iago, however, are relatively unmotivated -- more a stance toward the world. The fact that Iago is reputed to be "honest" long before he is passed over for the lieutenancy means that his "role" predates events initiating the play's action. Viola assumes her role during her first appearance on stage, but for rather odd reasons. She is not, like Rosalind in As You Like It, going off to a dangerous forest. Even though she has arrived in a country where a "noble duke" governs, she does not seem to contemplate asking this duke for protection in her own person. She mentions serving his beloved as a eunuch, then is next seen serving the duke himself as a lad. Her vagueness suggests that she is just reacting to an uncertain environment. Disguise, as an interim "state of being," allows her to defer assuming an adult gender role. For Iago, on the other hand, disguise is a long-term state of being.

The vagueness of why they choose to be servants also suggests that disguise is a stance toward life. Other Shakespearean role-players choose to be servants in order to achieve a particular goal: they wish to remain near a loved one (Julia, in Two Gentlemen of Verona, and Kent, in King Lear) or put off encumbering royal power (Henry, in Henry V, and the duke, in Measure for Measure). Viola, however, has no particular reason to serve anyone in Illyria, yet immediately determines to do so. Iago's goal seems to be promotion, but, if so, why continue to plot against Othello after Cassio has been cashiered? Replacing one motive with another makes both seem contrived. He recites what sounds rather like a creed to Roderigo: although we cannot all be masters, we can choose what kind of servant to be -- an honest fool who serves a master truly (and who should be whipped) or a fellow "trimm'd in forms and visages of duty" who keeps his heart attending on himself. These fellows, he says, "have some soul, / And such a one do I profess myself" (1.1.50,54-5). If this is a profession of faith, his role as "servant" is a lifetime commitment. Neither Viola nor Iago role-plays for the usual kind of gain -- an oddity, given the covert power stemming from concealment and detachment.

Nor do Viola and Iago role-play for the pleasure of the game. Typically (in drama before 1600), disguised role-players helped an overly rigid, sterile world regenerate itself. These characters, rooted in the medieval Vice and in the "tricky servants" of Plautus and Terence, are improvisers who delight in their own sprezzatura. Disguised role-players as diverse as Richard III and

Rosalind display such elan. Viola, on the other hand, has "a green and yellow melancholy" (2.4.113). Iago's musings on how to "plume up" his will (1.3.393) suggest determination and energy, but hardly the joy in his own prowess of Richard's "Shine out, fair sun, till I have bought a glass / That I may see my shadow as I pass" (1.2.262-63).

For both Iago and Viola, then, disguise is an open-ended stance toward the uncertainty of the world rather than a game or a means to achieving a goal. Such disguise isolates an individual, especially when practiced upon the whole society. Neither Viola nor Iago has a confidant (a fact particularly noteworthy for Viola, since female comic role-players usually do -- e.g. Rosalind has Celia and Portia has Nerissa). The only person who knows Viola's plan -- the sea-captain -- disappears from the play (although he is mentioned at the end). Iago's professed confidant, Roderigo, is more gull than confidant. Only the audience knows either character's secret. In Twelfth Night, it can enjoy this secret, comforted by Sebastian and the forms of comedy, but not in Othello. The story about the spectator who rushed on stage shouting "You fool, can't you see?" is easy to believe (McDonald 65).

Disguise isolates Iago and Viola not only from others but from their own emotions, an effect intensified by perceiving the self as bounded by the skin. Talk of bodies separate from selves is frequent in both plays. Olivia's antipetrarchan inventory of her own facial features makes them artifacts separate from herself. Orsino's description of his thoughts as "fell and cruel hounds" has the same effect, his feelings becoming "external agents sent to plague him" (Taylor 72). Both Desdemona and Othello separate and then deny the body: she sees his visage only in his stories and he says he took her with him not for her body but "to be free and bounteous to her mind" (1.3.265). At the end, he claims that he is executing her supposedly treacherous spirit while not marring her skin.

Both Viola and Iago view "self" as separate from body. Viola refers to a person's exterior as "a wall" (1.2.48) and reflects that her "outside" has charmed Olivia, implying that her outside is not herself. When Viola and Sebastian appear together toward the end of the play, her separation from her body becomes a kind of diorama: "One face, one voice, one habit, and two persons, / A natural perspective that is and is not" (5.1.216-17). The two bodies even speak in mirror-like phrases: Vio. "My father had a mole upon his

brow." Seb. "And so had mine." (5.1.242-43). Iago tells Roderigo that the body is a garden where the will can "plant nettles or sow lettuce" (1.3.322), a metaphor implying separation. A body is the body -- not just an extension of the person, but something "hollowed out and filled with consciousness (Armstrong 45). It is a possession, like a plot to be tilled or a handkerchief to bestow.

Although many characters in these two plays view self and body as separate, only Viola and Iago combine that sense of separation with a willingness to transform themselves and operate "in disguise." Detachment and disguise result in still greater divorce between head and heart. Viola "pines in thought" for the duke, but controls her emotion and sits "like Patience on a monument, / Smiling at grief" (2.4.114-15). Her soliloquies to the audience suggest stoic resignation rather than Rosalind's bubbling impatience. In her actions she is faithful to her role, unlike Julia who, in Two Gentlemen of Verona, vows to woo "coldly" (4.4.106-7). Viola's comments on Olivia ("poor lady; she were better love a dream" [2.1.26]) and herself ("my state is desperate for my master's love" [2.1.37]) are distant and impersonal, as unemotional as an audience's comment on a character from a play. While Iago supplies passionate motives galore, his wording distances him, undermining their plausibility:

> ...I hate the Moor,
> And it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets
> [H'as] done my office. I know not if't be true,
> But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,
> Will do as if for surety. (1.3.386-90)

He sounds as if he is trying to convince himself. More consistent with the tone of these words is his statement that emotion is a "permission of the will," a "raging motion" that reason should cool (1.3.330). Splitting the self into subject and object, with the narrating self viewing the constructed self as a kind of "Other," risks losing a complete, emotional self.

With detachment and disguise, however, comes power. Even non-manipulative role-players are privileged to see and know things that in other circumstances would be hidden from them (Snyder 46). The greatest power stems from "a curious kind of empathy," an ability to perceive "another's truth as an ideological construct" and thereby transform and exploit it (Greenblatt, Self-Fashioning 228). While Olivia merely says, "I would you were as I would

have you be," Iago acts so as to make the "will" into a reality. The disguised role-player tends to be an opportunist who curves structures to his or her own advantage without having a deep understanding of those structures. Iago, for instance, can turn Desdemona' s "virtue into pitch and out of her own goodness make the net / That shall enmesh them all" (2.3.360-02) despite his limited capacity to understand that virtue. In order to wield power effectively, however, he must efface all sign of himself. He responds, therefore, to Emilia's confused intuition that some "ete rnal villain" has "devis'd this slander" by asserting "there is no such man" (4.2.130,132,134).

The price of such power is loss of identity, since the very thing that makes it possible -- the split between self-as-observer (or narrator) and self-as-construct (or actor) -- fragments consciousness. The difficulty an audience has in determining who Viola and Iago are apart from their roles illustrates this point. As noted earlier, Iago is "honest Iago" from the play's inception, and Viola appears in female clothing only long enough to announce her intention to disguise herself. Iago, when unmasked at the end, speaks only to say he will never speak more, and Viola, unlike Rosalind, never resumes her female clothing. Although the audience tries to infer the character behind the role from elliptical remarks to other characters and a few soliloquies, doing so is confusing because the character so resembles the mask. For instance, Iago's sneer about the wine Desdemona drinks being made of grapes suggests an authentic cynicism about spiritual values. (4) Both mask and man seem vulgar and misogynistic. The "real" Iago is even "honest," in the sense that his words are often literally true (though intentionally misleading). For instance, he tells Othello that "for aught [he] know[s]" Cassio is honest (3.3.104), and he warns Othello against the "green-eyed monster" of jealousy. Viola, too, resembles her mask. The audience assumes that, like Cesario, she is loyal, intelligent, verbally adept, sensitive, and vulnerable. She, too, is a riddling truth-teller who says something true phrased to mislead. When asked by the duke whether her "sister" died of love, she answers, "I am all the daughters of my father's house" (2.4.120).

Criticism on Viola and Iago indicates the difficulty audiences have in determining who the characters are apart from their roles. Viola, for instance, is characterized by Marilyn French as "essentially an absence" (117). Iago is not infrequently held to be more an abstraction than a character -- Coleridge's "motiveless malignity," for example, or the power of

the rational view (Snyder 76). Concealment, for both characters, culminates in the self-cancelling declaration "I am not what I am" (TN 3.2.141; 0 1.1.65). A second am instead of seem transforms the statement into an inversion of God's statement to Moses (Exod. 3.14); it becomes a proclamation of nonbeing, an existential paradox of godlike creativity fused with negation. Greenblatt calls this declaration the "motto" of the role-player -- a manipulator of signs whose identity is "a blank" (Self-Fashioning 238).

As disguised role-players, Viola and Iago to some extent resemble their maker, Shakespeare himself, as well as the troupe of actors putting on the play. Ensemble actors, unlike stars, are submerged in their roles. Concerning Shakespeare's private life, so little material exists that audiences "know" him essentially through his works. His "character" is inferred from words uttered by his constructs, just as Viola's and Iago's are. Conclusions are ambiguous, as evidenced by the perennial claims that Shakespeare is really someone else entirely -- Oxford or Raleigh, for instance. As "manipulators of signs" who fashion narrative selves, all fit Greenblatt's definition of improvisers. In fact, Greenblatt calls Shakespeare a "master improviser" -- "the supreme purveyor of 'empathy,' ... one who possesses a limitless talent for entering into the consciousness of another ... [and] reinscribing it into his own narrative form" (Self-Fashioning 252-53).

Iago, however, differs significantly from the others, who submit themselves to a higher power. Such submission is traditionally feminine (despite the fact that it is a tenet of Christianity), and it is also an attribute found typically in the genre of comedy as opposed to tragedy. Realizing the positive potential of self-fashioning seems to demand a certain stance regarding the use of power accruing from disguise. Viola is fully aware of the mental constructs of others, but she refuses to use her knowledge. In this regard, she differs significantly from Iago as well as from Maria, Sir Toby, and Feste. Even when she suspects that Antonio may be mistaking her for her brother, she refrains from speaking or acting on that knowledge. Passivity enables her to combine control and dependency, thus avoiding a "blasphemous self-sufficiency" (Neill 100), and it is this passivity that so differentiates her role-playing from Iago's. Sometimes she does not even efface the signs of her role-playing, as when she complains to Olivia that she is being pushed "out of her part." Iago, instead, maintains his self-sufficiency. Assuming a set, predictable world where the rules are known, he lacks a sense of wonder

and an apprehension of some superhuman power (such as the power of Time that Viola recognizes). (5)

Not effacing the signs of role-playing seems essential to making role-playing constructive rather than destructive. As a dramatist, Shakespeare constantly draws attention to his own artifice. Unlike representational productions that further a suspension of disbelief, his plays frequently draw attention to themselves as constructs. Like Sir Andrew Aguecheek' s letter, they present the linguistic sign as an immediate object of audience attention. In the epilogue of As You Like It, Rosalind wittily comments on her being neither woman nor epilogue. She both claims and subverts the audience's mercy at the same time, thus combining control with dependency:

It is true that a good play needs no epilogue.... What a case am I in then, that am neither a good epilogue, nor can insinuate with you in behalf of a good play! ... My way is to conjure you.... I charge you ... to like as much of this play as please you"

Internal "textual events" that include metadiscursive commentary (like the epilogue and Aguecheek' s letter) demonstrate what Keir Elam calls "Baroque mirroring" (23), a recursive reflection that draws attention to itself as an "artifice." The frequency of such mirroring in Shakespeare's plays shows that he does not efface himself. One example is staged drama within the drama -- what Elam calls "overspying." An equivalent in the visual arts would be a mirror in the picture reflecting the picture. The theater audience of Twelfth Night, for instance, spies on some of the subplot characters who are spying on Malvolio. The theater audience of Othello watches Othello, who (as hidden audience) watches Iago and Cassio. Other "staged" events within that play include the meeting of Brabantio's forces and Othello's, Cassio's brawl, and the "brothel" scene. Features like "mirroring" draw attention to themselves as artifice. They subvert the effacement and concealment that result in exploitation. By undermining what they purport to shore up, they become acts of submission.

Since comedy celebrates the idea of flexibility and submission, genre helps account for the different effects produced by Iago's and Viola's disguise. Viola differs significantly from Iago because she inhabits a comic rather than a tragic universe. Comedy emphasizes the potentially fruitful effects of

self-fashioning because it presents the single self as deficient and imprisoning. The self-fashioner, therefore, can free human beings from the bonds of necessity by demonstrating that identity is not fixed: it is alterable and may change in response to new situations. Fashioning and refashioning the self demonstrate the multiple possibilities available. Susan Snyder says that the "most pervasive principle" of comedy is its "rejection of singleness," its preference for identities that are adaptable and even plural (48, 51). The plot itself, which moves toward marriage, implies that "twoness" is better than "oneness". In celebrating plurality and possibility, comedy affirms the generative power of Nature, which p romises spring, fruition, and rebirth. In tragedy, on the other hand, new life takes the form of prodigies. Iago continually holds the door open to unthought of possibilities, but these possibilities are monsters that slouch toward us from the world of nightmare. Since tragedy recognizes necessity and the cutting off of human possibility (11), it emphasizes the dark side of self-fashioning -- its isolation and its untenable claim of self-sufficiency. Iago's role-playing is loveless self-manipulation, a kind of masturbation. His "I am not what I am" terminates in silence, demonstrating that multiple being is dangerously close to sterility and self-extinction.

Flexibility and submission, qualities associated with the genre of comedy, have of course also been qualities traditionally considered admirable in women. Power considerations alone demand more flexibility on the part of those who are subordinate. Although flexibility and submission can be servile vices, they can also be virtues in people of either sex, particularly in a society like ours. (Sales figures for miraculous self-help books suggest that we are enraptured with the idea of self-sufficiency and self-making.) It is interesting that Shakespeare, four centuries ago, chose to make his only "winning" self-fashioner a woman. Even though the homilies of his day favored such a choice, however, one of the things that happens in comedy is that comedy tends to unfix stereotypes of all kinds, including gender stereotypes. Catherine Belsey argues that Viola's male disguise, by momentarily unfixing sexual stereotypes, allows her to escape the confinement of a single perspective and a single voice (184). Greenblatt argues that individuality in the Renaissance is "not so much a final goal as a way station to identity with normative social structures," one of which is sexual identity. Paradoxically, sexual difference is more unstable and artificial than the difference between a king and a beggar because the individual emerges from a "twinned sexual

nature" ("Fiction" 35,48). He theorizes that gender is seen as teleologically male: women, as mirror images of men, pass through the state of being men in order to become women (Negotiations 88-9). Such a scheme would suggest a fruitful outcome to Viola's disguise.

Perhaps, then, it is not Viola' s femininity that transmutes her self-fashioning but her androgyny. The theater conventions themselves emphasize this androgyny: whereas Iago is a male actor playing a male, Viola is a male actor playing a female disguised as a male. The fact that Viola does not resume her "woman's weeds" implies that her self-fashioning is not yet complete, that it will continue. Like Iago, Viola lies. She claims that she "sits like Patience on a monument" and "pines," but we see her busily composing speeches and exchanging jokes; she says her history is "a blank," but the play is her history, and it is packed with events. Audiences, however, react positively to her self-fashioning, seeing her riddles as truthful lies rather than, as in Iago's case, lying truths. A happy ending in which a man loves another man clothed as a man but supposed to be a woman encourages reassessing gendered preconceptions. The audience seems to recognize the existence of two Violas. The ambiguity of her gender mirro rs the ambiguity of her self-fashioning -- her laughing sadness, active passivity, and truthful duplicity. Her fictions seem "true" because they are constructive rather than destructive: by momentarily unfixing a given system of sexual differences, they allow us to glimpse new meanings and new practices.

In the iron world of tragedy, which recognizes necessity and the cutting off of human possibility, self-fashioning becomes self-annihilation, a kind of possession of the self and of others. In the golden world of comedy, however, where Time is suspended along with "the rain that raineth every day," self-fashioning becomes an act of will that is also an act of submission. The androgynous and passive Viola achieves "what she wills" by not acting on that will; she is a paragon fit for more than "suckl[ing] fools and chronicl[ing] small beer" (O 2.1.160). Unlike Iago, the unknown void, she seems a source of unknown possibility, a chrysalis rather than a shadowy incubus.

NOTES

(1.) All citations of Shakespeare's plays are to The Riverside Shakespeare.

(2.) See, for instance, cited works by William Kerrigan and Stephen Greenblatt, as well as Anne Ferry's The Inward Language and Katharine Maus' Inwardness and the Theater in the English Renaissance.

(3.) In his 1930 introduction to the Cambridge edition of the play, Arthur Quiller-Couch called it Shakespeare's "Farewell to Comedy." W. H. Auden says that in TN Shakespeare was "in no mood for comedy," and Jan Kott calls the play a "very bitter comedy" (see Introduction, Twelfth Night, The Arden Shakespeare, eds. J. M. Lothian and T. W. Craik [London: Methuen, 1975], pp. liii-liv). Anne Barton suggests that the harsher elements in the ending show Shakespeare "unbuilding his own comic form"; see "AYLI and TN: Shakespeare's Sense of an Ending," reprinted from Shakespearean Comedy, eds. Malcolm Bradberry and David Palmer (1972), in Essays, Mainly Shakespearean (Cambridge: U of Cambridge P, 1994), p. 104.

(4.) Madeleine Doran, also, notes that Iago's mask is "remarkably" like his own face (see Shakespeare's Dramatic Language [Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1976], p. 67).

(5.) Joan Hartwig says that the subplot characters in Twelfth Night do not succeed as they wish because they, too, lack such an apprehension (p. 510). Feste makes an interesting comparison to Viola because, as a professional role-player, he too illustrates the risks of self-conscious detachment. At the end of the play, he is alone, singing about "the rain that raineth every day." Terence Eagleton calls him a negative, disembodied presence within and yet beyond the conventions of human community, all-licensed and thus a limitless nothing... inactive" (see "Language and Reality in 'Twelfth Night,'" Critical Quarterly 9 [1968]: 226). Because his role-playing is professional, however, it does not combine with the element of "disguise" to produce the potential power (except when he does something like pretending to be Sir Topas).

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