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Title: The problem of Malvolio.
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Abstract: Malvolio is a subject in one of the two plots in William Shakespeare's 'Twelfth Night.' He achieved a certain degree of glory and good fortune by serving as the steward of a great noble household and by being the most trusted servant of its mistress. The play's subtitle, 'Or, What You Will,' refers to the misrule in the love triangle involving Sir Toby, Sir Andrew and Maria. It also signifies Malvolio's problem which is the question about his masculine identity.

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The origins of the main plot in Shakespeare's Twelfth Night have been traced to a cluster of earlier comedies and their derivatives; however, the subplot, involving Sir Toby, Sir Andrew, Maria, and their "gull," Malvolio, was entirely Shakespeare's invention.(1) Like the main story, the Malvolio subplot also involves comic "errors," disguise and performance, and the pursuit of marriage. It similarly explores the themes of identity, desire, and the confusion of both. In fact, the "gulling" of Malvolio and Sir Toby's debauched revelry literalize the "misrule" of the main story. But the subplot does not resolve itself as neatly as the main plot does; indeed, it fails to resolve itself at all. It might be supposed, then, that Shakespeare sought to counter the easy connubial resolutions inherent in his sources with something more problematic, thereby adding to the comic ending of the play something of a tragic one. Joel Fineman wrote that Malvolio "plays the role of the outsider whose unhappiness is the measure of comic spirit, the alternative to comedy

that makes us value the comic all the more" (33). To take this idea one step further, we can say that Malvolio alerts us to the necessity of comedy and to the profound implications of its failure. In a sense, with the problem of Malvolio, Shakespeare answers the question: What if things in Illyria hadn't turned out so well?

The source of this potential for failure is the comic force that drives both the subplot and the main story: "misrule." The subtitle of the play, Or, What you will, offers an ambiguous but provocative addition to our understanding of the "misrule" that was an important element of traditional Twelfth Night celebrations. "Will" has been generally interpreted as "volition" or "desire," so as to suggest that the logic of the play turns on wishful thinking rather than an objective reality. But in the saturnalian tradition, "what you will" also refers to identity, as in "what you will be." The narcissistic desires of Orsino and Olivia and the strategic disguise of Viola suggest that one's identity, social or personal, is derived from one's desire. Consider Olivia's question to Viola/Cesario, "What are you? What would you?" (1.5.212-213). Here, identity and desire become almost synonymous, perhaps because under the confusion of misrule both are ambiguous. Further, in Renaissance England, whom one married was an important factor in determining one's identity, particularly if a change in social rank was involved. Thus "what you will," in this comedy of courtship and marriage, also means "whom you will have" or "who will have you." In the complicated love triangle of these characters, misrule is the rule, and real desire and real identity become temporarily lost in a conflation of poses and possibilities.

Malvolio also confuses identity and desire when, walking in Olivia's garden, he muses, "To be Count Malvolio!" (2.5.35). But we know that Malvolio's fantasy is a pose without possibility. He is a literal example of the Italian malvoglio, which means "ill will," but here also seems to imply "wrong desire." Malvolio's sin is not only his alienating behavior toward others in the household, but also both the inappropriate desire to marry his mistress and rise in social rank and the sin of "self-love." The punishment for such sins, as he discovers, is severe. By comparison, the desiring characters of the main story, confused though they may be, commit no wrong and receive no punishment. The narcissism of Orsino and Olivia, while potent, is less overt or perhaps an allowed vice of the aristocracy. Likewise, while pursuing Orsino in conscious disguise, Viola goes safely, if miraculously, undetected.

Although the plights of the characters of the main story do suggest the precariousness and risk inherent in the confusion of identity and desire, which will be the locus and necessary prescription of the Malvolio subplot, these characters are nonetheless successful. Ultimately, for Viola, Sebastian, Olivia, and Orsino, "what you will" is an invitation to comic possibility; for Malvolio, however, it is an invitation to personal tragedy.(2)

If identity and desire function in the psychological realm, they also do in the social realm. The dialogic relation between plot and subplot, I submit, works on both levels; and herein lies a crucial difference between the plots. Whereas the main plot invokes a fantastical, almost timeless space, where an unchallenged aristocracy enjoys tremendous (if limited) emotional freedom, the subplot is more historically-specific, more obviously grounded in Elizabethan social relations: a reflection not of another time and place, like Illyria, but of England at the end of the 16th Century. As a result, the characters in the main plot are not ultimately obliged to act in a world with real consequences, while Malvolio most certainly is. Such an obligation or lack thereof is fundamental to the projection of a "self" in that world. With this difference in mind, the project of this essay will be to describe Malvolio's struggle with his identity and desires as historical and psychological "facts" that is, by historicizing the role of the household steward and his social sphere, and by investigating the possible contributions of modern identity theory. Then, I will read the elements of Malvolio's struggle back through the main plot in an effort to more fully describe the relation between the two plots.

Although much has been said of the meaning of Twelfth Night's subtitle, its specific connection to the play's subplot seems to have gone unnoticed. Olivia is the only character in the play to actually utter the words of the subtitle, when she says to Malvolio, "If it be a suit from the count, I am sick, or not at home what you will to dismiss it" (1.5.109-110, emphasis added). In telling Malvolio to use his discretion as steward and to do "what [he] will," Olivia gives him permission to use any form of falseness to prevent the disruption of her mourning. Although we later realize, through her sudden infatuation with Viola/Cesario, that Olivia's mournful intentions are not altogether sincere, her cloistered behavior is in fact in Malvolio's best interest: it makes him indispensable. I argue, then, that Olivia's command to do "what you will" formally initiates the Malvolio subplot, not only because it invokes verbatim

the subtitle of the play, but more importantly because, as we shall see, it reveals much about Malvolio's position as Olivia's trusted steward and the paradoxical role of a steward in a household with neither a master nor a masterly mistress.

While we tend to think of Malvolio as an ambitious social climber who rejects his middle-class origins in hopes of marrying into nobility, we cannot be at all certain that this is what Shakespeare had in mind.(3) In most sixteenth-century aristocratic households, particularly those of important noblemen, the steward had his own status. He was often a kinsman of the master and invariably a man of gentle birth. Indeed, during the parliaments of Elizabeth's reign, at least 190 members were, had been, or would become stewards (Hainsworth 7). When the steward was the head servant of the household, as was often the case, he commanded great respect. Thus, Spenser writes in The Faerie Queen (1590): "The first of them that eldest was and best/ Of all the house had charge and government/ As Guardian and Steward of the rest" (1.10.37.3). The "rest" in a noble household of the period may have been up to a hundred servants and dependents, over whom the steward had sway and kept order (Stone 29). As implied by the name of "Order," the steward in Massinger's A New Way to Pay Old Debts (c. 1630), the keeping of order in the household was the steward's prime objective, and for this reason, he was often likely to be unpopular with the lesser servants. However, this responsibility offered the steward privileges as well. Regardless of his social origins, he dressed as an aristocrat and followed the fashions of the day.(4) Because he often acted as a representative of the master and saw to the comfort of guests and visitors, a well-dressed steward reflected positively on the wealth and status of the master.

But this is not to say that the steward had a clearly defined sense of power. In fact, the great challenge of stewardship during the Renaissance was to deftly negotiate the blurred line between responsibility and authority. His position was inherently an ambiguous one.(5) Although, as the representative of the master, the steward had a nominal charge of the household, in reality he rarely made important decisions without consulting its head. Lawrence Stone argued that all household servants, stewards included, were considered "equal with children as subordinate members of the household" (27).(6) Although this may be somewhat overstated, it does suggest that, while the steward was often charged with the duties and even the authority of a master, he was rarely

treated like one. Moreover, the steward's position was inexorably linked to the fortunes of the household, which at the beginning of the Seventeenth Century were under constant threat of instability. As the size of the aristocratic household decreased during the period of great social, political and economic upheaval of the elite that preceded the English Revolution, the power and significance of the household steward consequently declined.(7)

This combination of inherent ambiguity and decreasing power undoubtedly presented real problems for the steward of a noble household, such as Malvolio. When we consider further that the death of Olivia's father, followed shortly by that of her brother, has left the household without a paterfamilias, we may suppose an even greater difficulty.(8) The lack of a patriarch might have required greater responsibility on the part of the steward, but it did not usually mean that he was given more authority. It appears that the many contradictions involved in stewardship were satisfactorily contained by the presence, or at least the existence, of the paterfamilias; with the permanent absence of the master, therefore, the steward might have been liable to tremendous feelings of role ambiguity.

Indeed, for Malvolio this ambiguity is not uncomplicated. Olivia is aware of her new power as mistress of the household, but she is not particularly interested in exercising it. What she is interested in, in fact, is "misrule." Thus, Malvolio occupies a subordinate role in relation to a mistress who is neither dominant nor authoritative but playful. As steward, it is his presumptive office to exercise her power for her, but Olivia's own desires prevent that. Even his job of keeping order in the house becomes impossible because Olivia does not support his efforts. Although he has become the ultimate masculine authority in the household, Malvolio is unable to control the debauchery of Sir Toby as Olivia's father or brother might have. Because Olivia is, at least temporarily, undecided about the nature of the relation between her steward and herself, Malvolio is confused about his own appropriate role. A better steward, we might suppose, one with a greater sense of his place and power, would have been able to accept, even easily handle, these ambiguities. But Malvolio, lacking a firm sense of his place in the social hierarchy, cannot accept them. Instead, he tries to amend the situation by alternately railing at the disorder and fantasizing about becoming in name what in some ways he has already become in authority.(9)

In this way, we can begin to talk about Malvolio's "identity crisis,"(10) why he is of "distempered appetite" (1.5.73), and why he cannot live comfortably in Olivia's household. Whether Malvolio is of gentle or middling birth is not so important as the kind of "self" he projects as a member of the household. Critics who have too reductively labeled Malvolio a "social climber" or diagnosed his dissatisfaction as a case of class hyper-consciousness have neglected to consider the role of identity, and its formation and resolution (or their failure), in the development of Malvolio's discontent. I argue that, beyond other valid considerations, the character of Malvolio is principally driven by his anxious but unconscious desire to resolve his ambiguous masculine identity.

The use of modern identity theory to understand early modern drama has received considerable and widely diverse critical attention in recent years. Logical justifications for such an analysis have held that as the rise of a powerful merchant class in the Renaissance disrupted the continuities of feudal and aristocratic life, a modern notion of "self," divided and in crisis, first appeared. Although historians disagree on the nature of this revolution, I want to suggest that the question of what might have constituted a "self" in the Renaissance is one to which Twelfth Night provides two answers, at least indirectly. As I have argued, there is in the main plot and the subplot a distinct difference in dramatic "subjectivities": in the former, the self is "fashioned" by the interactions of concrete social status and the free-play of experience; in the latter, status is not necessarily stable and unreliable experience is the source of debilitating anxiety. Regardless of Malvolio's rank, he consistently disrupts the continuities of life in Illyria (however temporarily discontinuous they may be) and does so in terms of the nature of status and the effects of experience. Through these disruptions, Malvolio projects a self that is, above all, divided and in crisis. Thus, in discussing the "identity" of such a character in modern terms, I am assuming that Shakespeare has, in a sense, already done so. At the very least, such an approach offers a vocabulary for understanding the play's treatment of the problem of identity - an understanding that is somewhere between a metaphor for a particular socially and politically informed psychological truth and the thing itself.

Erik Erikson's stages of identity formation offer some insight into the problems of identity formation or psychosexual development.(11) In

adolescence, a child may be concerned with how he appears to others, compared to how he feels about himself. That is, his social identity and personal or ego identity may seem at odds. In this stage, there is a danger of "role diffusion" or doubt about one's sexual identity, which adolescents may seek to avoid by over-identifying with a person of the same or opposite sex, by having a "crush" or "falling in love." This response is "an attempt to arrive at a definition of one's identity by projecting one's diffuse ego images" onto another and "seeing them thus reflected and gradually clarified" (Childhood 228). In young adulthood, when one is faced with the social expectation of courtship and marriage, such "role diffusion" may become a fear of ego loss through self-abandon (i.e., intimacy), and may lead to a deep sense of isolation and, ultimately, self-absorption. A normal adult eventually learns to "lose himself" in sexuality and friendship without the fear of being "engulfed." Where these attempts at intimacy fail, however, the result, in maturity, may be a regression to "individual stagnation," "interpersonal impoverishment," and an obsessive need for "pseudo-intimacy" (Childhood 231).

We may detect a disparity between the social and personal identities of the steward who "practic[es] behavior to his own shadow" (2.5.17). Malvolio's personal identity as one deserving "exalted respect" (2.5.23) is significantly different from his social identity as a "time-pleaser" (2.3.148). A healthy person, on the other hand, eventually bridges the gap between the way he perceives himself and the way he believes others perceive him. On this matter, Erikson states:

The conscious feeling of having a personal identity is based on two simultaneous observations: the immediate perception of one's self-sameness and continuity in time; and the simultaneous perception of the fact that others recognize one's sameness and continuity. (Ego Development 23)(12)

Even before his gulling, Malvolio lacks the emotional constancy and unity that such simultaneity requires. Once Maria's "device" has been set, the very combination of self-deception and deception by others would seem to make the achievement of a resolved personal identity quite impossible.

The basis of Malvolio's gulling is that only with such an inflated notion of himself could he believe that Olivia loved him. Everyone except Malvolio understands that a match with Olivia is impossible, not only because Malvolio

is her steward, but also because he is neither "generous, guiltless [nor] of free disposition" and perhaps completely unable to love. We might call his eagerness to believe an "over-identification" with both Olivia and the possibility of becoming her husband. In his fantasy of becoming Count Malvolio, Malvolio seems to project the ambiguity or "role diffusion" he associates with his position as steward onto both Olivia and the role of her noble husband in order to see the possibility of something better. "To be Count Malvolio" would be, in name and station, to have a much more clearly defined place in life. Yet, in his inability to accept the ambiguities of his role as steward, Malvolio has neither a place nor the companionship it would offer. His isolation and consequent self-absorption seem to derive from his inability to achieve intimacy with any other person. The result of Malvolio's failure to live harmoniously and intimately with others in the household is, as Erikson predicts, something akin to "interpersonal impoverishment."

An important distinction between Shakespeare's identity drama and modern identity theory is that Renaissance England generally did not distinguish between the specific stages of adolescence, young adulthood, and maturity (Kahn 197). In Shakespeare's day, the status of real "manhood" was not achieved by all men, and a kind of "adolescence" ensued until a man not only came of age but also took a wife and produced an heir. Patriarchal power in Renaissance England belonged not to men generally but to married men with families, and it was unlikely for a bachelor to gain a position of high social or political status.(13) Thus, without a wife to confirm his manhood and a household to call his own, Malvolio, like Sir Toby and Sir Andrew, remains in a kind of adolescence. This may further explain his fantasy of becoming "Count Malvolio." Like an adolescent day-dream of manhood, Malvolio imagines occupying not only a higher social position but also the identity-affirming position of paterfamilias. If we consider Malvolio's masculine identity unresolved in part because he remains unmarried, and therefore childless, then we can see that Olivia's unstable household, because it lacks a patriarch, further problematizes his struggle. Malvolio's situation paradoxically invites and denies his participation in reestablishing such a patriarchy, which for him would help to complete the process of identity formation.

In negotiating the space of ambiguity that comprises his search for identity, Malvolio is caught within still another paradox. Not only is the "misrule" of Olivia's household (and Illyria generally) contrary to his objectives as

steward, but the emotional versatility required to accommodate such "misrule" is beyond his ability.(14) Because Malvolio can only respond to the revelry and humor of the household with indignation, his officious performance becomes a failure of play. Consider his first appearance in Act 1, Scene 4, which immediately identifies him as the anti-comic figure, the opposite of Feste, Olivia's clown. Although Olivia is purportedly in mourning, she finds comic relief in Feste's jibes at Malvolio, and even provokes her steward by asking him, "How say you to that, Malvolio?" Not only does Malvolio refuse to play Feste's game, but he also insults Olivia for playing it: "I marvel your ladyship takes delight in such a barren rascal." If we consider the psychological dimensions of the relationship between Olivia and Malvolio that I have discussed, we can see that Malvolio is in an impossible situation. His job is to maintain order in the household so that Olivia may properly mourn; but because she is not really in mourning, she enjoys Feste's disorderly playfulness. Malvolio's reaction to this disorder is "distempered" because his world does not make sense. In attacking what he sees as Feste's vulnerability" Look you now, he's out of his guard" (1.5.82-86) he reveals his own: that he can never allow himself to be "out of his guard." Olivia shows that she understands this when she exclaims, "O you are sick of self-love, Malvolio!" (1.5.90). His narcissistic isolation is his protective shell that attempts to fend off both the "bird-bolts" and "cannon bullets" (1.5.93) of others. Malvolio cannot distinguish between innocent teasing and real offense because in Olivia's household the distinction is unstable, if not meaningless.

Feste's jesting represents not only the lack of order in the household, but also what appears to be the beginning of the end of Olivia's mourning, which may be a threat to Malvolio's present power. So long as Olivia has "abjured the sight and company of men" (1.2.40-41), Malvolio, as her keeper of the house, retains a special significance. He is, in fact, the most important man in her life, which she admits when, noting his "distract" behavior, she declares, "I would not have him miscarry for the half of my dowry" (3.4.62-63).(15) As such status is jeopardized, Malvolio fears not only losing his present power and thus perhaps being "unmanned" but also being reminded of his lack of real patriarchal power. This fear seems to account for his disagreeable behavior in this scene. His description of the "manner of man" (1.5.152) that is Viola/Cesario is a curious one which makes the point:

Not yet old enough for a man, nor young enough for a boy: as is a squash is

before 'tis a peascod, or a codling when 'tis almost an apple. 'Tis with him in standing water, between boy and man. One would think his mother's milk were scarce out of him. (1.5.156-162)

This pubescent youth, he seems to say to Olivia, is hardly man enough for your serious consideration. It is perhaps for the same reason that Malvolio specifically calls Feste a "barren" rascal. On one hand, Malvolio is dutifully protecting his mistress; on the other hand, he is projecting his deepest fear his failure to achieve a resolved masculine identity.

Similarly, Malvolio's failure to either control or abide the antics of Sir Toby, Sir Andrew and Maria, is closely tied to his difficult relation to Olivia. This is evident in Malvolio's first remonstrations against Sir Toby's debauchery: "Sir Toby, I must be round with you. My lady bade me tell you that, though she harbors you as her kinsman, she's nothing allied to your disorders" (2.3.95-97). Whether Olivia actually instructed Malvolio to deliver Sir Toby an ultimatum we cannot be sure, but Malvolio would have her "allied" to order, and therefore to himself. Toby senses Malvolio's implicit meaning and offers his cutting double question: "Art any more than a steward? Dost thou think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale?" (2.3.114-116). To be "more than a steward," for Malvolio, might indeed mean to be a nobleman and possibly Count Malvolio, Olivia's husband. Toby and the others object to the fact that Malvolio is overstepping his bounds, not by insisting on order in the house, for that is his job, but by allying himself so closely with Olivia. They seem to realize that this violation of the social order is much more egregious than their late-night revelry.(16) Sir Toby's suggestion that Malvolio is "virtuous" is a sharply ironic criticism that subtly points to the steward's hypocritical desire for Olivia. Maria calls him "a kind of puritan" (2.3.139), not because she thinks he is an actual puritan, but because he is like one in his hypocritical, self-absorbed pomposity. The designation, as Shakespeare used it, had no narrowly defined religious or political connotation. One historian notes, of the puritan designation in pre-Revolutionary English writing: "There were many Malvolios. Contemporary references to puritan hypocrisy are frequent, and they usually refer to the combination of godly phrases with economic or other less noble motives" (Hill 25).(17) Here, Toby and Maria insinuate the hypocritical righteousness of Malvolio's pretending to protect Olivia from Toby's debauchery while simultaneously entertaining sexual and matrimonial thoughts about her.

Maria, however, also sees beyond Malvolio's "puritan" hypocrisy, to a self-division exceeding that of "phrases" and "motives," and one that lies at the core of his own self-concept. Thus, she explains to Sir Toby, "it is his grounds of faith that all who look on him love him; and on that vice in him will my revenge find notable cause to work" (2.3.151-153). In constructing her "revenge," Maria recognizes that the disparity between Malvolio's "self-love" and that fact that others know him as "an affectioned ass" (2.3.148) is his greatest vulnerability. By convincing Malvolio that Olivia loves him, Maria intends to "put him in such a dream that when the image of it leaves him, he must run mad" (2.5.193-194). To put Malvolio in such a dream would be to fool him into believing that his social identity and personal identity were the same indeed, that all his problems were solved. For "to be Count Malvolio" would be to marry Olivia, to rise in station, to bring order to the house, and finally to resolve his identity into that of a mature man.

In Malvolio's performance of his fantasy, he imagines having "the humour of state" (2.5.52), or freedom of rank, that he entirely lacks as a steward: "I frown the while, and perchance wind up my watch, or play with my some rich jewel" (1.5.59-60). On one level, this is a thinly veiled fantasy of lust and power, in which he substitutes a sexually suggestive "jewel" for his steward's chain. Malvolio imagines possessing the sexual liberty that would render Olivia available to him, as well as the sexual potency that would signify his complete manhood. But he also imagines the ability to play, to be "generous, guiltless, and of free disposition," as if such emotional freedom were the sole property of the nobility. Ironically, of course, even in his luxurious imaginings, Malvolio is not playing as much as he is being played with. Finally, when the gulling is over and "the image of [Count Malvolio] leaves him," he does not "run mad" so much as he is threatened with what Erickson called "ego loss." By rejecting his "calling" of stewardship, Malvolio has rejected his own selfhood, and in a sense no longer has any coherent identity at all.

Outwardly, Maria's gulling is intended to make Malvolio an extreme and ridiculous version of the person he desires to be. On another level, however, it also seems clearly calculated to destroy his very identity. We can see in Malvolio's reading of the letter his attempt to "crush" (2.5.140) himself into the identity of "the unknown beloved" (2.5.90) when he is presented with the

puzzle, "M.O.A.I. doth sway my life" (2.5.107). Malvolio's effort to "make that resemble something in [him]" (2.5.119-120) results in the literal disintegration of his name. He cannot solve the puzzle because he does not really know who he is. Maria's pithy construction, "Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon 'em'" (2.5.145-146), similarly reveals her understanding of Malvolio's predicament. To be "born great" is to have an identity that is ontologically fixed: one is simply great. To "achieve greatness" is performative and thus involves attaining an identity through some act. But to have "greatness thrust upon" one involves no willful or original act at all, but merely a reaction, perhaps desperate, to one's circumstances. In Malvolio's case, it is to nominally accept the benefits of a resolved adult identity without actually having achieved one. The letter tells Malvolio, "thou art made if thou desir'st to be so; if not, let me see thee a steward still" (2.5.155-156). Though Malvolio does indeed desire to be "made" into a nobleman and a patriarch, the effect of the gulling is not that he is left "a steward still," but that he is virtually un-made, his identity left in tatters.

The "Count Malvolio" who presents himself to Olivia "cross-gartered" and "smiling"(18) seems to be the imaginary fulfillment of Malvolio's wish to transcend his paradoxical position as steward by marrying his mistress and thereby resolving his masculine identity. When Olivia reacts incredulously to Malvolio's behavior, asking, "God comfort thee! Why dost thou smile so and kiss thy hand so oft?" (3.4.32-33), she fails to acknowledge and endorse the new "identity" Malvolio has assumed. Instead, she answers his gestures with ambivalence and confusion and finally dismisses him, leaving him wholly unsatisfied, "a steward still." Thus, the truly cruel element of the gulling is the way it sets up an inevitable conflict between what Malvolio unconsciously wishes were true and what he consciously discovers is not. Because the imbrication of the conscious and unconscious seems to direct much of the subtext of the main plot of Twelfth Night, it seems appropriate to investigate Malvolio's fantasy not only in terms of its conscious effects, but also its unconscious causes. I submit that if we read his fantasy as a "day-dream" or even an actual dream, then it may reveal not only something of his hidden desires, but, perhaps more importantly, how he comes to understand, if only unconsciously, the complex social and psychological matrix within which he attempts to define himself.

The work of Freud suggests to me several readings of Malvolio's fantasy that look to childhood desires as the origin of adult fantasies. In the essay "Family Romances," Freud considers the (male) child who invents an imaginary parentage in order to cope with the realization that his parents are not the heroic, infallible people he thought they were when he was younger. By altering his past, the child effectively alters his conception of the present and future as well. Such a desire can be profound enough to follow the child into adulthood. Freud writes:

A characteristic example of this peculiar imaginative activity is to be seen in the familiar day-dreaming which persists far beyond puberty. If these daydreams are carefully examined, they are found to serve as the fulfillment of wishes and as a correction of actual life. They have two principal aims, an erotic and an ambitious one. (238)

Similarly, Malvolio imagines "Count Malvolio," who may be either the invented father or the son the father produced, or both simultaneously, and who may represent the symbolic fulfillment of a wish to correct his origins. Comparing himself, or his parents, with Olivia, or her parents, and finding his own situation inadequate, Malvolio may be said to invent a past, and thus a present and future, which are more satisfying to him. The "ambitious aim" relates to Malvolio's rise in social status and is apparent in his disdainful treatment of Sir Toby in the fantasy. The "erotic aim" is to "bring his mother into situations of secret infidelity" (239), through which such an alternative parentage might have been possible. Such an adulterous act may be symbolically represented by Malvolio's socially proscribed wooing of Olivia. In this reading, the manifestation of his unconscious desire is largely a function of difference in social rank, a difference first perceived in childhood, but one more fully and perhaps painfully demarcated in Malvolio's adult role as steward.

Yet, as Freud argued in The Interpretation of Dreams, the greatest influences of adult dreams are not experiences of childhood but of infancy: "A wish which is represented in a dream must be an infantile one" (533). But dreams, as wish-fulfillments, are not always inspired by the most obvious desires, and the true wish may be disguised or distorted. Through interpretation, we may find that the latent dream thoughts are altogether different from the manifest dream content. For example, in the dream, Olivia seems to be Malvolio's

heterosexual object choice, and Count Malvolio, his id-driven alter-ego. Thus, the dream appears to be a clear fulfillment of Malvolio's ambitious and sexual desire to become her noble husband. Here, the latent infantile wish might involve the satisfaction of Oedipal desire through identification with the father. Yet, the true wish may be less obvious. At the time of the dream, Olivia has officially renewed her interest in Orsino's suit (through Viola/Cesario), and any accepted suitor is, to Malvolio, a rival for Olivia's love. Such a rival might be represented by the stately Count Malvolio. Indeed, the character in Twelfth Night who most closely resembles Count Malvolio is Orsino himself. Thus, it may appear that in becoming the noble Count, Malvolio has identified with his rival and then literally replaced him, thereby removing the threat the rival posed. This interpretation, in which the same latent infantile wish to possess the mother may involve taking the place of the father, suggests that Malvolio's desire for Olivia is part of a larger sense of masculine rivalry, and one derived from his first, infantile sense of it.

However, consider further that, beyond her beauty and charm, Olivia's greatest attraction for Malvolio may be that she, unlike any other, holds the power and title he desires: she is the head of the household. Perhaps his dream is not the fulfillment of a wish to have her, but rather to be her. The latent infantile wish in this scenario might involve the resolution of Oedipal desire through identification with the mother. Of course, in this identification across both class and gender, to be Olivia is also to desire a noble husband. Accordingly, Count Malvolio is not whom Malvolio wants to be, but rather whom he wants to have. Indeed, this may be readily apparent in the dream when we consider that it mentions Olivia only in passing and is primarily concerned with an attractive nobleman being attended by his servants. Malvolio's dream is, in a sense, a sexually charged fantasy whose main figure is another man. Here, the manifest dream of heterosexual jealousy and desire may reflect, in Freudian terms, an insufficiently repressed homosexual impulse. More importantly, however, this interpretation suggests that Malvolio's identification with rank and authority, with real power as he most directly experiences it through Olivia, is stronger than his identification with his masculinity and even heterosexual desire.

To reiterate, the point of these interpretations is not to describe definitively the source of Malvolio's desires; rather, because the

correspondences between unconscious desire and conscious action are rarely direct, they may reveal, in their indirection, not only latent desire, but also the social and psychological dynamics that provide the context for such desire. Thus, with a contingent understanding of Malvolio's long held feelings of social inferiority, his native sense of masculine rivalry, and his powerful identification with rank and authority, we can see more clearly how his search for a resolved identity is so vulnerable to the possibility, even the inevitability, of failure.

As I have suggested, the relationship between this failure and Malvolio's dream-turned-nightmare is a symbolic one. Thus, it is not surprising that the action which follows the gulling - Malvolio's cruel punishment - is also highly symbolic. Psychoanalysis, literature, and Western culture generally have found a metaphor for identity crisis or ego loss in various images of captivity, darkness, and maternal engulfment, in which the psychic isolation experienced by the individual is symbolized by his physical isolation. Malvolio's punishment, his being taken to "a dark room and bound" (3.4.135-136), is such a metaphor. Like his fantasy, it suggests more than one interpretation. In an Eriksonian reading, Malvolio's overtures to Olivia may be called a failed attempt at "losing himself" in sexuality and intimacy (or perhaps merely "pseudo-intimacy"), which results in his feeling "isolated" or "engulfed," or, indeed, in the most literal manifestation of "interpersonal impoverishment." We may further note that Malvolio's punishment, like Maria's letter, seems custom-designed for his particular sexual crime of wrong desire for his mistress. That is, the "hideous darkness" (4.2.30) of the cellar, like Lear's "sulphurous pit" (KL 4.6.128), may signify feminine sexuality, the sexual darkness of Olivia, to which his unmediated desire has transported him. The lunatic's cellar is also the darkness of Malvolio's identity crisis, which is chiefly manifest as what Maria claims to be his "madness"; thus, the cellar is a public symbol of this alleged madness. Antipholous of Ephesus, in The Comedy of Errors, faces a similar fate when, his problems with identity having caused considerable confusion and provoked accusations of insanity, he is threatened with being "bound and laid in some dark room" (TCE 4.4.94), which was a common and curiously symbolic treatment for those thought to be insane in Shakespeare's day. For Sir Toby, however, who suggests and executes the punishment, the cellar is also a private symbol of the steward's self-doubt, of which Sir Toby and the others are all too aware. But the metaphor is also Malvolio's. Knowing that he has been "madly used" but not knowing exactly how,

he is in figurative darkness about the gulling. In his psychic turmoil, the darkness of ignorance and deception, anxiety and sexuality, seem to merge, and his punishment for not seeing the truth (that is, for being gulled) is his not seeing anything at all.

On the other hand, his real "madness" is his obsessive rationality and insistence that the room is dark. Even in his vulnerable position, Malvolio is determined to discuss the matter rationally, "in any constant question" (4.2.48-49). The consummate steward, he refuses to accept any form of disorder. Thus, as it indicates the disorder of both his identity crisis and his physical predicament, this scene is emblematic of Malvolio's inability to accommodate the failures of logic and the chaos of misrule. In Illyria, such reasonableness is problematic.

Learning to accept the disorder of experience, to enjoy its possibilities, and, like Viola, to allow time to "untangle" the hard knots of life's confusion, are what makes the characters of the main plot ultimately successful in finding mates. From their precarious beginnings, Viola, Sebastian, Olivia, and Orsino experiment with adult identities, try them out on one another, and "play" with the possibilities each identity offers. This quest continues until the "play," and the theatrical performance itself, come to a conclusion, and marriage permanently confirms upon each character his or her adult identity. Along the way, however, in the midst of their experimentation, the potential for error and crisis is apparent, and it is here that we can begin to explore the close thematic relation between main plot and subplot.

An undercurrent of tragic potential, which is first suggested by the deaths and melancholy that begin Act 1, can be found in the language of possibility, uncertainty, and anxiety that each character uses. For example, we hear in Orsino's first speech on the ephemeral nature of love, with its curious phrase, "so full of shapes is fancy,/That it alone is high fantastical" (1.1.14-15), an almost infinite multiplicity of desire that seems to be capable of containing, if only for a moment, the wishes of every character in the play, even Antonio's. This possibility is first realized when Viola decides to don the disguise of a eunuch and serve Orsino by speaking to him in "many sorts of music" (1.2.58). The phrase echoes the music that is Orsino's "food of love," but also looks forward to the very different sorts of music or

shapes of fancy, homosexual and heterosexual, that Viola will speak to both Olivia and Orsino, and which will be an important cause of the play's confusion.

This possibility becomes endemic uncertainty when the disguise and self-deception running rampant in Illyria, like the carnival masquerades of the solstitial celebration, manifest various levels of identity and potentially limitless prospects for human interaction. Like Malvolio, the characters in the main plot's love-triangle perform a specific identity not their own, in order to satisfy a specific desire. Viola does this consciously, while Olivia and Orsino, in their obsessive narcissism, do it unconsciously. Even Sebastian, in all his apparent innocence, has used the alias "Roderigo" for unknown reasons. For each of these characters, the outward or performative "self" is capable of splitting off from the inward "self" (a split that is not unlike Erikson's social and ego identities). For example, although Viola compliments the sea captain for having "a mind that suits with [his] fair and outward character" (1.2.50-51), only fourteen lines later she dons a disguise. We are told by Viola's captain that Orsino is "a noble duke, in nature as in name" (1.2.25), yet Orsino's plan to have Viola/Cesario "act [his] woes" (1.4.26) provides strong evidence that his woes are indeed an act, and that he is not what he appears. Olivia too, who "they say...hath abjured the company and sight of men" (1.2.40-41), nonetheless entertains the jokes of Feste and has clearly moved beyond her need to mourn, though she says otherwise.

It is significant that the characters in Twelfth Night acknowledge the falseness that is common to their society and the different levels of identity that are possible (personal and social, inward and outward, ontologically "fixed" and performative). Consistently, almost habitually, they express a conscious awareness "that nature with a beauteous wall/Doth oft close in pollution" (1.2.48-49). Although this was a commonplace of Renaissance, and specifically Shakespearean, speech, as in the "fair cruel" of the Sonnets, the language of Twelfth Night is charged with a distinctive anxiety about the potential for being deceived. For example, Olivia knows that one might easily be taken in by appearances, for the speeches of suitors are "like to be feigned" (1.5.196), and "the eye is too great a flatterer for the mind" (1.5.309). Olivia's visual fixations, indicative of her own narcissism, initially cause her to fall in love with Viola/Cesario (and later enable her to switch to Sebastian in Act 5 without a second thought). Perhaps it is

because Olivia is self-conscious of her own falseness that she is so wary of it in others.

In her first meeting with Viola/Cesario, Olivia is almost obsessively aware of the possibility of outward deception, and she reveals her anxiety by asking an extraordinary number of questions regarding Viola/Cesario's identity and desire. Consider those asked in 1.5 alone:

"What is he at the gate?"; "A gentlemen? What gentleman?"; "What kind of man is he?"; "What manner of man?"; "Of what personage and years is he?"; "Your will?"; "Whence came you, sir?"; "Are you a comedian?"; "What are you? What would you?"; "What is your text?"; "Where lies your text?"; "Why, what would you?"; "What is your parentage?" (1.116-117, 119, 150, 152, 155, 169, 177, 182, 212-213, 220, 223, 268, 278)

Taken together, these questions sound like the ravings of a paranoid. Not only is Olivia suspicious of the suit from the count, but she is also skeptically enamored of Viola/Cesario. To be sure, Olivia's questions are part of a ritualized courtly flirtation that is a form of play. But they also represent a tremendous anxiety about the failure of play, or what can only be called reality. That is, if this young man with whom Olivia has fallen in love is something other than the person he seems, the result of courtship could be, by Elizabethan standards, quite disastrous.

Viola/Cesario, in her response to these questions, admits, "I am not what I am" (3.1.141), conceding openly, if ambiguously, that "what I am and what I would are as secret as maidenhead" (1.5.215-216). Despite her disguise, Viola/Cesario makes it quite clear that she "care[s] not who knows so much of [her] mettle" (3.4.272), and she takes few pains to keep her true identity hidden. Perhaps this is because, unlike any other character, she has the singular emotional unity of "one heart, one bosom, and one truth" (3.1.158) and a relatively strong sense of her own identity.(19) Nevertheless, on finding that Olivia has fallen in love with her, Viola/Cesario realizes the great danger, for herself and for Olivia, that her falseness has created:

Disguise thou art a wickedness, Wherein the pregnant enemy does much.

How will this fadge? My master loves her dearly, And I (poor monster) fond as

much on him As she (mistaken) seems to dote on me. What will become of this? As I am a man, My state is desperate for my master's love; As I am woman - no alas the day! - What thriftless sighs shall poor Olivia breathe? O time, thou must untangle this, not I; It is too hard a knot for me t'untie. (2.2.27-41)

Despite Viola's own constancy, the "fantastical" possibilities of identity and desire, like Orsino's love, always "receiveth as the sea" (1.1.11) those who entertain them, and, like the sea, either embrace or engulf.(20) Viola's "pregnant enemy" is the tragic possibility of identity crisis that Malvolio ultimately suffers. It is Malvolio who becomes the "poor monster" that Viola risks becoming but does not. Viola sees that in her disguise she has caused tremendous confusion of desire brought on by the confusion of identity. Because she does not know how this dilemma will "fadge," she must trust the untangling of the confusion to time, or to the process of maturation, and hope that "Nature to her bias" (5.1.260) will untie the knot.

In this element of vulnerability, where mistakes create monsters and, as Feste says, "the wrong side may be turned outward" (3.1.13), that we can see perhaps the most important connection between the two plots, which is also the primary cause of the play's confusion: the problem of misplaced desire. In the main story, each of the characters is madly desirous of another, whom he or she cannot have, perhaps in a way similar to what Erikson called "over-identification."(21) Orsino desires Olivia, who desires Viola/Cesario, who desires Orsino (and even Antonio hopelessly desires Sebastian). Ultimately, Viola/Cesario is the only character whose original desires are satisfied; the others must compromise with alternatives. Still, except for Antonio, who in the final act seems to disappear from the story altogether, every character in the main story is satisfactorily re-paired, and thus repaired from the story's confusion and anxiety. For Malvolio, however, no such reparations are possible.(22)

We are obliged to ask, then, given the extreme narcissism of the other characters and the curiously hurried marriage arrangements in Act 5, whether Malvolio's malvoglio is essentially any different from the desires of the characters of the main story. Why is Malvolio's desire for his mistress so egregious if Olivia has, in pursuing Cesario, evinced few scruples about falling in love with servants? Olivia and Orsino, and arguably even Viola and Sebastian, are full of self-love; why is Malvolio "sick" with it? How

authentic is the affection that narcissistic Orsino has for narcissistic Olivia, a woman whom he hardly knows and who has been ever so "constant" in her refusals? What about his sudden love for Viola/Cesario, whom he only recently thought to be merely a nice young man? Likewise, is the "love" Olivia easily transfers from Viola/Cesario to Sebastian born of real affection? Was this love ever anything more than a case of her eyes being "too great a flatterer for [her] mind?" And what about Sebastian's marriage to a perfect stranger? The final act of Twelfth Night elicits an unavoidable feeling that the unlikely, last-minute marriages and the somewhat abrupt conclusion of the play rely on a kind of fairytale artifice, while summarily dismissing these important questions.(23) The vulnerabilities and tragic possibilities of Viola's, Sebastian's, Olivia's, and Orsino's quests for love and selfhood seem to have been displaced onto Malvolio, whose quests for the very same things are failed ones. His particular position of ambiguous authority, his own social inferiority, his faltering ego (perhaps his emerging modern "self," divided and doubtful), all contribute to making him a very convenient scapegoat. For, ultimately, as the receptacle for the play's unwanted tragic potential, the Malvolio subplot makes comedy possible for the main plot.

Yet it is part of Shakespeare's genius in Twelfth Night to make this displacement incomplete, thereby linking plot and subplot even more closely. When in the final scene Malvolio declares, "I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you!" (5.1.378), we ought not take his meaning lightly. His true revenge, we might say, is his refusal to allow the main plot to be completely resolved before the end of the play. Having jailed the captain who aided Viola with her disguise and held her clothes in the interim, Malvolio keeps Viola from donning her "maiden weeds" (5.1.255) and thereby properly accepting Orsino as her husband. Moreover, Viola says to her brother, Sebastian, "Do not embrace me, till each circumstance,/Of place, time, fortune, do cohere and jump/That I am Viola" (5.1.2251-253). As long as Viola remains in disguise, the "misrule" of the main plot is never set straight.(24) Of course, neither is the subplot. When Malvolio enters to announce the wrong that he believes Olivia has done him, she responds with the assurance that he will have justice; but this too must wait until she knows the "grounds and authors" (5.1.353) of the gulling. After Malvolio's angry exit, Orsino selfishly commands Fabian, "Pursue him, and entreat him to a peace; he hath not told us of the captain yet" (5.1.380-381). But neither Malvolio nor anyone else comes to finish the unfinished story.

If the characters of the main plot are fundamentally different from Malvolio, then, as we have seen, they also share much in common with him. There is no final marriage procession in Twelfth Night, as there are in most Shakespearean comedies, because under the circumstances, with a bride in men's clothing and a steward "notoriously abused," none seems appropriate. The problem of Malvolio has become a problem for the characters of the main plot, and one they can solve only superficially. The underlying darkness of the play is finally, if ambiguously, played out by Feste, the last character on the stage. As the mediator between the play's two plots, Feste seems to be privileged with the wisdom that each plot holds for the other. Part of that wisdom, suggested by his name, is that the revelry and "misrule" of the Twelfth Night celebration are a natural and necessary part of life. From the perspective of modern psychology, we may add that experimentation and confusion are normal aspects of identity development. Feste's second and more ominous truth, however, is that "anything that's mended is but patched" (1.5.47-48): that although the comic fictions of life may conceal tragic possibility, they do not eliminate it. His final song, which comically describes the passage from boyhood into manhood, leaves the play with an ambivalence that points to King Lear, whose clown shares Feste's refrain.(25) The concluding lines of the song are as abrupt and apparently unresolved as the play itself:

A great while ago the world begun, With a hey, ho, the wind and the rain, But that's all one, our play is done, And we'll strive to please you everyday. (5.1.405-408)

The lines sum up the play and its happy ending by dismissing them altogether. The banal send-off, like the too-convenient marriages, overtly covers over the ambiguous final status of the play's characters simply by ending the play. It is not Feste's theme, as some critics have argued,(26) that the progress of life and the coming into "man's estate" (5.1.393) represent a mundane but reliable transition from milestone to milestone or a mere passing of time, but rather that drama, particularly comedy, makes life seem to be so by masking its pitfalls. Although the play's marriages represent the joining of three noble families and the restoration of patriarchal rule in Illyria, the disruptive anger of the steward remains. Thus, Feste's truth resonates: "anything that's mended is but patched."

Stephen Greenblatt writes that "the form of the drama itself invites reflection upon the extent to which it is possible for one man to assume the identity of another" (219). Twelfth Night and its two plots not only invite such reflection, but they enact it, with only ambiguous conclusions. Such is the nature of identity. The steward's failed imposture of a noble count, and his failure to resolve his masculine identity, are contrasted to the successful identity experimentations of the main plot. However, Malvolio's failures are also analogous to the failure of the main plot to resolve itself completely; thus, they integrate plot and subplot and tie him to the whole structure of the play. For all his differences, he is as much the play's insider as he is its outsider. But he is still its outsider. The play's final word, then, is ultimately dependent upon Malvolio's final status, the valence and social significance assigned to his "difference." The implications for a materialist analysis are perhaps too neatly apparent from a modern perspective: if the unchallenged aristocracy of the main plot remains unchallenged in a world without consequences, this is only a temporary repression of a dialectical inevitability. Yet, such inevitability is nowhere to be found in the play's text.(27) Indeed, the meaning of dramatic non-resolution must not be found beyond the play but within it. In the same way, Twelfth Night must be understood not in terms of the ends of identity and desire, but in their processual struggle. "What you will" signifies many things, but it is also a question, and one whose answers lie inextricably between plot and subplot.

ENDNOTES

1 Plautus's Menaechmi, also a probable source for The Comedy of Errors, and Gl' Ingannati, an early sixteenth-century Italian comedy of mistaken identity and surrogate courting, may have been well-known to Shakespeare. A likelier direct source is the English "historie" of "Apolonius and Silla" from Barnaby Riche's Farewell to the Military Profession (1581). Riche's tale, while more violent and bawdy than Shakespeare's version, similarly begins by unraveling the problems of mistaken identity and misplaced desire, only to sew them up again neatly with the reunion of twins and the celebration of a double marriage. See Bullough, 269-372. Israel Gollancz's preface to the 1894 Temple edition of Twelfth Night notes that in Il Sacrificio, the "poetical introduction" of Gl' Ingannati, there occurs the name "Malevolti," which suggests the name "Malvolio." However, beyond the nominal connection, there is

no evidence that the later character is a substantive derivation. See Gollancz vi-vii.

2 The word "tragedy" is used speculatively, but not casually. In Aristotelian terms, Malvolio might arguably have the necessary traits of a tragic hero. As the steward of a great noble household and the most trusted servant of its mistress, he has achieved a certain degree of glory and good fortune; most essentially, he is a man of some excellence and uprightness and quite free of baseness. His inadequacy or positive fault (harmartia) concerns his unresolved masculine identity, which is one of the primary subjects of this essay.

3 See Malcomson 38, who argues that "the play veils and manipulates the rank of Malvolio...."

4 Cunnington 66; also the source of the Spenser and Massinger quotations. See also Gouws 478-479; and Hunt 282.

5 We may be confident that Renaissance audiences recognized this to be true, in the same way, perhaps, that today we recognize - even stigmatize - the very difficult position of the butler, whose character, according to the time-honored adage of mystery novels, is the first to be impugned.

6 On the treatment of servants in 17th and 18th C. aristocratic households, see Hainsworth 245.

7 While the role of the household steward declined, that of the estate steward increased. With enclosure and industrialization, the larger noble estates became complicated organizations that required professional management. In the Seventeenth Century, the estate steward was a very powerful figure, while the household steward had become all but extinct and was replaced by the more butler-like majordomo, who wielded much less authority. See Hainsworth 10.

8 Although there were women, often widows of some maturity, who successfully managed wealth and property during the Renaissance, a great noble household left in the hands of a young, unmarried woman, no matter how capable, signified a distinct disadvantage.

9 I am indebted to Constance Jordan for helping me to understand the

structural dynamics of the Renaissance household. See her Renaissance Feminism.

10 Following Erikson, I will use this term to mean "loss of ego identity." For a useful discussion of the early history of the expression, see Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis 16-19.

11 See Childhood 219-234. While Erikson describes eight stages of ego development, my discussion concerns only three: Adolescence (Identity v. Role Diffusion); Young Adulthood (Intimacy v. Isolation); and Adulthood (Generativity v. Stagnation). The application of Erikson's work to identity formation in Shakespeare is well-developed in Coppelia Kahn's "The Providential Tempest and the Shakespearean Family," in Man's Estate, 195-225. Although Kahn's work does not consider the Malvolio sub-plot, I am deeply indebted to her discussions of Twelfth Night, masculine identity in the Renaissance, and the identity theories of Erikson.

12 See also Lichtenstein 193-195, and Erikson, Identity: Youth and Crisis 21-26.

13 See Stone, Family 27; Laslett 12; and Kahn 12-17.

14 See David Willbern's "Malvolio's Fall," which considers "the steward's collision with the merrymakers, the nature of the damage he suffers, and its relevance to the general theme of festivity" (86).

15 Olivia's association of Malvolio with her dowry is further evidence that she considers him to be a kind of temporary, substitute husband.

16 For a contrary view, see Malcomson 45.

17 See Mueschke and Fleisher 732-733: "The stage satire of the Puritans was as popular with theater audiences as the Puritans themselves were unpopular, and the occasional suggestion of a Puritanical bias in Malvolio's pretentious virtue added to the opportunities for satire and ridicule of the steward" (733).

18 In Shakespeare, smiling almost always signifies deception in the smiler,

and often leads to his demise. Compare Malvolio's fate with some of Shakespeare's other "smiling" characters: Hamlet's Claudius "O villain, villain, smiling damned villain" (1.5.106); the "smiling" Rosencrantz and Guildenstern (2.2.332); Oswald, the "smiling rogue" of King Lear (2.2.79); and Timon's flattering lords, the "most smiling, smooth, detested parasites" (3.6.104).

19 I agree with Fineman's argument that the main plot's "playfully designed chaos is only possible because the sex difference, the 'little thing' (3.4.282-283) Viola lacks, is secure, acknowledged, presumed" (82), and Barber's point that "when the normal is secure...playful aberration is benign" (245). However, as I have argued, there is little that is "normal" or "secure" about Olivia and her household at the time when she meets Viola/Cesario; likewise, from the play's beginning, Orsino's narcissism seems to have him perched at the edge of a pond grasping at a phantasm. Only Viola's singular unity lends benignity to the play's chaos. The chaos that is not so benign is that which leads Fineman to admit that "this is comedy, but comedy that knows worse than itself" (85).

20 For an interesting recent discussion of Orsino's metaphors of engulfment and digestion, see Rene Girard 112-114.

21 This is what C. L. Barber might have called an "inadequate object." See 246-247.

22 Perhaps this is because, unlike the apparent desires of the others, Malvolio's misplaced desire for Olivia, does not seem to be based in any real affection at all. Moreover, while the other characters mediate their desires through surrogates and equivocation, Malvolio expresses his overtly, in this way offending not only the decorum of courtly love, but also the rules of social status. While Orsino sends embassies of love, and Olivia gives Viola/Cesario a ring and Sebastian a pearl, Malvolio's material expressions of his affection, his cross-gartering and smiling, are not tokens of real love. Because they are not of his own invention but specifically prescribed by the gulling, they become fetishes or intended symbolic actions that finally have no symbolic content for Malvolio the lover.

23 David Scott Kastan writes: "To call attention to the formal rather than the

psychological justifications of [Twelfth Night's] conclusion...is not to find the ending either inadequate or ironic, but only to see it as it is: as a self-consciously improbable - though thoroughly desirable - resolution of loyalties and affections" (577). Valerie Traub also comments instructively: "Insofar as gender hierarchies seem to be both temporarily transgressed and formally reinstated, the question of subversion versus containment can only be resolved by crediting either the expense of dramatic energy or comedic closure" (120).

24 See Willbern 89.

25 Compare Feste's song,

When that I was and-a little tiny boy, With hey, ho, the wind and the rain, A foolish thing was but a toy, For the rain it raineth every day. (5.1.366-369)

with the one King Lear's fool sings in the middle of the storm, He that has a tiny little wit, With hey, ho, the wind and the rain, Must make content with his fortunes fit, Though the rain it raineth every day. (KL 3.2.74-77)

26 Although Feste's song suggests various interpretations, I disagree with Barbara Everett's more conventional reading that "the theme of the song is, after all, simply growing up, accepting the principle that nights before have mornings after; that life consists in passing time, and in knowing it" (308). I prefer Coddin's reading of the song as one which "call[s] attention to the illusory nature of comic resolution...": "The final line, 'And we'll strive to please you everyday,' is a reminder that playing itself, while trafficking in illusion, is historically embedded, materially reproducible in time and space, and thus vulnerable to 'wind and rain,' to the threats that escape closure," 323. See also Kastan 578.

27 Coddin argues that "Twelfth Night pointedly reinforces neither aristocratic nor anti-court values; rather, by exploding the kinds of social classifications propounded by contemporary critics into a multiplicity of slippery, contingent positions, the play subversively confounds holiday and history, festive 'license' and contestation," 312.

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