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# **Playing with Identity**

**The Idea of the Self from Shakespeare to Nunn**

By

**Bethany Schouten**



**Universiteit Utrecht**

<b>Institution of Higher Learning</b>	University of Utrecht Master Cultural History
<b>Supervisor</b>	Joris van Eijnatten
<b>Second Reader</b>	Willemijn Ruberg
<b>Editor</b>	Stephanie Walker
<b>Author</b>	Bethany Schouten Student number 3278972 B.K.Schouten@uu.nl
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Master Thesis by Bethany Schouten

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## INTRODUCTION

*If music be the food of love, play on:* a phrase I think is familiar to us all. Maybe you cannot place it immediately but it most certainly has crossed your path. The expression comes from William Shakespeare who, in late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century England, wrote plays such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Hamlet*, *Romeo and Juliet* and the famous comedy *Twelfth Night or What You Will*. Shakespearean plays have been a great influence on western culture and they have inspired and influenced generations ever since they were first performed. For many, including myself, the characters of the plays have become symbols that are connected to love, identity, misfortune, happiness and despair.

Shakespeare seems to have taken a hold on our minds: both he and his plays have been subjected to much interpretation and criticism. In *The Modernist Shakespeare* Hugh Grady states that “Shakespearean criticism has long been in search of the *authentic Shakespearean meaning*[...] armies of both ignorant and learned tilt and joust at each other in a [...] never ending contest of interpretation” (Grady, 1991: 1, my emphasis). Shakespeare’s plays are thus a matter of debate. This makes me wonder what it is that these critics are looking for. Can one find a true intrinsic meaning when interpreting Shakespeare’s plays? Does this intrinsic truth really exist or is meaning and interpretation dependent on time and one’s own perspective? Because of this everlasting search for the ‘true’ Shakespearean meaning I find it interesting to understand how meaning is constructed in different historical eras. Therefore, I propose to examine a modern rendition of Shakespeare’s play *Twelfth Night or What You Will*, namely Trevor Nunn’s 1996 production of *TWELFTH NIGHT OR WHAT YOU WILL*.<sup>1</sup> I have chosen this particular play because it takes on interesting notions of gender (bending), mistaken identity and sexuality, and because it allows me to analyze these notions in different renditions.

What is important in this research is an understanding of the medium (consisting of either the play or the film) versus the message (selfhood and identity), since I am analyzing both Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* in relation to Nunn’s film rendition of the play. Because Nunn reciprocated the language/words of the script in the film, it is my assumption that the medium

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<sup>1</sup> For reasons of lucidity I will refer to Shakespeare’s original play as *Twelfth Night*. Trevor Nunn’s film production of *Twelfth Night* will be referred to as *TWELFTH NIGHT*.

does not affect the notion that I will examine. I am not merely analyzing, comparing or contrasting language/words present in the play and the film. By means of a semiotic and discursive close reading I am examining the transfer of ideas and themes throughout the 'play' - the play as a performance (on stage or on screen), the play of words and characters and Nunn's playing with things such as the setting and clothing. Therefore, I am able to research the theatre play and the film in relation to each other. Accordingly, I will conduct an analysis in which I will examine where and, if so, how the film can be connected to the original play, while simultaneously detecting the alterations that may have deeply influenced Shakespeare's work.

Trevor Nunn's production of this comedy is interesting for several reasons. Firstly, it appears to be one of the most popular movie productions of *Twelfth Night*. It has been widely discussed, both in popular media and in academia. The reviews have been rather contradictory, Nunn has received both praise and slander. This slander however seems to revolve more around a critique on filming Shakespeare in general than on Nunn's production itself (Osborne in Lehmann & Starks, 2002: 90). Stanley Kauffmann, for example, characterizes TWELFTH NIGHT as horrible and states that "the film medium is like an x-ray that enlarges the flaws in plays" (Kauffmann in Lehmann & Starks, 2002, 90). Jem Bloomfield, on the other hand, has praised the film: "Nunn has made a superb film from one of Shakespeare's most popular plays" (Bloomfield, 2007) and in a film review from the *New York Times* Stephen Holden has said that "'Twelfth Night' is deeper than most in the way it confronts the psychological forces seething behind the conventional facades of masculine and feminine. It fully recognizes the genius of the play" (Holden, 1996). Moreover, David Gates and Carla Power state that "Former Royal Shakespeare Company director Trevor Nunn offers a handsome, splendidly acted 'Twelfth Night'" (Gates & Power, 1996: 82). Trevor Nunn's film production of *Twelfth Night* has thus been widely recognized as an interesting one.

The film originates from 1996, a time which began the post-structuralist wave of interpretations of *Twelfth Night*. Nunn himself is not a scholar. Rather, he is a theatrical director and he has always "hurled himself into theatrical activities, directing classical productions as well as musicals and revues" (Academy of Achievement, 1995). Moreover, in 1964 he joined the Royal Shakespeare Company, and was made Associate Director in 1965. In 1968, he was named artistic director which made him the youngest person ever to hold the post (Academy of Achievement, 1995). Nunn has also served as the artistic director of the

Royal National Theatre and currently he is the artistic director of the Theatre Royal, Haymarket. Therefore, Nunn can be seen as an expert in the field of Shakespearean plays and theatre in general. He is not a post-structuralist scholar however and therefore it could be argued that he may not have been aware of post-structuralist interpretations of *Twelfth Night*. Nonetheless, I argue that Nunn could still have been (possibly unconsciously) influenced by these notions due to their broad and pervasive impact on western thinking and culture in the late twentieth century. Accordingly, post-structuralist theories can be seen as broader cultural perceptions of ideas that were present during that historical period. Therefore, Nunn did not necessarily have to study these theories in order for him to be influenced by them.

If Nunn has, in fact, been influenced by post-structuralist interpretations of the play several questions arise: Do the post-structuralist interpretations affect the characters? Are particular characters more affected than others? Also, the setting of the film has been altered. Instead of setting the tale in the early seventeenth century, Nunn has placed it in the 1890s: the late Victorian era. This is an interesting choice since during this age the division of gender roles, which are so vital to this play, are more visible. Thus, by altering the setting gender differences may be more illuminated than in the original play (Thomas, 2008: 307). However, Nunn does stay fairly loyal to the original script in terms of language. Catherine Thomas states that in principle, “the film replicates Shakespeare’s play *Twelfth Night or What You Will*” (Thomas, 2008: 307). Moreover, Nunn himself states that he made it a priority to stay as close to Shakespeare’s original play as possible. He managed to incorporate sixty-five percent of the script, which “compares favorably with a lot of recent Shakespeare films where one is down to forty or even thirty percent of the original text” (Nunn, 1998: 49). Moreover, Nunn even criticizes those who are not loyal to Shakespeare’s original work: “That strikes me as almost a contradiction in terms, that you’re doing a great work by Shakespeare, but you’re not prepared to include his language” (Nunn, 1998: 49). This statement seems contradictory considering the choice Nunn made to alter the setting. Therefore, it is interesting to examine how his version of the play can be understood in relation to Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*.

For these reasons, *TWELFTH NIGHT* is interesting to study in terms of identity and selfhood in relation to a specific historical framework, the Renaissance and the late twentieth century. The central question in this research is: How can notions of identity and selfhood, as represented in Trevor Nunn’s *TWELFTH NIGHT OR WHAT YOU WILL*, be understood in terms of the historical period from which *Twelfth Night or What You Will* originates, the Renaissance, and how do

they relate to post-structuralist interpretations of the play? My research will revolve around two contradicting hypotheses. Since Nunn on the one hand stays close to the original script it seems fair to reason that his TWELFTH NIGHT can be understood within the context of the Renaissance. However, it could also be said that Nunn has been influenced by post-structuralist interpretations since he has placed an early seventeenth century tale in a Victorian age. I thus have two hypotheses that contest one another. In this research I aim to formulate an answer to my research question by analyzing TWELFTH NIGHT while using these two premises as my starting point.

The significance of this research lies in gaining insight in how different historical eras influence one's understanding of certain notions, in this case notions regarding identity and selfhood. This involves questions such as: How does one deal with theoretical insights and historicity when handling historical works? Is one critical of one's own politics of location when looking at historical sources? How does one perceive the cultural and historical period from which something originates? The aim of this research is to test the historicity of Nunn's film. Accordingly, I will analyze to what degree he was interested in (1) historical interpretations and (2) theoretical understandings of *Twelfth Night*. In this sense, my research can be seen as a case study to answer such questions.

To gain a solid understanding into how selfhood and identity can be understood in the two eras that are discussed in my research, my first chapter provides a theoretical understanding of Renaissance selfhood. Here, I will elaborate on the general theories and ideas that discuss identity in the early modern period. This will be followed by a chapter revolving around post-structuralist interpretations of *Twelfth Night*. I will elaborate on how late twentieth-century theorists view the play and the characters. By establishing a clear theoretical framework, I will be able to analyze Nunn's TWELFTH NIGHT in relation to these two specific periods.

The third chapter of this research will consist of character analyses. I will focus on four leading characters of *Twelfth Night*, namely: Viola/Cesario, Duke Orsino, and Sebastian, the latter specifically in relation to his companion Antonio.<sup>2</sup> These four characters prove to be

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<sup>2</sup> One might notice that I am not analyzing Countess Olivia, while she is an important character, specifically in relation to the characters that I am analyzing. I have chosen not to study Olivia in this research due to the fact that her role is somewhat ambiguous in Nunn's TWELFTH NIGHT. The characters that I am focusing on all play a significant role in Nunn's film. Firstly because interesting post-structuralist interpretations are primarily focused on the four characters that I am analyzing (on which I will elaborate more throughout my research). Secondly, major alterations in the film and/or interesting notions can be connected to the four



interesting due to the gender plays and sexuality ‘confusions’. I will conduct three analyses of each character. The first will revolve around Nunn’s representation of the character in question. The second analysis will revolve around how the character can be understood from the perspective of the early modern period. In the last analysis I will study how the character is seen from a late twentieth-century post-structuralist point of view. The three analyses will be followed by an in-depth elaboration of how my findings compare and contrast to one another. Accordingly, I will provide insight into Nunn’s position between these two specific periods. This will be done individually for Viola/Cesario and Duke Orsino. Sebastian and Antonio will be analyzed in relation to each other.

Last, in my conclusion I will draw all my findings together and answer the question: How can notions of identity and selfhood, as represented in Trevor Nunn’s *TWELFTH NIGHT OR WHAT YOU WILL*, be understood in terms of the historical period from which *Twelfth Night or What You Will* originates, the Renaissance, and how do they relate to post-structuralist interpretations of the play?

#### HISTORIOGRAPHY

The field of Shakespearean studies is vast. I am certainly not the first one to research Shakespeare and I will definitely not be the last. In order to illustrate what has already been written about Shakespeare I will elaborate on four specific themes within the historiography of Shakespearean studies. First I will go into the general state of affairs regarding research that has revolved around Shakespeare, specifically focusing on *Twelfth Night* and genre. Then, I will discuss what has been written about Trevor Nunn’s *TWELFTH NIGHT*. Subsequently, post-structuralist interpretations of *Twelfth Night* will be elaborated upon and finally I will focus on how recent studies on the Renaissance may impact our common understanding of Shakespeare, and thus *Twelfth Night*.

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characters that I have chosen to centralize. Therefore, Olivia will be mentioned in my analysis. However, I will not conduct an in-depth analysis of her character.

#### A COMPANION TO SHAKESPEARE'S *TWELFTH NIGHT*

Much has been written about Shakespeare. According to Emma Smith “Shakespeare’s critical reception seems marked by the phenomenon of too much” (Smith in Wells, 2010: 253). Since there is so much information, I will elaborate on the general state of affairs regarding *Twelfth Night* as understood when looking at the genre of the play. *Twelfth Night* is considered a comic drama. Courtship and the perusal of love is understood to be a main theme in this genre. At the same time, comic dramas are equally energetic in negating death (as can be seen with Olivia, who is in mourning for the death of her father and brother) (Snyder in de Grazia & Wells, 2001: 89).

Comic dramas often entail disguisers or deceivers. Their role is ambiguous since they generate complications and resolutions (Snyder in de Grazia & Wells, 2001: 89). Viola can be seen as an example of how this works, she disguises herself as a young page under the name Cesario. Accordingly, Duke Orsino uses her as an intermediary between him and Olivia.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, however, Viola/Cesario generates complications for Antonio, who is imprisoned when he comes to her aid, thinking he is helping his companion Sebastian.<sup>4</sup> In *Twelfth Night* Viola’s male disguise gives her knowledge, however, she is not able to alter any events. Yet, Viola is still in somewhat of a powerful position. She is able to gain access to information. In so doing, Shakespeare produces a ‘woman on top’. Nevertheless, Shakespeare’s placing of ‘women over men’ is only temporary. The hierarchies he challenges are reasserted at the end of the tale (Snyder in de Grazia & Wells, 2001: 89).

Another theme in this genre is the multiple frames which overlap in the plot. Accordingly, characters that have contrasting worldviews are introduced to one another. This can be seen when looking at Viola/Cesario and Duke Orsino. Orsino is under the impression that he is bonding with his male servant. However, he is actually gaining insight into the world of women (Snyder in de Grazia & Wells, 2001: 90). The focus thus lies on the inclusion of different world views in which one achieves broader insights. Accordingly, alternative

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<sup>3</sup> Orsino sends Viola/Cesario to Olivia to woo her for him.

<sup>4</sup> Antonio has been banned from Illyria due to a previous battle at sea, in which Antonio killed many of Orsino’s men. When Sebastian and Antonio arrive in Illyria, Antonio must lay low in order to avoid captivation. When he comes across Viola/Cesario, who is being challenged to a duel, Antonio comes to her aid, thinking he is helping his companion Sebastian. Subsequently, Antonio is caught by the police. Since Viola/Cesario does not know Antonio, she does not vouch for him. This causes great confusion for Antonio, who thinks he has been deceived by his closest friend.

meanings are encouraged. This also underlies the verbal play which has a great role in Shakespearean comedies. Feste, *Twelfth Night's* clown for example, continually challenges one's common knowledge and logic. This, again, encourages men and women to gain insight into different ideas than they are generally used to.

From a different point of view, comic inclusiveness is seen as “antithetical to closure, pointing out that since comedy regularly contradicts itself by incorporating opposite perspectives – for example mocking marriage while working to bring marriages about – it naturally mocks itself as well, undermining its own practices” (Snyder in de Grazia & Wells, 2001: 90). In this sense, dramatic comedies are extremely fluid and can be seen from multiple perspectives. Accordingly, the distinctions that locate a play in a specific genre are somewhat generic (Howard in Kastan, 1999: 297). Genre should thus be considered as fluid. Accordingly, *Twelfth Night* is a play understood as a dramatic comedy which can be looked at from various perspectives.

#### **TREVOR NUNN'S TWELFTH NIGHT OR WHAT YOU WILL**

According to Laurie Osborne in “Critical Shakespeare” “cinema is certainly the ideal medium for Shakespeare in the twentieth century, largely because film both creates and reinscribes our ideologically based expectations about characters” (Osborne in Lehmann & Starks, 2002: 90). In her study she analyzes Nunn's rendition of TWELFTH NIGHT and argues that the film represents twentieth-century constructions of romantic love and gender (Osborne in Lehmann & Starks, 2002: 91). Osborne's focus lies on the ‘film logic’ and how Nunn has altered several aspects of the film. Osborne argues that these changes can be understood in a contemporary framework. Her analysis of the film thus lies in the twentieth century and she aims to create an understanding of the contemporary “blend of genders” in Nunn's production (Osborne in Lehmann & Starks, 2002: 105).

Another scholar that has critically studied TWELFTH NIGHT is Catherine Thomas. In “Nunn's Sweet Transvestite” Thomas looks at Viola's “layering of clothes and the performed gender identity” (Thomas, 2008: 308). Accordingly, she takes into consideration how clothes were used in plays during the Renaissance, where boy actors played women's parts. In that historical period then, Viola/Cesario was played by a boy, playing a woman, playing a boy. From this perspective Thomas analyzes the role of costume in creating Viola/Cesario

(Thomas, 2008: 308). With her analysis of Nunn's *TWELFTH NIGHT* she examines how the alteration of the setting influenced the role that clothes played. She thus researches whether the setting illuminated gender issues for Viola/Cesario through the use of Victorian costume.

Thomas' and my research have a few things in common, namely the focus on different eras: the Renaissance and society in the late twentieth century. Thomas, however, has merely looked at gender through one character, Viola/Cesario. She does not analyze identity, selfhood, sexuality and the relationships between the various characters. Moreover, she only looks at one factor: Viola/Cesario's clothing. Furthermore, her analysis of costume during the Renaissance is rather brief. Her main focus lies on the setting's adaptation and how that has influenced the role of Viola's apparel. Therefore, Thomas' analysis of Viola/Cesario's gender in Nunn's *TWELFTH NIGHT* can be seen as a stepping stone for my research.

#### **SHAKESPEARE'S *TWELFTH NIGHT* AND POST-STRUCTURALISM**

Many studies and interpretations of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* have been conducted from a post-structuralist theoretical framework. An example can be found in Casey Charles' "Gender Trouble in Twelfth Night". He states that "Judith Butler's critique of the notion that there are fixed identities based on the existence of genital difference provides a useful model for understanding how *Twelfth Night* uses the vagaries of erotic attraction to disrupt paradigms of sexuality" (Charles, 1997: 122). Also, "On Queering Twelfth Night", where Chad Thomas analyzes *Twelfth Night* while drawing on the aesthetics of queer theatre and talking about 'queer Shakespeare' as a discourse, provides an interesting case in point. In his research post-structuralism provides the groundwork for interpreting this Shakespearean play (Thomas, 2010: 102). Another illustration can be found in the article "Glimpsing a 'Lesbian' Poetics in Twelfth Night" where Jami Ake's point of departure can be articulated as 'female homoeroticism'. She argues:

Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* offers an often overlooked opportunity to witness the dynamics by which a language of female-female desire emerges from the materials of conventional heteroerotic discourses already in circulation. Viola's performance of Orsino's poetic suit to Olivia [...] allows us to see both the ways that female desire finds imaginative space outside the restrictions of a thoroughly masculine Petrarchan poetics and how newly forged languages of female desire find their way into action.

(Ake, 2003: 375-376)

This post-structuralist framework influences how one looks at identity and the symbols that are associated with it. By looking at the play from a post-structuralist perspective one is bound to draw conclusions that comply to post-structuralist theories. It is not my aim to state that these conclusions are simply incorrect. Rather, I intend to compare and contrast the interpretations deriving from the late twentieth century to an understanding of the play from the perspective of the early modern period. This will allow me to examine how notions of identity and selfhood are understood within the historical period in which they exist.

### REVISITING THE RENAISSANCE

In the past two decades new information about Renaissance selfhood has surfaced, which has led to interesting new insights. In the sixteenth century people started talking about notions of selfhood, though in a different context than we do now. When one compares notions of the self and the other in the Renaissance to late twentieth-century conceptions of identity, it becomes clear that different historical moments experience the self in a different manner (Selleck 2008: 6). Thus, notions regarding the self and the other differ depending on the historical period.

I have found a study that has touched upon these new insights. In *Shakespeare, Sex and Love* Stanley Wells sets out to put sex and sexuality in Shakespeare's plays into their original context: "Shakespeare wrote in the effort to elucidate sexual significances that would have been apparent to his earlier readers and hearers but which have been submerged by the passage of time" (Wells, 2010: 2). Wells goes on to state that Shakespearean plays did not necessarily intend to elucidate sex or sexuality in the Renaissance, but are nowadays understood in this manner anyway (Wells, 2010: 3). Therefore, in order to understand Shakespeare's plays he finds it necessary to interpret them in their historical and cultural context. In so doing, he touches upon some interesting topics, but his research remains inconclusive. An example can be found in his analysis of the characters Antonio and Bassanio in *The Merchant of Venice*. He states: "We cannot say that Shakespeare explicitly portrays a sexual relationship, but [...] we cannot deny that the texts permits such a subtextual reading" (Wells, 2010: 242). To me this seems like a rather vague conclusion. Therefore, I intend to take Well's goal as a starting point, to analyze Nunn's adaptation of *Twelfth Night* and examine it from its original context, and extend on it.

Bruce Smith is another theorist who challenges the many post-structuralist understandings of *Twelfth Night*. In *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England* Smith extensively researches male relationships which were common in early modern England. Accordingly, I will also draw on his insights in my character analyses.

Two scholars that have been extremely influential in the field of Renaissance selfhood in the past decade are Nancy Gail Selleck and Jerrold Seigel. Therefore, my understanding of the self and the other during the Renaissance will rely on Nancy Selleck's *The Interpersonal Idiom in Shakespeare, Donne, and Early Modern Culture* (2008) and Jerrold Seigel's *The Idea of the Self: Thought and Experience in Western Europe since the Seventeenth Century* (2005). In their work they explain how the self and the other were understood during the Renaissance and how those conceptions regarding selfhood differ from the notions of identity we know today. Things such as language, clothing and even one's body were understood very differently during that time.

An example can be found in Selleck's explanation of how early modern selfhood was both fundamentally social and more concrete and physical than later conceptions of identity (Selleck, 2008: 27-28). Selleck elaborates on this social aspect of selfhood by turning around the subject and the object as we know them today. She states that "Renaissance usage characteristically defines selfhood as the experience of an *other*" (Selleck, 2008: 8, author's emphasis). In order to illustrate this she uses Shakespeare's Henry IV who tells his lords "I will henceforth rather be my Selfe / Mighty and to be fear'd" (Shakespeare in Selleck, 2008: 8). According to Selleck, the self Henry IV speaks of is constituted in his outward manifestation. He is an objectified self since he describes his role as king by elaborating on what he is to others: "Mighty and to be fear'd" (Selleck, 2008: 23). An objectified self has its origins in an external perspective. Accordingly, Renaissance selves are by definition social selves since they take the other as the locus for the self.

This understanding of the objectified self is only one part of the Renaissance selfhood puzzle. In Chapter II I will elaborate on this in further detail. This example merely illustrates how selfhood was fundamentally different during the Renaissance.

As I have argued above, the field of Shakespearean studies is vast. There is however a 'missing link' since there is no extensive research that truly takes into consideration the

historical period from which Shakespeare's plays originates. Therefore, I intend to contribute to this field of research by 'connecting the dots' from the Renaissance to the late twentieth century.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

Through a semiotic 'break down' of the film, done via a close reading of the script, I will analyze what signs are represented in *TWELFTH NIGHT*. I will look at how these signs can be understood within a Renaissance context, the Victorian era and a late twentieth-century framework. My focus will lie on how identity and selfhood can be understood.

The term semiotics refers to the general methodological approach of the study of signs in culture and of culture as a sort of 'language'. "The underlying argument behind the semiotic approach is that, since all cultural objects convey meaning, and all cultural practices depend on meaning, they must make use of signs" (Hall, 1997: 36). For Saussure the production of meaning depends on language and he argues that language is a system of signs (Hall, 1997: 31). Things such as sounds, images, objects and words function as signs within a language: "only when they serve to express or communicate ideas...[To] communicate ideas, they must be part of a system of conventions..." (Hall, 1997: 31). Saussure goes on to state that things are defined in relation to the other, accordingly the marking of difference is fundamental to the production of meaning (Hall, 1997: 31). A good example, which can be related to the context of this Shakespearean comedy is *MAN* and *WOMAN*. What signifies is not *MAN* or the essence of 'man-ness', but the difference between *MAN* and *WOMAN*. According to Saussure "signs are members of a system and are defined in relation to other members of that system" (Saussure in Hall, 1997: 31).

Claude Lévi-Strauss elaborates on this and in my analysis of both the original script of the play and the film production my approach will rely on his notion of binary oppositions and meaning. Lévi-Strauss states that a way of giving meaning to certain things is to, indeed, divide them into two groups: as with *MAN* and *WOMAN*. He does not focus on how certain customs, rituals or tales are produced and used in daily life. Rather, he analyzes what they are trying to say and what messages about a certain culture are being communicated. He examines meaning by looking at underlying rules and codes through which objects or

practices produce meaning. In this context, Lévi-Strauss uses a Saussurian approach (Hall, 1997: 37). An understanding of binary oppositions is extremely useful in this context. Lévi-Strauss argues that social groups impose meaning on their world by organizing things into classificatory systems. Binary oppositions are crucial for any type of classification since you have to establish a clear difference between certain things, ideas and objects in order to classify them (Hall, 1997: 236). Thus, here we see again that difference is fundamental to cultural meaning. Deploying an understanding of signs as explained by Ferdinand de Saussure and elaborated upon by Claude Lévi-Strauss, I will analyze the characters, their character types, color schemes/contrasts and clothing.

Moreover, in order to analyze the post-structuralist interpretations of the play, I will conduct a close reading of each study. Stuart Hall explains that there are two ways to analyze cultural objects and/or culture. The first consists of semiotics, as elaborated upon above. The second relies on the idea of discourse, the fact that cultural objects only mean something within the cultural and historical framework in which they exist (I will elaborate more on this in the section *Theoretical Framework*). I will thus conduct a semiotic breakdown of the texts while simultaneously placing them in their own cultural and historical framework. This will allow me to examine how the studies in question are constituted and how they should be understood, since it is a methodology that enables one to examine the cultural embeddedness of a specific text (Grady, 1991: 211-214). Accordingly, this particular method is effective to examine whether Nunn has been influenced by a late twentieth-century post-structuralist framework.

As I have stated, the significance of this research lies in gaining insight into how different historical eras influence one's understanding of certain notions, in this case notions regarding identity and selfhood. Accordingly, I am comparing the way in which identity and selfhood are constituted and perceived in Nunn's TWELFTH NIGHT, in *Twelfth Night* as performed in the early modern period and in post-structuralist interpretations of the play. In order to draw all my findings together, I will rely on the notion of *tertium comperationes*. When comparing cultural objects, the things that are being compared are not always identical to one another. However, there must be a common quality. This common quality is known as the *tertium comperationes* (Chesterman, 1998: 29-30). In my research, the common quality would be selfhood and identity as represented and perceived in the different versions of *Twelfth Night*.



*Tertium comperationes* as a method thus serves as a starting-point when comparing different notions and concepts revolving around identity and selfhood in TWELFTH NIGHT, Shakespeare's original version of the play and the post-structuralist interpretations of *Twelfth Night*. Accordingly, it enables me to pinpoint the essence of the compared concepts (Chesterman, 1998: 8). *Tertium comperationes* will thus serve as a frame of reference through which I am able to compare and contrast my findings.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Semiotics is useful when looking at signs in the script of the play and the film, however, as a theory it has received its fair share of criticism. One of the major critiques is that semiotics seems to confine the process of representation to language and to treat it as a closed and static system. It is important to realize that certain signs only exist meaningfully within a specific cultural or historical context, in this case either the Renaissance or the late twentieth century. In order to illustrate how the specific signs can in fact be located within the early modern or within the 1990s, I will now turn to an understanding of culture as elaborated upon by Stuart Hall. I will research how selfhood and identity are constructed and represented in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and Trevor Nunn's TWELFTH NIGHT by means of a cultural-analytical textual analysis. Stuart Hall states that:

What has come to be called "the cultural turn" in social and human sciences, especially in cultural studies and the sociology of culture, has tended to emphasize the importance of *meaning* to the definition of culture. Culture, it is argued, is not so much a set of *things* – novels and paintings, or TV programs and comics – as a process, a set of *practices*. Primarily, culture is concerned with the production and exchange of meaning – the "giving and taking" of meaning – between the members of a society or group. To say that two people belong to the same culture is to say that they interpret the world in roughly the same ways [...] it is participants in a culture who give meaning to people, objects and events. Things "in themselves" rarely if ever have one single, fixed and unchanging meaning.

(Hall in Berger, 2011: 113)

Hall emphasizes that things in themselves don't have any meaning, meaning is constructed. Moreover, Hall states that people who belong to the same culture interpret the world in roughly the same manner.

This understanding of culture and the way signs meaningfully exist within their cultural and historical contexts enables one to look at TWELFTH NIGHT. I will analyze the representation of

identity and selfhood. It will become clear how the Renaissance, and/or the late twentieth century have contributed to the social construction of identity, selfhood, femininity, masculinity and sexuality and how they exist(ed) meaningfully in relation to each other. An analysis with this approach and theoretical framework will lead me to answer my central question: How can notions of identity and selfhood, as represented in Trevor Nunn's TWELFTH NIGHT OR WHAT YOU WILL, be understood in terms of the historical period from which *Twelfth Night or What You Will* originates, the Renaissance, and how do they relate to post-structuralist interpretations of the play?

Crucial to the theoretical framework of this research is an understanding of representations as a construction of reality. Trevor Nunn's production of TWELFTH NIGHT does not present a copy of the real world, or even the original play, it is a construction. Accordingly, ideas and subjects such as MAN and WOMAN are *constructed* (Schouten, 2011: 4). Representation is the production of meaning through language. "Things don't *mean*: we *construct* meaning, using representational systems - concepts and signs" (Hall, 1997: 25). Meaning depends not only on the material quality of the sign, but on its *symbolic function*. It is only because a sound or image symbolizes and represents something, that it can convey meaning (Hall, 1997: 26).

Another notion critical for this research is an understanding of masculinity and femininity since the Victorian era. Due to the fact that Nunn placed the tale in the late Victorian era, it is important to understand how masculinity and femininity were understood as in a binary opposition from that time onward. As already noted above, media representations at the same time represent and construct their subject. By the realization of gender roles in texts, both categories of male and female are being inserted into the interplay of power in a specific manner; it 'defines' so to speak not only that which is normal, but also what is deviant. A recurring theme, especially in my analysis of Nunn's TWELFTH NIGHT and the post-structuralist interpretations, is the placement of femininity and masculinity.

To be able to tangibly reference the representation of masculinity and femininity in TWELFTH NIGHT, I will primarily contrast it to the notion of gender as described by Simone de Beauvoir. De Beauvoir explores the distinction made between men and women and states "On ne nait pas femme, on le devient"<sup>5</sup> (van der Tuin in Buikema & van der Tuin, 2007: 15), which

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<sup>5</sup> This means: One is not born, but rather becomes a woman.

indicates that femininity and masculinity are constructed. She explains how these constructed gender differences are set in a hierarchical opposition where women are second class citizens in relation to men: women are “the second sex” (van der Tuin in Buikema & van der Tuin, 2007: 15). Accordingly, the masculine principle is the norm, and phenomenon such as *being active, the self* and *culture* are assigned to *man*. The woman, on the other hand, is put in the role of *Other* and is associated to *passivity* and *nature*. Women and men are thus in a binary opposition, de Beauvoir illustrates that alongside the binary opposition *man/woman*, there are many concepts which are gendered.<sup>6</sup> In my research I will use this notion and analyze whether these gendered binary roles are visible in *TWELFTH NIGHT*.

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<sup>6</sup> “Gendered” means that concepts which are supposed to be gender neutral, are assigned to a certain sex.

## CHAPTER ONE

# REVISITING THE RENAISSANCE

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The mysteries of identity have been the subject of debate for centuries now. As I have stated in the introduction of this research, according to some scholars the sixteenth century marks the time in which people started talking about notions of the self, the other, identity and *persons*. In *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* Stephen Greenblatt explains that in the early modern period a change occurred in the intellectual, social and psychological structures that governed identities. Even though these structures concerning identity were understood differently than we see them now, the sixteenth century observed an “increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process” (Greenblatt, 1980: 2).

In *The Interpersonal Idiom in Shakespeare, Donne and Early Modern Culture*, Selleck explains that different historical eras experience the self in a different manner (Selleck, 2008: 6). Therefore, notions regarding the self and the other differ depending on the historical period. To gain insight into how characters in Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* can be understood from the context of the early modern period, I will elaborate on notions of selfhood that were prevalent during this time. The question that will serve as a guideline throughout this chapter is: *How were the self and the other understood during the Renaissance?* In order to answer this question I will use literature that centers around this topic. My analysis will primarily be based on secondary sources, with an exception here and there.

## 1.2 ANALYSIS

In *The Idea of the Self* Jerrold Seigel explains that selfhood, in Western society, has three dimensions: the bodily, the relational and the reflective dimension (Seigel, 2005: 5). Although these three dimensions of the self are always present, different historical periods tend to focus on one or two of these dimensions, leaving the other(s) somewhat in the background. The two dimensions that are most prominent within Renaissance selfhood are the relational and the bodily.

## THE RELATIONAL DIMENSION OF THE SELF

The Renaissance characteristically defines selfhood as the experience of an other. In this sense, there is a strong emphasis on the relational dimension of selfhood. The term *inter-relational*, or *interpersonal*, illustrates the plurality of persons involved (Selleck, 2008: 11). In this sense, the self was created and fashioned through the experience with outside sources. Greenblatt explains that there is no such thing as “human nature independent of culture” or external influences (Greenblatt, 1980: 3). Therefore, self fashioning in the Renaissance was created through an other.

As already mentioned, an important characteristic of this relational selfhood is that the ‘subject’ and ‘object’ (as we know them today) were turned around during the Renaissance. This leads Selleck to formulate the concept of the objectified self. This objectified self has its origins in an external perspective and functions as the object of another’s perception and understanding. According to Selleck and Seigel, the self was constituted through the other. Selleck argues that Renaissance selfhood moves away from “the currently familiar notion of the other as a foil or anti-self against which the self defines itself” (Selleck, 2008: 2). Rather, during that period the other served as the self’s source, the self’s *locus*.

In the introduction I explained how the objectified self should be understood by discussing Shakespeare’s Henry IV who saw and constructed his self through ‘the eye of the beholder’. Another example may elucidate even more how the other was not seen as hostile or alien, but as something ‘fulfilling’. Selleck explains that even though the other’s perspective may be different from one’s own, that does not have to result in an other that is completely alien to the self. ‘Other’ means more than mere ‘difference’. It can also refer to similarity. In this sense, other can be seen as *more of the same*. Selleck proves this with a simple, but vivid example revolving around two red chairs: “here’s one red chair, and here’s *another*” (Selleck, 2008: 4, my emphasis). This illustrates that the other carries important ties to the self: it is defined as much by what it shares with the self as by its distinctiveness.

This interesting dynamic in which the other is active and engaged with the self marks a crucial aspect of Renaissance selfhood. When one compares it to a modern subjective self, for example, it becomes clear that the latter consists of merely its own experience. Thus, to speak of the self as an object is to imply that there is a fundamental difference between Renaissance and late twentieth-century selfhood. The second or ‘reflected’ perspective, a point of view

decentered from the self's own *present* experience, which is characteristic for a Renaissance self, lets us recognize the impact of the other not as that which deconstructs an already existing self, but as that which the self is made on (Selleck, 2008: 4-8). Therefore, a sense of engagement with a *live* other can be seen in much of the language of selfhood during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century. An example of this can be found in John Donne's term *interinanimate*. This term captures the process by which lovers and close friends affect each other. A poem from Donne where this is illustrated states:

But as these several [i.e., separate] souls contain  
Mixture of things, they know not what,  
Love, *these mixed souls doth mix again,*  
*And make both one, each this and that.*

(Donne in Selleck, 2008: 5, my emphasis)

In this poem, the strong relational character of Renaissance selfhood becomes visible. The love that causes two souls that are already a "mixture of things" to "mix again", not only makes two become one, but it also makes one become two: "each this and that". This illustrates the subsuming of the other into the self (Selleck, 2008: 5). This does not only occur with lovers. Rather, an early modern coinage of the term *self* is used in a transferred sense to signify one's other self, be it a lover or a close friend.

Selleck explains that Renaissance expressions of friendship are nowadays understood as proclamations of love and/or sexual intimacy. She refutes this idea and states that language was different during that time. When studying Renaissance language (or literature) one has to take that cultural framework as a starting point in order to understand the conventions (Selleck, 2008: 3).

Friendship was a significant aspect of selfhood during the early modern period. Selleck argues that a self expressed intimacy by calling a *friend* "my self", "my next self", "my other self" or stating that "he is my self". This illustrates a significant interpersonal experience of selfhood. It suggests that what is most vital in the self, can be found in the other. In order to illustrate this Selleck quotes Montaigne (on whom I will elaborate) in one of his late sixteenth-century essays. He argues that friends were understood to "entermixe and confound themselves one in the other, with so universal a commixture, that they can no more finde the seame that hath conjoined them together" (Montaigne in Selleck, 2008: 37). Selleck further explains that this

interpersonal connection with a friend creates a sense of interdependence: “the other is *oneself* by virtue of being indispensable. The inseparability of self and other is stressed” (Selleck, 2008: 37). This interdependence between friends was not something out of the ordinary, rather it was “ubiquitous in literary texts of the 1590s and early 1600s” (Selleck, 2008: 35). Thus, it was common understanding that through an involvement with the other the self became substantive.

Selleck states that this usage of the self was particularly present in Shakespeare’s plays and poems of the late sixteenth century (Selleck, 2008: 5). Therefore, I assume that the notion of relational selfhood, specifically interinanimate selfhood, is present throughout Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*. It is for this reason that in my Renaissance character analyses I will determine whether and, if so, how the relational self can still be seen in Nunn’s *TWELFTH NIGHT*. Accordingly, I will analyze how social dialogue can be understood and how notions of self and other are expressed.

#### **THE BODILY DIMENSION OF THE SELF**

The bodily dimension of the self was also of crucial importance during the Renaissance. According to Seigel this dimension is significant because it is the “body’s movement among the things around it that first allows us to ‘have a world’, a set of surroundings that appears to us as meaningful, and it is through bodily interaction with this world that we first come to know ourselves as well” (Seigel, 2005: 20). Therefore, the body can be seen as the stepping stone. The body does, however, have different meanings in different periods.

In general, uses of the ‘self’ in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century tend to refer to the body. What is interesting here is that at that time these referrals were not gendered, as we often see today (Selleck, 2008: 27). Furthermore, Selleck explains how language varies in different periods. This is illustrated by the fact that the word ‘person’ signified something more concrete in the Renaissance than it does today. In addition to the social role a person had, as elaborated upon above, the word ‘person’ had several distinctive meanings. It referred to one’s physical appearance, which included clothes and accessories. (This connection between ‘person’ and one’s clothes is an interesting one on which I will elaborate). Secondly, it referred to the body itself, to one’s physical person as opposed to others, or to one’s bodily presence or action. The word ‘person’ could also refer to both one’s physical body,

particularly in the sense of one's sanctity, and the sense of authority or power, as discussed with King Henry IV. In this sense, person referred to the idea of a rank. A passage from Henry Purcell's late seventeenth-century play *The Faerie Queene* illustrates this:

Kings Queenes, Lords Ladies, Knights & Damsels gent  
Were heap'd together with the vulgar sort,  
And mingled with the raskell rabblement,  
Without respect of *person* or of port.

(Purcell in Selleck, 2008: 28, my emphasis)

This shows a reference made to a social rank as a 'person' thus entailing a sense of concrete physicality (Selleck, 2008: 28). Therefore, Renaissance selfhood was not merely social, but also fundamentally physical.

Moreover, things we nowadays see as character or personality traits were then understood in physical terms. An example of this can be seen in the use of the term 'character'. During the Renaissance the personal was considered to belong to someone's behavior. It was a visible aspect of one's personality and was considered as something that could be seen on the surface. The personal was a *common* feature, something belonging to all. In this sense, character was related to a person's appearance (Selleck, 2008: 44). A passage from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* illustrates this: "I will believe thou hast a Mind that suits With this thy fair and outward Character" (Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 11-13). Here, a distinction is made between the mind, one's reflective self, and the bodily self as represented by one's "fair and outward character".

Clothing and accessories were also considered important for the bodily self. As stated above, Greenblatt argues that in the sixteenth century, there was an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process (Greenblatt, 1980: 2). Clothing played an important part in this. In *Men in Women's Clothing* Laura Levine explains how in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century it was thought that action, particularly imitative action where one would *dress* like an other, was constitutive for one's identity. In her work, Levine focuses on *men becoming women* through costumes. She explains that in the theatre, where men played women's roles, there was an idea that when men wore women's apparel, they would *become* a woman (Levine, 1994: 10). One's identity was thus constructed through one's costume. Stephen Orgel further elaborates on this notion in *Impersonations* and



states that “clothes really do make the man”, or the woman for that matter (Orgel, 1996: 102). Orgel explains that during the Renaissance clothes were seen as creating one’s self. He states that twins were not seen as people with an identical face, rather, twins were people who *dressed* alike. Another example can be seen in women dressing as men and vice versa. It was not believed that a woman posing as a man, was actually a woman until people saw her in her *own* female costume. Borrowing a dress, or buying a new one was generally not considered to be an option. One’s *own* male or female apparel was of the essence. The costume was the real thing. Orgel states: “Clothes make the woman, clothes make the man: the costume is the essence” (Orgel, 1996: 104).

I find this notion of clothing as an integral part of one’s identity extremely interesting, especially in the case of *Twelfth Night* where cross-dressing and mistaken identities are so crucial. Therefore, it will be interesting to see whether and, if so, how costume played a role in constructing the self in Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* and Nunn’s TWELFTH NIGHT.

#### THE REFLECTIVE DIMENSION OF THE SELF

Looking at the three dimensions of selfhood, as presented by Seigel, it has become clear that the bodily and the relational dimensions of the self were most prominent during the Renaissance. This does not, however, mean that the reflective self was not at all present. It may not have been as outstanding as the other two, but it did play a part. To illustrate this I will first briefly discuss what the reflective self entails. Then, I will elaborate on how the reflective self was seen by briefly discussing Michel de Montaigne’s late sixteenth century essay “On Friendship”.

Seigel explains that reflectivity refers to a type of intellectual self-awareness in selfhood. It is a contribution made to the self by the mind. Seigel argues that reflectivity is not merely rationality or consciousness. Rather, it entails a form of mental agency: “reflectivity has a bearing on the self’s relations to itself and to the world that for instance problem-solving or the choice of means to achieve given ends does not” (Seigel, 2005: 12). Furthermore, the mental act of reflecting is usually considered as an intentional stimulus. Therefore, reflectivity indicates that there is an active self.

One reason, according to Seigel, that human beings must be reflective is precisely because they are physical and relational. Since they are both, they can never wholly be the one or the other. Accordingly, the self must be able to take a certain distance from each of these dimensions. Reflectivity allows them to do so: “reflectivity allows humans to address and in some degree deal with the tensions or conflicts between what biology demands and what social and cultural existence imposes and allows” (Seigel, 2005: 17). Therefore, reflectivity is an integral part of selfhood. It is a mediator between the different dimensions of the self.

An example of how the reflective and relational dimensions of the self were considered to be intertwined during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century can be seen in Montaigne’s “On Friendship”. He studies the self and finds that aspects of the other, a friend, are always there: “In the friendship I speak of they mix and blend one into the other in so perfect a union that the seam which has joined them is effaced and disappears. If I were pressed to say why I love him, I feel that my only reply could be: ‘Because it was he, because it was I’” (Montaigne, 1993: 97). Here, it becomes visible that the self and the other are one. The other is the locus for the self. The relational aspect of the self is thus of importance to Montaigne. In friendship, selfhood is constructed through the other.

Besides the relational aspect of friendship, the reflective dimension is of crucial importance as well. Greenblatt argues that Montaigne catches the essence of ‘inner life’ in his elaboration on identity (Greenblatt, 1980: 87). Accordingly, it becomes clear that, for Montaigne, the self is constructed in the mind, it is something reflective. Moreover, one may improve oneself by learning and reflecting on the self with a friend. What is interesting here is that, according to Montaigne, the ability to form a friendship depends on one’s sex. Only men are capable to have a strong bond with a friend. Women, he states, are not able to form such a strong reflective relationship since “the normal capacity of women is, in fact, unequal to the demands of that communion and intercourse in which the sacred bond is fed; their souls do not seem firm enough to bear the strain of so hard and lasting a tie”. Moreover, he states that there “has never yet been an example of a woman’s attaining to this, and the ancient schools are at one in their beliefs that it is denied to the female sex” (Montaigne, 1993: 95). In this sense, Montaigne believed that women were unable to bear the strain of such a heavily reflective bond. Furthermore, it becomes clear that reflectivity in general was seen as something reserved for men during the Renaissance. At least, according to Montaigne.

In his essay, Montaigne attempts to define the self. He sees the self as a relational and reflective entity. It must be stated though that Montaigne was one of the first (if not the first) to discuss the reflective dimension of the self in the early modern period. As I have argued, the bodily and relational dimensions were most prominent. Therefore, Montaigne's ideas concerning the reflective dimension of the self are not necessarily representative of Renaissance selfhood in general. However, since his essays were published in 1580 Shakespeare might have been influenced by this mode of thought. In my analysis of *Twelfth Night* I will primarily focus on the bodily and relational dimensions of selfhood. However, since all three dimensions are always present, I will keep Montaigne's notions on the reflective dimension of selfhood in mind as well.

### 1.3 CONCLUSION

As I have argued, all three dimensions of the self are at play, regardless of the historical setting. However, in certain periods, one or two dimensions are more prominent than the other(s). During the Renaissance the focus was on the bodily and relational dimension of selfhood. The reflective dimension played a role as well, as can be seen in Montaigne's "On Friendship", but it was less prominent. It is important to consider all three dimensions when analyzing the self. One dimension does not trump the other. The three dimensions exist in a relationship of interdependency (Seigel, 2005: 16-17). The terms constitute a vocabulary for selfhood. Each is capable for calling up certain aspects of the self. For this reason it is important to keep in mind how the different dimensions influence and even merge into each other.

In my character analyses I will study how notions of the self are represented and perceived. Thus, when analyzing Viola, for example, I will look at what constitutes her selfhood in Nunn's *TWELFTH NIGHT*, the original text itself and late twentieth-century post-structuralist interpretations of the play. Questions that I will ask are: Through which elements is Viola's sense of self constructed in Nunn's *TWELFTH NIGHT*? Is her selfhood constructed through her relations with others, perhaps Orsino or Sebastian? If this is the case, Viola's relational dimension of the self would be most prominent, thus implying that her identity is created through an other. Similar questions will be asked when taking the bodily dimension of the self into consideration: How does clothing affect Viola's selfhood? Is clothing seen and perceived

as constitutive for Viola's selfhood? A similar approach will be taken when studying Viola from a Renaissance perspective. I will analyze which mechanisms influence her identity. The same will be done in my elaboration of post-structuralist interpretations of Viola. By critically analyzing which dimensions of the self are most prominent in constructing Viola's selfhood, I will be able to draw conclusions regarding Nunn's TWELFTH NIGHT and the way it relates to different historical eras and theoretical frameworks.

## POST-STRUCTURALIST SHAKESPEARE

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Within post-structuralism many theorists discuss identity politics, specifically focusing on gender and sexuality. Often, these two are studied in relation to each other. Important theorists who have made contributions to this field in the past two decades include: Judith Butler, Laura Mulvey, Helene Cixous, Michael Warner and Judith Halberstam.

I do not wish to elaborate on all the different theories regarding gender and sexuality because that would be an entire study in itself. Therefore, this chapter will not revolve around *defining* gender and sexuality as perceived within post-structuralism.<sup>7</sup> Rather, in this chapter I will focus on post-structuralist interpretations of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and attempt to identify a common understanding. I will not conduct in-depth character analyses (for that will be done in the following chapters), rather I will look at what themes are pursued and what general ideas are elaborated upon. The interpretations that I will discuss derive from the 1990s. By analyzing these interpretations, I intend to get a clear idea of how *Twelfth Night* was understood in terms of gender and sexuality during the 1990s, the period in which Nunn directed TWELFTH NIGHT. This will allow me to analyze whether or not Nunn has been influenced by (some of) these theoretical notions.

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<sup>7</sup> I have already briefly touched upon one theorist who critically analyzed gender relations, namely Simone de Beauvoir. However, many more theorists have discussed gender and sexuality. In post-structuralism gender and sexuality are inextricably linked to identity. Since it is such a major theme in my thesis, I will briefly elaborate on how gender and sexuality are generally understood within post-structuralism. Gender should be understood as different from sex. Sex refers to the biological characteristics that define men and women. Gender refers to the culturally and socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women (Asberg in van der Tuin & Buikema, 2007: 35-36). Sexuality is a term that is a bit more difficult to briefly describe. Sexuality is usually studied within queer studies. Queer theorists analyze the different contexts in which terms such as *homosexual* and *heterosexual* function and the interests one has in categorizing terms such as sex, sexuality and sexual normativity (heterosexuality is seen as the norm, homosexuality is seen as a deviation). Queer theorists study how sexuality affects one's (gender)identity (Hoogland in van der Tuin & Buikema, 2007: 11-113). For more information on this topic, one can access various (hand)books. To name a few: Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990). Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *the Epistemology of the Closet* (1990). Iris van der Tuin & Rosemarie Buikema's *Gender in Media, Kunst en Cultuur* (2007).

As already stated in the introduction, the field of Shakespearean studies is extremely vast. Therefore, it is impossible to analyze every single interpretation of *Twelfth Night* ever made. Because of this, I set up several criteria in order to select those interpretations that could be of use to me. First, I am only looking at studies that were conducted in the 1990s. Secondly, key terms that I have used to select the studies were *gender* and *sexuality*. The vast field of Shakespearean studies is extremely versatile, topics range from gender to class and from power relations to religion. While many of these studies are, without a doubt, very interesting not all of them are of use to me. Therefore, I have limited myself to those studies that revolve around gender and/or sexuality.<sup>8</sup> Last, I am only looking at studies that have been done on the characters that I am focusing on in this research. There are several other interesting characters that have thoroughly been analyzed. However, since I am not focusing on them I have chosen not to take these studies into account.<sup>9</sup>

By using these selection criteria I hope to create a well defined and structured account of what has been written on gender and sexuality in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* during the post-structuralist era.

## 2.2 BYPASSING SHAKESPEARE

In *The Modernist Shakespeare* Hugh Grady argues that in the past few years there has been a change in how we read Shakespeare (Grady, 1991: 210) He argues that there is an uneasy relationship between “clearly Postmodern critical procedures and texts from a decidedly different cultural context” (Grady, 1991: 217). However, he does not seem to find this problematic for he believes that text only exists through interpretation. Accordingly, “the text is represented as existing in an ahistorical space” (Grady, 1991: 218). In this sense, Grady

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<sup>8</sup> Studies that revolve around other interesting topics such as class, madness, religion are: Daalder, Joost., 1997. “Perspectives of Madness in *Twelfth Night*”. *English Studies*. 78 (2), pp. 105-110. / Lindheim, Nancy. 2007., “Rethinking Sexuality and Class in *Twelfth Night*”. *University of Toronto Quarterly*. 76 (2), pp.679-713. / Penuel, S., 2010. “Missing Fathers: *Twelfth Night* and the Reformation of Mourning”. *Studies in Philosophy*. 107 (1), pp.74-96

<sup>9</sup> I am not looking at characters such as Malvolio, Maria, Sir Toby and Sir Andrew, since their roles are not specifically connected to gender and/or sexuality. Rather, these characters represent issues that revolve around class and religion.

argues that post-modern and post-structuralist theorists can bypass a text's original context and find a deeper meaning than (may have been) originally intended.

*Twelfth Night* has been the subject of debate over the last two decades in post-structuralist readings of Shakespeare, especially regarding notions of gender and sexuality. This has led to new insights. As Grady has argued above, these insights primarily exist within an ahistorical context.

### 2.3 GENDER IN *TWELFTH NIGHT*

In "Gender Ambiguity and Desire in *Twelfth Night*" María del Rosario Arias Doblas elaborates on the various debates centering around gender in *Twelfth Night*. She questions gender identity by examining several trends regarding gender in this early modern play (Doblas, 1996: 283-284).

In her research Doblas detects two contrasting views concerning the representation of gender in Shakespearean plays. On the one hand there is an optimistic view of Shakespearean female characters. It is argued that "Shakespeare, in portraying witty and high-spirited heroines, transcends patriarchal social prejudices about women and sees men and woman as equal in a world which declared them unequal" (Doblas, 1996: 283). The high-spirited heroine can be found in Viola who, in dressing up as a boy, transgresses gender boundaries and plays with notions of gender performativity. On the other hand there is a more pessimistic outlook: "Shakespeare had a limited view of women as did the society he lived in [...] Once Portia, Rosalind or Viola disguise themselves as men they can be as saucy as they like, however, if they do not wear male garments, feminine assertiveness is viewed with hostility" (Doblas, 1996: 283). What is more, these women *willingly* take off their male apparel, thus complying to male expectations. This can, for example, be found in the ending of *Twelfth Night* where Orsino needs proof of Viola's female sex. Accordingly, he asks to see her in her "woman's weeds" before marrying her.

Casey Charles' "Gender Trouble in *Twelfth Night*" also focuses on gender in *Twelfth Night*. In his research he takes a Butlerian approach, meaning that he uses Judith Butler's notion on

performativity as a starting point.<sup>10</sup> Charles argues that with *Twelfth Night* Shakespeare shows how gender identities can be staged, performed and are even 'playable' by both sexes. This is illustrated through Viola who performs a male gender. Charles argues that through her gender ambiguity, Viola creates a 'new' gender (Charles, 1997: 129-130). He supports his argument with Butler's notion of cross-dressing. According to Butler cross-dressing, as a performative practice, plays with the signs of gender. In this sense, the performative act of cross-dressing disrupts the gender binaries. Charles draws on Butler's argument in which she states that cross-dressing "reflects the mundane impersonations by which heterosexually ideal genders are performed" and "exposes the failure of heterosexual regimes ever fully to legislate or contain their own ideals" (Butler in Charles, 1997: 123).

Building on this argument, Charles argues that Viola, through cross-dressing and performing a male gender, transgresses gender boundaries and creates a new gender identity. Moreover, Viola's cross-dressing can be seen as undermining the socially constructed nature of gender (Charles, 1997: 123). In this sense, Charles illustrates that, from a Butlerian point of view, Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* represents new gender identities.

Chad Allen Thomas supports this argument. In "On Queering *Twelfth Night*" he states that *Twelfth Night* expresses non normative desire and fluid gender identities (Thomas, 2010: 102). Moreover, Thomas touches upon sexuality in Shakespearean plays. He argues that 'queering' Shakespeare effects a change in perspective: by pairing 'mixed' bodies, genders and sexual identities, one will encounter new categories concerning sexuality.

#### 2.4 SEXUALITY IN *TWELFTH NIGHT*

Most of the interpretations that revolve around gender center around Viola, which is understandable since she is the one who is considered to be transgressing gender boundaries. In *Desire and Anxiety* Valerie Traub also discusses Viola/Cesario and argues that s/he is *the*

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<sup>10</sup> According to Judith Butler, gender is performative. From this line of thought, gender is a sequence of acts, it is a type of masquerade, and that what the masquerade masks is the separation with biological sex. According to Butler gender is an ongoing persistent impersonation that passes as something real (Salih, 2002: 62). For more information on Butler's notion of Performativity, one can consult Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990) and/or *Bodies that Matter* (1993).



example of gender ambiguity. Traub argues that Viola/Cesario's gender is constantly hanging in the balance (Traub, 1992: 132).

What becomes clear when looking at studies that focus on sexuality, is that the other characters of *Twelfth Night* come into play as well. Traub is one such theorist who has focused on sexuality in *Twelfth Night*. In her analysis she focuses on both gender and sexuality since she finds it crucial to analyze how sexuality and gender intersect. In this sense, her approach lies on "detailing the intersections and contradictions between sexuality and gender in the early modern period" (Traub, 1992: I, my emphasis). (The fact that Traub says that she will analyze gender and sexuality from the perspective of the early modern period is an interesting statement. I will elaborate more on this).

Especially sexuality is an important theme for her. She argues that *Twelfth Night* is full of (homo)erotic desire:

The sexual economy of *Twelfth Night* is saturated with multiple erotic investments: Viola/Cesario's dual desire for Olivia and Orsino; Orsino's ambivalent interest in Viola/Cesario; Sebastian's responses to Olivia and Antonio; and finally, Antonio's exclusive erotic wish for Sebastian.

(Traub, 1992: 130)

In her analysis of sexuality in *Twelfth Night* Traub primarily elaborates on homosexuality. First she discusses Viola/Cesario as homosexual. She argues that Viola may have feelings for Olivia. However, when homosexuality becomes too "anxiety-ridden, the homoerotic energy of Viola/Cesario is displaced onto Antonio" (Traub, 1992: 133). Antonio, then, is described as the character who is "positioned most firmly in a homoerotic relation to desire" (Traub, 1992: 132). Through his friendship with Sebastian, Antonio is considered to be the exemplum of homosexuality. Next on the list of homosexuals is Orsino who is described not as bisexual, but as both homosexual and heterosexual, because of his "heterosexual desire for Olivia and his homoerotic desire for Cesario" (Traub, 1992: 135). Even Sebastian is put under the homosexual microscope. Traub does not explicitly state that he is homosexual, but she does question his sexuality: "Sebastian's own desire seems more complicated than the assumptions of 'natural' heterosexuality would suggest. In fact, Sebastian's desire [...] seems to obliterate the distinction between homoerotic and heterosexual" (Traub, 1992: 138). Traub thus questions sexuality categories in *Twelfth Night* and argues that it is filled with erotic desire, homoerotic desire that is.

Valerie Traub is not the only one who has taken an interest in sexuality in *Twelfth Night*. In 1992 Joseph Pequigney also researched same sex love in *Twelfth Night*. In “The Two Antonios and Same-Sex Love in *Twelfth Night* and *The Merchant of Venice*” Pequigney analyzes (homo)sexuality in these two Shakespearean plays. Pequigney’s objective is to analyze the sexual orientation of Sebastian and his companion Antonio. Their friendship has been the subject of many studies. Moreover, this relationship has been referred to as “the strongest and most direct expression of homoerotic feeling in Shakespeare’s plays” (Adelman in Smith, 1991: 67). Pequigney seems to build on this work and states that his aim is to “secure the homoerotic character of the friendship” (Pequigney in Barker & Kamps, 1995: 179, author’s emphasis). In his elaboration on the relationship between Antonio and Sebastian he states that “it is the classic homoerotic relationship” (Pequigney in Barker & Kamps, 1995: 181) in which Sebastian comes to depend on Antonio, both emotionally and financially, while Antonio is the caregiver. While it is obvious that Antonio is homosexual, Sebastian is clearly bisexual: “he proves capable of erotically responding to man and woman” (Pequigney in Barker & Kamps, 1995: 182). Moreover, Sebastian is the most extreme example of bisexuality in Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*. The man to which Sebastian erotically responds to is, of course, Antonio. The woman of his desire is represented by Olivia.

Like Traub, Pequigney elaborates on (homo) sexuality in relation to the other main characters as well. Accordingly, he draws conclusions similar to Traub’s: “Like Orsino, Olivia goes through a homoerotic phase that lasts through and beyond betrothal; both have experiences that evince their bisexuality” (Pequigney in Barker & Kamps, 1995: 183). Pequigney argues that Viola can be seen as a variation to this bisexual theme since she combines both sexes and is pursued by both sexes.

Pequigney’s study was well received. Even late twentieth-century scholars that attempted to critique it, in the end came up with similar results. Charles, for example initially stated that “‘The Two Antonios and Same-Sex Love’ *unproblematically* applies contemporary constructions of sexual identity to an early modern culture in which the categories of homosexuality and bisexuality were neither fixed nor associated with identity” (Charles, 1997: 121, my emphasis). This implies a critique from Charles’ part. Charles finds it necessary to look at the cultural and historical context of the play when analyzing sexuality. However, his conclusion regarding homosexuality in *Twelfth Night* is that “the representation of male homoeroticism in this comedy is [...] glaring and ultimately inexplicable” (Charles,

1997: 136). Therefore, his research can be seen as more nuanced than Pequigney's since he has attempted to locate the role of (homo)sexuality in *Twelfth Night* by analyzing the play from its own cultural and historical framework. However, in the end his conclusion matches Pequigney's.

Furthermore, Charles argues that the homosexual themes in *Twelfth Night* are extremely important and interesting, for the representation of homo-erotic attraction in *Twelfth Night* serves to dramatize "the socially constructed basis of a sexuality that is determined by gender identity" (Charles, 1997: 122). Moreover, what is interesting about Charles' research is that he does not merely look at male homosexual relationships as represented by Antonio and Sebastian or Cesario and Orsino. Rather, he also takes into account the lesbian erotics of *Twelfth Night*. Charles argues that the relationship between Olivia and Viola has not received the credit it deserves. He states that "although until recently most scholarship in Renaissance homo-erotics has dealt almost exclusively with male-male relationships, there is no reason to believe that lesbian practices were not equally as common" (Charles, 1997: 131). Therefore, he centralizes the Olivia-Viola affair.

In his article, Charles explains that in early modern England, lesbian sexual practice was condemned and lesbian women were often prosecuted (Charles, 1997: 131). He believes that it is for this reason that in early modern Europe evidence for lesbian relationships is well hidden, more so than with male homosexuality: "The combination of a crime too nefarious to name and a set of perpetrators officially silenced and obedient within a predominantly patriarchal culture has made lesbian history a 'blank', a closet within a closet, that scholars are only now beginning to attempt to reconstruct" (Charles, 1997: 131-132). He argues that it is because of this, that the lesbian affair between Olivia and Viola is not prominent.

He illustrates this lesbian romance with several examples. One of them can be found in Olivia and Viola/Cesario's first encounter. Viola/Cesario takes the liberty of asking Olivia to lift her veil (which she wears because she is in mourning for her late father and brother). She then woos Olivia, as Orsino has asked her to, and states: "But if you are the devil, you are fair" (Shakespeare in Charles, 1997: 133). Viola/Cesario proceeds in wooing Olivia and by the time s/he leaves, Olivia has fallen in love with her/him. She sends her head steward after Viola/Cesario to give her/him her ring. This makes Viola realize that she is "the man if it be so, as 'tis, / Poor lady, she were better love a dream" (Shakespeare in Charles, 1997: 133).

This famous soliloquy, where Viola suddenly realizes that she *is* the man and she acknowledges that her performance has led to a lesbian attraction, is used by Charles to illustrate the lesbian erotics in *Twelfth Night*.

Charles further elaborates on this homosexual attraction between Viola/Cesario and Olivia. He states that it is apparent throughout the entire tale because Olivia “continues her amorous assault until the end of the play, unwilling to take no for an answer” (Charles, 1997: 134). Accordingly, Charles sees Olivia as the exemplum of lesbian desire.

Like the other theorists who discuss sexuality in *Twelfth Night*, Charles also elaborates on the male homosexual relationships in the play: “In counterpoint to the ironies and ambiguities that closet the lesbian subtext in the main courtship of *Twelfth Night*, the representation of male homoeroticism in this comedy is by contrast glaring and ultimately inexplicable” (Charles, 1997: 136).

Charles’ plea for more attention for the lesbian erotics in *Twelfth Night* seems to be answered by Jami Ake who, in “Glimpsing a ‘Lesbian’ Poetics in *Twelfth Night*”, elaborates on female same sex desire. As already stated in the introduction of this research, Ake argues that Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* offers a view into the politics of female desire. Much like Charles, Ake analyzes the first encounter between Olivia and Viola/Cesario. She argues that this scene illustrates that “forged languages of female desire find their way into action. Viola’s successful wooing of Olivia in the interview scene afford us a glimpse of a tentative ‘lesbian’ poetics as one female character imagines and articulates the words that will seduce another” (Ake, 2003: 376). Ake concludes that Viola’s seduction of Olivia demonstrates how difficult it is to invent the terms for female desire (Ake, 2003: 389). Even though Viola performs a masculine gender, she is not successful at wooing Olivia after all due to the fact that a “fairly conventional comic ending, and its celebration of heterosexual marriage” (Ake, 2003: 2889) cuts off the possibility of a ‘successful’ lesbian relationship.

## 2.5 CONCLUSION

The many studies deriving from the 1990s that centre around gender and sexuality, illustrate the idea that ‘post-structuralist Shakespeare’ opens up a new perspective. From this point of view gender and sexual identities have become intertwined. This implies a shift in the way

that selfhood is understood. Selfhood in the late twentieth century seems to be defined in terms of bodily and relational selfhood, which can be connected to the Renaissance in which these two dimensions of the self were also prominent. However, these dimensions are understood differently in the late twentieth century. The relational dimension of the self now seems to revolve around one's sexuality. Accordingly, the object of one's affection or desires constitutes one's identity in terms of sexuality. The bodily dimension of the self plays an important part in this. One's sexuality is defined in terms of one's own sex in relation to the sex of the person that is desired. Thus, when a person is of the male sex, the sex of the person he desires determines his sexual identity. In this sense, the bodily and relational dimension are intertwined when looking at selfhood in terms of sexuality and gender identity. One's sexual identity exists through one's own body and by virtue of an *other*.

Moreover, these notions have become defining for the play's characters. Thomas' acknowledgement that post-structuralist theories provide new insights when looking at Shakespearean plays is an interesting one. It seems as if these theorists are less interested in the textuality of Shakespeare's work and more interested in gaining *new* insights (Grady, 1991: 225). The symbolic world in which Shakespeare lives in these studies and interpretations revolves around sex, sexuality and gender. Accordingly, there is no awareness for early modern notions of selfhood. The play and the characters are solely understood from a late twentieth-century post-structuralist perspective.

When analyzing the different characters from a post-structuralist perspective, I will rely on these studies. For example, I will provide concrete illustrations of how Orsino's sexuality can be understood. Accordingly, I will analyze how his sexuality is understood to influence his selfhood. Sexuality can be seen as both a relational and a bodily dimension of the self. The bodily dimension of the self in the late twentieth century, however, is different than in the early modern period. Within post-structuralism the bodily dimension of the self often refers to sexuality, specifically focusing on one's object of desire. Thus, Orsino's bodily self can be identified as homosexual and heterosexual. His homosexuality is constructed through his relation with Viola/Cesario while his heterosexuality is connected to Olivia. Questions that I will use as guidelines state: How can the dimensions of the self be seen in a post-structuralist framework? How do notions of gender and/or sexuality influence one's sense of self? Which

dimensions of the self are prominent and how are they to be understood? How do post-structuralist notions of selfhood compare and contrast to early modern conceptions of the self?

By using these questions as a framework, I intend to gain insight into how Viola, Orsino, Sebastian and Antonio are understood within post-structuralism. Accordingly, I can test whether and, if so, how Nunn has been influenced by such theoretical understandings.

## CONSTRUCTING *THE SELF* THROUGH THE AGES

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In *Cineaste* an interview has been conducted with Trevor Nunn on his production of TWELFTH NIGHT: *Shakespeare in the cinema: A film directors' symposium*. The first question that was asked focuses on the process of turning a play into a film. *Cineaste* posed the question: "It is almost always necessary to make cuts and other changes in the text when cinematically adapting a Shakespeare play. What is your own philosophy or strategy for making cuts, for updating antiquarian or obscure words, or for rewriting or rearranging scenes?" (*Cineaste*, 1998: 48). Trevor Nunn answers:

In my view, *Twelfth Night* is as near a perfect work for the theater as any that one can nominate. It's exquisite [...] So one tampers with it at one's peril. I did several things I'm sure would mortify some scholars. I introduced a prologue, because it was discovered that audiences were having difficulty in orientating themselves, and trying to discover exactly who these twins were [...] I also did a certain amount of transposition, partly because I wanted to clarify narrative, and, in one all-important area, to emphasize ironic counterpoint. I fought to keep as much of the text as possible, and I lost some of the battles, but we retained about sixty-five percent of Shakespeare's text and I think that compares favorably with a lot of recent Shakespeare films where one is down to forty or even thirty percent of the original text. *That strikes me as almost a contradiction in terms, that you're doing a great work by Shakespeare, but you're not prepared to include his language.*

(Nunn, 1998: 49, my emphasis)

Although Nunn had to alter several aspects of *Twelfth Night* in his rendition of TWELFTH NIGHT, he did his utmost best to preserve it, especially when considering the fact that he stayed close to the original script, of which he was able to preserve sixty-five percent. This stands in sharp contrast to other Shakespearean film productions where often only a meager thirty or forty percent of the script survives. Keeping this in mind, I will now turn to my analysis. The main point of focus will be the characters of *Twelfth Night* as represented in Trevor Nunn's 1996 production of TWELFTH NIGHT. I will analyze the plot and the characters, focusing on what has been changed and what has remained the same.

### 3.2 THE PLOT

TWELFTH NIGHT tells the tale of Viola, who is shipwrecked on the shores of Illyria. The tale is set in the late Victorian era, in the 1890s. The film starts with a short prologue which, as stated above, is not included in the original. The prologue introduces the twins Sebastian and Viola. One can immediately see their striking resemblance and how close they are. When a storm causes a shipwreck Viola and Sebastian are separated due to the chaos. Viola presumes that her twin brother is dead for she is not able to find him after the disaster. To ensure her safety, as it could be dangerous to enter a foreign land as a woman alone, she decides to masquerade as a young man under the name Cesario and enters the service of Duke Orsino. Orsino, who is in love with Countess Olivia, uses Viola/Cesario as a mediator between him and Olivia to convince Olivia of his love for her. Olivia, who believes that Viola is a man, falls in love with Viola/Cesario. Viola, however, has already fallen in love with Duke Orsino.

When Sebastian arrives on the scene he creates confusion. Because she mistakes him for Viola/Cesario, Olivia asks Sebastian to marry her and they are secretly wed. When the twins finally meet again there is a lot of amazement at their similarity (as two men). Subsequently, Viola reveals that she is actually a woman and that Sebastian is her lost twin brother. The play ends in the announcement that Duke Orsino and Viola shall be wed (Goodwin, 1979: 47-48). The film, however, features an epilogue in which one sees Olivia, Sebastian, Orsino and Viola at a type of wedding reception. There, they celebrate their journey that has ended in lovers meeting.

The subplot centers around Sir Toby (Olivia's uncle), Sir Andrew and Maria (Olivia's maid) who deceive Malvolio, Olivia's haughty, stoic head steward. They make him believe that Olivia is secretly in love with him and wishes for them to be wed. They do so by sending him a love letter written by Maria in Olivia's handwriting. Accordingly, Malvolio is tricked into wearing yellow stockings cross-gartered, to smile constantly in the presence of Olivia (although she is actually in mourning for the death of her father and brother) and to be rude to the fellow servants. Malvolio is extremely happy with the letter and starts acting out its contents (Goodwin, 1979: 47-48). In this sense, Malvolio steps out of his character and becomes the fool.



### 3.3 THE CHARACTERS

My analyses center around Viola/Cesario, Duke Orsino and Sebastian, the latter in relation to his companion Antonio. In my analyses I will conduct three analyses of each character. The first analysis will revolve around Trevor Nunn's production of TWELFTH NIGHT. I will examine how the characters are represented in the film. Thus, in this reading I will not be focusing on the characters as presented in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. Alongside the analyses of the characters, I will point out (major) alterations that Nunn has made. These alterations are, of course, crucial to my research. Therefore, they will be a recurring theme throughout the rest of my research. Secondly, an analysis will be done on how the characters can be understood from a Renaissance perspective. In this sense I will do a Renaissance reading of each character. Accordingly, I will discuss how selfhood can be understood when looking at the character in question. In so doing, I will primarily rely on the literature and theories as elaborated upon in the chapter "Revisiting the Renaissance". Subsequently, I will elaborate on how each character is understood from a post-structuralist point of view. As I have argued in the chapter "Post-Structuralist Shakespeare", a lot of research has been done on the characters of *Twelfth Night*. Therefore, while conducting character analyses from a post-structuralist point of view I will rely on the already existing studies. Last, I will compare and contrast my findings. In so doing I will attempt to locate where Nunn has stayed loyal to the original version of *Twelfth Night* (as he claims to do) and in which respects he has been influenced by post-structuralist readings of Shakespeare.

### 3.4 VIOLA/CESARIO

Viola/Cesario is the leading character and in many ways the heroine of TWELFTH NIGHT. She has often been seen as "the exemplum of patience" since she waits for the complex situation to unravel, but does not force events to 'speed up' (Ranald, 1987: 91-92).

### NUNN'S VIOLA/CESARIO

Viola's transformation from a woman to a man is explicitly shown in TWELFTH NIGHT, unlike in the original play. The theme of androgyny and cross-dressing has thus been made a central focus point. The viewer sees Viola's transformation into Cesario: her hair is cut off, her chest bound, she applies a blond moustache, pads her crotch and tries out masculine walks (Elam,

2008: 118). What is interesting here is that in the play Viola decides to present herself as a eunuch to Orsino. She asks the sea captain who has rescued her from the shipwreck to introduce her to Duke Orsino and states: “Thou shalt present me as a Eunuch to him” (Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 3). Viola thus considers herself as having a renounced sexuality, rather than truly taking on a masculine identity (Ranald, 1987: 95). In the film however, Viola embraces a masculine identity and says to the sea captain: “Be my aid for such disguises I shall become at the form of my intent. I will serve this Duke, I shall present me as a Boy to him” (TWELFTH NIGHT OR WHAT YOU WILL, 1996). Nunn’s Viola thus takes charge and makes affirmative comments about her masculine appearance, something she does not do in the play. Rather than erasing her female sex and gender, she intends to take on a new sex, a masculine one.

Viola’s transformation from a woman to a man is thus made explicit in Nunn’s film adaptation. The taking off of her female apparel is associated with the taking off of her female sex. In her transformation the sea captain first cuts off Viola’s long blond hair, a signifier of her femininity. He does this while Viola softly weeps with her face buried in her hands. Subsequently, with a lot of moaning, her corset is taken off. This is an important ‘event’. During the Victorian era, the corset was an important clothing item for women. In the nineteenth century corsetry was used to construct, maintain and police middle and upper class femininity (Summers, 2001: 9). It was believed that women were weaker, both in their minds and bodies. Accordingly, the corset was considered to be both a moral and medical necessity. It would keep women ‘together’. However, at the same time the corset was a useful device to highlight the fragility of women. Victorian men found a certain amount of vulnerability endearing in middle and upper class women. Therefore, the corset served to keep women together, while at the same time highlighting their weakness, which would put men in a dominant position. Therefore, men and women were in a binary opposition. Men were identified by their strength, courage and capability, while women were considered weak and frail (Summers, 2001: 107-108).

This distinction in sex and gender (roles) is an important aspect of Victorian society. By setting TWELFTH NIGHT in that period notions of the second, *weaker* sex are prominent. Hall explains that clothes have a simple function of covering up the body, but they also double up as signs. Accordingly, they construct a meaning and carry a message (Hall, 1997: 37). In this

sense, the taking off of the corset carries the message that Viola takes off her female sex, and thus the constraints that come along with it.

Once the corset has come off, the male costume is put on. The trousers, suspenders and crotch filling are all signifiers of masculinity. The binding of her breasts is the last step in erasing her femininity. Subsequently, she must learn how to walk, talk and even growl like a man. After her transformation is complete, she is presented, as a “boy” to Duke Orsino.

The signs of femininity and masculinity are thus represented in an explicit manner in TWELFTH NIGHT’s opening scene. Throughout the rest of the movie, however, the distinction between masculinity and femininity is not as clear-cut. Viola’s performance of masculinity remains rather feminine. Accordingly, Viola/Cesario is represented as a feminine man. Several references are made to this throughout the film. Orsino, though unaware of it, even explicitly responds to this femininity and says to Viola/Cesario:

...Diana’s lip  
Is not more smooth and rubious; thy small pipe  
Is as the maiden’s organ, shrill and sound,  
And all is semblative a woman’s part

(TWELFTH NIGHT OR WHAT YOU WILL 1996)

Viola/Cesario’s lips are seen as “rubious”, just like the Goddess Diana’s. Moreover, her “small pipe” is “as the “maiden’s organ”. Orsino thus makes clear references to Viola/Cesario’s femininity and her sex traits, such as her lips and voice.

A similar situation occurs when Viola/Cesario compliments Olivia and professes Orsino’s love to her. She does this in a very ‘soft’ and ‘feminine’ manner. This occurs when Viola/Cesario visits Olivia. Sir Andrew and Sir Toby accompany them for a short while and Sir Toby, who wants to woo Olivia as well, is fascinated by Viola/Cesario’s mannerism. When Viola/Cesario says to Olivia: “Most excellent accomplished lady. The heavens rain odors on you” (TWELFTH NIGHT OR WHAT YOU WILL 1996), Sir Toby is fascinated and believes Viola/Cesario has the ability to see into a woman’s soul. Accordingly, he takes notes of everything Viola/Cesario says. Viola’s masculinity is thus still defined by her female gender.

#### RENAISSANCE VIOLA/CESARIO

As I have argued in the chapter “Revisiting the Renaissance”, the two dimensions of the self that were most prominent during the early modern period were the bodily and relational. This is clearly visible when looking at Viola as represented in Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*. Especially the bodily dimension of the self is important for Viola’s selfhood.

Viola sees herself in various ways. On the one hand she plays her masculine role by imitating her twin brother Sebastian, who she sees as her *other self*. However, she also sees herself as having renounced her sexuality: she is neither man nor woman. I will elaborate on this seeming paradox and discuss how Viola’s selfhood can be understood from a Renaissance perspective.

The relational dimension of the self is visible through Viola’s relation to her twin brother Sebastian. When she decides to masquerade as a young page under the name Cesario, she constructs her masculinity after the image of Sebastian. In her *play* of the external aspects of masculinity she follows the example of her twin brother, which explains the confusion once Sebastian arrives in Illyria and meets Olivia. The thing is, however, that Viola/Cesario does not feel masculine at all (Ranald, 1987: 95). Rather, she feels like she lacks “A little thing that would make me tell them how much I lack of a Man!” (Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 147). Her constant awareness of what she lacks results into feelings of insecurity and monstrosity (on which I will elaborate). However, she does not feel like a woman either. Rather, she renounces her sex.

This brings me to the bodily dimension of Viola’s self. In contrast to the film, the transformation through which she becomes Cesario is not made visible in the original play. Rather, we first encounter ‘Cesario’ when s/he goes to Orsino’s house in disguise. Here, s/he presents herself as having a renounced sexuality for she states to the sea captain: “Thou Shalt present me as an Eunuch to him” (Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 13).

As I have argued in the chapter “Revisiting the Renaissance”, clothing was an important aspect of the bodily self. It was thought that one’s identity was constructed through one’s costume. Moreover, imitative action, where one would *dress* like an other, was considered constitutive for one’s identity. From this perspective, Levine explains that during the Renaissance there was an anti-theatrical conception of the self which was related to *cross-*

*dress*ing. The anti-theatricalists feared that, with cross-dressing, the self was inherently monstrous and inherently nothing (Levine, 1994: 12). First, there was the idea that doing lead to being. Thus, when Viola played the role of Cesario, she would ultimately *become* a man. This implied that there was no stable self or inherent identity. Everyone could be converted into someone of the other sex. Such a self was considered to be extremely manipulable and easily unshaped. Therefore, the self was also inherently monstrous. The anti-theatricalists thus believed that with cross-dressing there was no inherent identity, which would turn someone into a monster (Levine, 1994: 12-16). Levine explains that this idea is contradictory since “the self is both inherently monstrous and inherently nothing at all” (Levine, 1994: 16). However, this was the general anti-theatrical mode of thought during the Renaissance.

This line of thought is illustrative of how Viola/Cesario can be understood from a Renaissance perspective. She describes herself as a “poor monster” after meeting Olivia:

My Master loves her dearly  
And I, *poor Monster*, fond as much on him,  
And 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 a Woman* (now alas the Day!)  
What thriftless Sighs shall poor Olivia breathe?

(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 59, my emphasis)

Viola thus feels like her identity is highly manipulable for she is both man and woman at the same time. Accordingly, she questions what she is. Does she have an inherent self? Her insecurity and lack of an inherent identity make her feel monstrous.

Viola/Cesario further struggles with her gender performance throughout the rest of the play. By performing a masculine gender, she does not know who or what she is anymore. An example of this can be seen in a conversation between Olivia and Viola/Cesario. Olivia, who will not take no for an answer, desperately tries to convince Viola/Cesario to return her love. Viola/Cesario protests and attempts to explain that it is impossible for Olivia to love him/her:

OLIVIA: Stay: I prithee, tell me what thou thinkest of me.

VIOLA: That you do think you are not what you are.

OLIVIA: If I think so, I think the same of you.

VIOLA: *Then think you right; I am not what I am.*

OLIVIA: I would you were, as I would have you be.

VIOLA: Would it be better, Madam, than I am?  
I wish it might, for now I am your Fool.

(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 111-113, my emphasis)

Viola/Cesario thus tries to tell Olivia that she is not what she is. Accordingly, she does not know what constructs her self anymore. This can be connected to the anti-theatricalist notion that with cross-dressing there is no inherent self. If Viola *is not what she is*, what constitutes her selfhood? Viola has already stated that she is both man and woman. This implies that that her sense of self is highly manipulable and easily unshaped.

The way the other characters perceive Viola also contributes to Viola's lack of selfhood. The characters with whom Viola interacts comment on her female masculinity. As I have argued in the chapter "Revisiting the Renaissance", bodily aspects of the self included things such as clothing and accessories. One's outward character was considered constitutive for one's selfhood. What is interesting here is that the characters surrounding Viola, continually comment on her/his lack of certain masculine bodily traits. As elaborated upon in *Nunn's Viola*, Orsino teases 'Cesario' about 'his' female attributes:

...Diana's lip  
Is not more smooth and rubious; thy small Pipe  
Is as the Maiden's Organ, shrill and sound,  
And all is semblative a Woman's part

(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 25-27)

Where in TWELFTH NIGHT these lines indicate the beginning of Orsino's romantic and sexual feelings for Viola/Cesario, in *Twelfth Night* they are presented as merely a playful joke regarding 'Cesario's' lack of masculinity. References to Viola/Cesario's lip, which is "smooth" and "rubious" and her "small pipe" that is as the "maiden's organ", illustrate that she is not seen as a 'full grown' man. These things are seen as part of her outward character. They are a type of bodily 'accessories'. Accordingly, the references made to Viola/Cesario's feminine attributes (unconsciously) illustrate her actual female sex.

It is these female attributes that make the people around her consider Viola to be a “boy”, not a man. Several references are made to this throughout the plot. Malvolio comments on ‘his’ youth:

Between Boy and Man. He is  
very well flavour’d and he speaks very schrewishly.  
One would think his Mother’s Milk were scarce out of him.

(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 39)

This illustrates that ‘Cesario’ is considered very young, between a boy and a man. Therefore, s/he is not yet seen as a man. Feste, the clown of the tale, points out that ‘Cesario’ lacks a beard, a sign which is related to a masculinity:

CLOWN: Now Jove, in his next Commodity of  
Hair, send thee a Beard!

VIOLA: By my troth, I’ll tell thee, I am almost sick  
for one.

(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 103-105)

This lack of a beard, which is part of one’s outward ‘character’ is a sign referring to Viola’s lack of masculinity. A beard can be seen as a masculine ‘accessory’, it is part of a man’s outward character. Therefore, Viola’s lack of a beard illustrates her lack of masculinity.

Another example that illustrates the absence of Viola/Cesario’s masculinity is given when Olivia states that she is certain that Viola/Cesario will one day *become* a good man: “Be not afraid, good youth, I will not have you: And yet, when Wit and Youth is come to Harvest, Your Wife is like to reap a proper Man” (Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 111). Viola/Cesario is thus not seen as a man by Olivia, but as a ‘boy’ who will one day *become* a great man. This illustrates a lack of masculinity, which indicates yet again that Viola’s performance is not completely successful.

The importance of the bodily self is highlighted in the last scene of the play. Here, it is revealed that Cesario is, in fact, Viola. Accordingly, Orsino wishes to marry Viola. However, Viola must prove that she is a woman first: “Give me thy Hand, And let me see thee in thy Woman’s Weeds” (Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 193). As I have argued, during the

Renaissance identity was constructed through one's costume. Orgel states that one's costume was seen as the essence of one's identity. Clothing made the man, or the woman. It was thus not out of the ordinary that Orsino needed proof before he believed that Viola was truly a woman.

Moreover, while Viola was still in her male costume, Orsino continued to call her "boy" and "Cesario":

Cesario, come,  
For so you shall be, while you are a man.

(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 203)

Viola is thus not yet seen as a woman. Even though her true identity has been revealed, her female selfhood is not considered 'valid' since she is still in a male costume. Clothing, in the Renaissance, can thus be seen as the index pointing at something much greater: one's selfhood. It was truly thought that clothing constituted one's identity. As long as Viola remained in her male costume, she would *be* Cesario. Viola's true self thus lay in her dress.

Viola's selfhood is extremely multifaceted. She sees herself as inherently monstrous and inherently nothing. Accordingly, her sense of self can be related to the anti-theatricalists who thought that with cross-dressing the self was inherently nothing and therefore monstrous. Moreover, the way through which Viola/Cesario's self is perceived by others is also significant, which illustrates that the boundaries between the self and the other are extremely porous. Because Viola/Cesario lacks a masculine outward character, such as a beard, she is not considered a man. Moreover, the importance of clothing is stipulated as well. Her *own* dress is needed to construct her true self as Viola.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> In my analysis of Viola, I have not taken into account that during the early modern period, Viola's character would have been played by a boy. In this sense, a boy would be playing a woman playing a boy becoming a woman again at the end of the play. This further complicates the anti-theatricalist notion of cross-dressing. However, since I am not looking at sixteenth and seventeenth-century theatre customs, I have chosen not to take this dimension into account. I am focusing on Viola solely as a character. I am not looking at those who play Viola. For more information on cross-dressing in the theatre one can consult Laura Levine's *Men in Women's Clothing: Anti-Theatricality and effeminization 1579-1642* (1995).



## POST-STRUCTURALIST VIOLA/CESARIO

As I have argued in the chapter “Post-Structuralist Shakespeare” Viola has been subjected to many studies that focus on her gender and sexuality. Therefore, in this analysis I will provide concrete examples of how Viola’s gender performance and sexuality can be understood from a post-structuralist point of view. I will critically examine the studies that center around Viola and I will provide an analysis of how Viola’s character can be seen within post-structuralism.

In contemporary interpretations of *Twelfth Night* Viola is considered to be the one who transgresses gender boundaries by performing a male role. She creates a ‘new’ gender, one that challenges male/female binaries. In *Twelfth Night* Viola is the character *par excellence* who mediates between the gender boundaries. An example of this can be found when Viola/Cesario points to him/herself as a performer of a male gender in his/her first encounter with Olivia. While Viola/Cesario reluctantly woos Olivia, s/he makes it explicit that her wooing does not come ‘natural’, but that it is a performance. When Olivia asks Viola/Cesario: “Whence came you, Sir?” Viola/Cesario replies: “I can say little more than I have studied, and that Question’s out of my *Part*” (Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 41, my emphasis). Viola is thus playing the part of Cesario (Charles, 1997: 130). Moreover, Viola/Cesario tells Olivia: “I am not that I *play*” (Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 41, my emphasis). Here, Viola/Cesario stresses even more that she is playing with her gender, thus implying that she is blurring the gender binaries. The idea of theatricality is made visible. Accordingly, the idea that gender is a construction is laid bare.

Another example of Viola/Cesario’s gender performance can be seen in his/her answer when Olivia asks Viola/Cesario who s/he is: “What I am and what I would, are as secret as Maidenhead” (Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 43). Here, Viola/Cesario’s secret points to her gender. In order to keep playing the masculine part, Viola’s true sex must remain hidden (Charles, 1997: 130).

What is interesting is that with her gender performance, Viola transgresses gender binaries. As I have explained, Charles argues that Butler’s notion of cross-dressing creates a space for the performer to play with the signs of gender. Accordingly, cross-dressing disrupts the gender binaries on which masculinity and femininity are constructed. The effects of Viola’s cross-dressing point to the socially constructed nature of gender in Shakespeare’s play

(Charles, 1997: 123). Accordingly, Viola illustrates that gender identities are fluid and can be staged. This fluidity of gender identities within post-structuralism can be compared to the anti-theatricalist ideas about cross-dressing.

Butler argues that there is no core self. Rather, one performatively constitutes acts. In this sense, gender is always a *doing*. However, this *doing of gender* is not something an active subject does. It is not done by a subject who pre-exists the deed, rather it is the *doing* itself around which performativity is centered. Butler argues that “there is no gender identity behind the expression of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very ‘expressions’ that are said to be its results” (Butler in Salih, 2002: 63). Butler thus refutes the idea of a pre-existing inner core by arguing that subjects do not perform their gender, rather they performatively make up a subject that is the effect of discourse, not the cause of it (Salih, 2002: 63-65). This can be related to the anti-theatricalist notion that *doing leads to being*. The anti-theatricalist idea that cross-dressing would turn the actor into someone of the opposite sex implies that there is no inherent identity. Rather, one *becomes* someone by performing a role.

The notion of no core identity is thus present in both historical periods. There is a discrepancy in this analogy though. Butler makes a distinction between *performance* and *performativity*. She states that the notion of performance implies the existence of a pre-existing subject, whereas performativity is in opposition with that subject. This distinction is not made by the anti-theatricalists. Yet, these two different notions do correspond in the sense that there is no core, or inherent identity. Accordingly, the fluidity of bodily gender identities can be seen in both historical periods.

The major difference lies in the notion of monstrosity. In the Renaissance Viola/Cesario considered herself a monster because of her cross-dressing. In the late twentieth century, however, Viola’s cross-dressing is perceived as a powerful tool through which she “exposes the failure of heterosexual regimes ever fully to legislate or contain their own ideals” (Butler in Charles, 1997: 123). Moreover, Charles argues that Viola, through cross-dressing and performing a male gender, transgresses gender boundaries and creates a new gender identity. Viola’s cross-dressing can thus be seen as undermining the socially constructed nature of gender (Charles, 1997: 123).

This marks a shift in how one perceives and expresses one's bodily self. In the early modern period, Viola/Cesario saw herself as a monster because she did not know what constituted her selfhood anymore. The same act is seen very differently in the late twentieth century. There, cross-dressing and performing a different gender was perceived as a powerful tool through which one was able to blur the gender binaries.<sup>12</sup>

Viola's sexuality is also an interesting case in point when looking at her from a post-structuralist perspective. Catherine Thomas states that Viola's sexuality is ambiguous. She is attracted to Orsino, but at the same time there also seems to be a sense of desire between Olivia and Viola/Cesario (Thomas, 2008: 314-315). Furthermore, Ake argues that "Viola's performance of Orsino's poetic suit to Olivia creates a curious dramatic space" (Ake, 2003: 375-376). This dramatic space opens up possibilities for female same sex desire. Ake argues that Viola's successful wooing of Olivia in their first encounter represents a "lesbian poetics as one female character imagines and articulates the words that will seduce another" (Ake, 2003: 376). This lesbian poetics can be seen in Viola/Cesario's lines, through which she is supposed to woo Olivia on behalf of Orsino:

'Tis Beauty truly blent, whose Red and White  
Nature's own sweet and cunning Hand laid on.  
Lady, you are the cruell'st She alive  
If you will lead these Graces to the Grave,  
And leave the World no Copy.  
[...] I see what you are, you are too Proud:  
But if you are the Devil, you are Fair  
(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 45)

Olivia responds to Cesario's wooing by falling in love with him/her, instead of Orsino:

I do I know not what and fear to find  
Mine Eye too great a Flatterer for my Mind.  
Fate, shew thy Force. Our selves we do not owe.  
What is decreed must be, and be this so.  
(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 51)

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<sup>12</sup> It must be stated though that there is a discrepancy between theory and practice. Butler argues that cross-dressing opens up the gender binaries. Accordingly, one is able to illustrate that gender is a construction. In theory, cross-dressing is thus considered a powerful tool. In practice, however, people who cross-dress are often considered monstrous, or individuals with no inherent identity (which can, again, be related to anti-theatricalist notions). For more information on this, one can consult the theories of Judith Halberstam. She discusses cross-dressing and to what extent one can cross-dress before it becomes 'painful'.

Accordingly, a lesbian erotic desire is created in the sense that Olivia falls in love with Cesario, who is in fact Viola. This is further elaborated upon throughout the plot, where Olivia continually expresses her love for Viola:

Cesario, by the Roses of the Spring,  
By Maidhood, Honor, Truth, and Everything,  
I love thee so, that, maugre all thy Pride,  
Nor Wit nor Reason can my Passion hide.  
Do not extort thy Reasons from this Clause,  
For that I woo, thou therefore hast no Cause,  
But rather Reason thus with Reason fetter.  
Love sought is good, but given unsought better.

(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 113)

Olivia is thus madly in love with Viola/Cesario. This creates an opening for female same sex desire. At the same time, however, Viola herself is in love with her master Orsino. She often states that she loves him and that he is the object of her desire. She does this both in private and in public, although when said in public it is always in a hidden manner. When she lets out her true feelings for Orsino in a soliloquy she states: "Yet a barful Strife: Whoe'er I woe, my self would be his Wife" (Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 27). Another example of Viola's love for Orsino is seen in the final scene:

ORSINO: Boy, thou hast said to me a thousand times  
Thou never shouldst love Woman like to me.

VIOLA: And all those Sayings will I overswear;  
And those Swearings keep as true in Soul  
As doth that orbèd Continent, the Fire,  
That severs Day from Night.

(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 193)

Viola is thus defined by her love for Orsino and her relationship with Olivia within post-structuralism. Traub argues that Viola "fonds her master while simultaneously finding erotic intrigue and excitement as the object of Olivia's desire" (Traub, 1992: 131). Viola even comments on the complex love triangle in which she has become involved and states "O Time, thou must untangle this, not I: It is too hard a Knot for me t'untie! (Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 59). This illustrates what Traub calls a "dual erotic investment" which gives us a "transgressive glimpse of multiple erotic possibilities" (Traub, 1992: 131). Viola is thus seen as a character through which one is able to explore the possibilities of sexuality. She is

able to do so because she represents both sexes: “I am all the Daughters of my Father’s House, And all the Brothers too” (Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 83). In this sense, she is defined by both the bodily and relational dimension of the self. Moreover, these two dimensions appear to be intertwined within post-structuralism.

Viola’s homosexual self is created through her relation with Olivia. The same can be said for Viola in relation to Orsino. Viola’s heterosexual self exists by virtue of Orsino. She is defined as homosexual through her interaction with Olivia, while she is defined as heterosexual through her relationship with Orsino. Her bodily self is of importance here as well. In post-structuralism it seems that the bodily self is seen in terms of one’s desires. Accordingly, one’s bodily self is constructed through the body of one’s affection. This marks a shift. In the early modern period the bodily self was defined through one’s own body. Things such as one’s ‘outward character’, clothing and appearance constituted the bodily self. In the late twentieth century however, the bodily self is understood through the body of one’s desires. Accordingly, selfhood is defined in terms of sexuality.

Post-structuralist Viola/Cesario can thus be understood in terms of her performance of a male gender. By cross-dressing Viola blurs the gender binaries and illustrates the fluidity of gender roles. While this can be related to the anti-theatricalists, it also differs from their notions in several ways. Viola/Cesario’s sexual identity is of significance as well. Her sexual identity is defined in terms of relational and bodily selfhood. While her homosexual self is constructed through her relationship with Olivia, her heterosexual identity depends on Orsino.

### 3.5 *TWELFTH NIGHT* VS. *TWELFTH NIGHT*

Nunn has been influenced in several ways by post-structuralist interpretations of *Twelfth Night* in constructing the character of Viola. There are several major alterations that can be connected to a post-structuralist framework. There are also, however, aspects of Viola’s character that can still be related to the original Renaissance play. In my elaboration of what has changed and what has remained the same, I will attempt to provide insight into just how much the changes have affected the representation of Viola in *TWELFTH NIGHT*.

## ALTERATIONS

The first change (which also influences the rest of the tale) can be seen in the time setting. By placing the tale in the Victorian era, gender differences are highlighted. By placing TWELFTH NIGHT in the 1890s, the efforts for Viola to become a boy were more extensive than during the Renaissance (Thomas, 2003: 307). This immediately becomes clear in the scene in which the viewer sees Viola become Cesario. This scene was not present in *Twelfth Night*. There, Cesario is seen for the first time as s/he goes to Orsino's house. By incorporating this scene in the tale, gender differences are highlighted. The viewer gets a look at the pervasive process of *becoming* a man. Especially the corset played a significant role here. As explained above, the corset was an important element of female apparel during the Victorian era. It was used to construct middle and upper class femininity and it was believed that women needed it to be held 'together'. Moreover, it maintained the gender binaries through which men were represented as active and in charge, and women as passive and frail. Thus, by taking off the corset, Viola's femininity is taken off. The fact that Viola's transformation is made visible, highlights the gender issues that are in the play.

Moreover it is likely that this alteration makes the movie more accessible for a contemporary public (Thomas, 2003: 307). When looking at the paradigms of gender and desire, social and cultural notions of the Victorian age are closer to modern day conceptions than those of the Renaissance.

Another alteration lies in the fact that Viola does not renounce her sex in TWELFTH NIGHT. In *Twelfth Night* Viola tells the sea captain "Thou shalt present me as a Eunuch to him" (Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 3). In TWELFTH NIGHT, however, she states: "Be my aid for such disguises I shall become at the form of my intent. I will serve this Duke, I shall present me as a boy to him" (TWELFTH NIGHT OR WHAT YOU WILL 1996). Viola thus embraces her masculine performance and makes affirmative comments about her masculine appearance. Rather than erasing her female sex and gender she intends to take on a new sex, a masculine one. This can be connected to the different notions regarding cross-dressing. In the Renaissance cross-dressing was perceived as something negative. Accordingly, Viola saw herself as a "poor monster" because she had no grasp on who or what she was. Therefore, she made no affirmative comments regarding her performed masculinity. Rather, she completely renounced her sex. In the late twentieth century, however, cross-dressing was perceived as a way to disrupt the gender binaries. It enabled one to contest the constructed notions of

masculinity and femininity. Accordingly, one was in a position of power since it enabled one to interrogate “the exclusionary nature of the constructed categories of sex and challenge the symbolic hegemony” (Charles, 1997: 123).

Another example of this can be found in Viola’s soliloquy. Where in *Twelfth Night* Viola called herself a “monster” with no inherent identity, Viola makes affirmative comments about her masculinity in TWELFTH NIGHT. Trevor Nunn has constructed Viola as ‘taking charge’ by editing just a few simple lines. In *Twelfth Night* Viola said when she realized that Olivia had fallen in love with her:

What means this Lady?  
Fortune forbid my Outside have not charm’d her.  
She made good View of me, indeed so much  
That me thought her Eyes had lost her Tongue,  
For she did speak in Starts distractedly.  
She loves me sure, the Cunning of her Passion  
Invites me in this churlish Messenger.  
None of my Lord’s Ring? Why he sent her none;  
I am the Man, if it be so, as ‘tis,  
Poor Lady, she were better love a Dream

[...]My master loves her dearly  
*And I, poor monster*, fond as much on him, And 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 a woman* (now alas the day!)

(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 57-59).

*Twelfth Night*’s Viola thus saw herself as a monster, for she was both man and woman at the same time. She had no grasp on her selfhood anymore.

In the film however, she states:

What means this lady?  
Fortune forbid my outside have not charm’d her.  
She made good view of me, indeed so much  
That me thought her eyes had lost her tongue,  
For she did speak in starts distractedly.  
She *loves* me sure, *I am the man*

(TWELFTH NIGHT OR WHAT YOU WILL 1996, my emphasis)

By erasing a few lines, the message is completely different. Where in *Twelfth Night* Viola was struggling with her performance of a masculine gender, TWELFTH NIGHT’S Viola is impressed

with herself. The way in which she says “I am the Man”, and then proudly laughs, indicates that she feels confident about her performance. Viola is thus transgressing gender boundaries. In Nunn’s TWELFTH NIGHT this successful gender bending is celebrated by Viola. Her affirmative comments illustrate that she is in charge of her gender performance. Accordingly, she creates a new gender. Therefore, I argue that post-structuralist interpretations regarding Viola’s gender performance have influenced Nunn’s adaptation of the tale.

The last major alteration that I will comment on here is the fact that Viola’s identity does not lie in her clothing in Nunn’s TWELFTH NIGHT, in contrast to Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night*. In the final scene Viola reveals her true, female, identity. What is interesting is that in the original play Viola is still considered to be Cesario as long as she remains in her male costume. This is articulated by Sebastian when he first sees Viola, but does not believe that it is her for she is wearing a male costume. For a second he even thinks that he is looking at himself:

Do I stand there? I never had a Brother;  
Nor can there be that Deity in my Nature,  
Of here and everywhere. I had a Sister,  
Whom the blind Waves and Surges have devour’d.  
Of Charity, what Kin are you to me?  
What Countryman? What Name? What Parentage?

(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 191)

Here, the relational dimension of selfhood is visible. Sebastian is extremely confused when seeing his sister in male apparel. He even thinks that he is looking at himself, his *other self*. This illustrates that the boundaries between the self and the other were extremely porous. The self could even merge into an other self.

The dialogue continues and Viola states:

If nothing lets to make us happy both  
But this my masculine usurped Attire,  
Do not embrace me till each Circumstance  
Of Place, Time, Fortune, do cohere and jump  
That I am Viola, which to confirm,  
I’ll bring you to a Captain in this Town,  
Where lie my Maiden Weeds, by whose gentle Help  
I was preserv’d to serve this Noble Count.  
All the Occurrence of my Fortune since  
Hath been between this Lady and this Lord.

(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 191-193)



Viola's "maiden weeds" are thus necessary to prove that she is, in fact, Viola. In order to do so, she needs her own dress. Her sense of self is thus bodily.

In the film, however, this has been slightly altered. There Viola states:

If nothing lets to make us happy both  
But this my masculine usurped attire,  
Do not embrace me till each circumstance  
Of place, time, fortune, do cohere and jump  
That I am Viola. Which to confirm,  
I'll bring you to a captain, by whose gentle help  
I was preserved to serve this noble count.

(TWELFTH NIGHT OR WHAT YOU WILL 1996)

This illustrates that Viola's sense of self is not constructed through her apparel. This implies a shift in selfhood. In the early modern period Viola's bodily self was constructed through her apparel. Accordingly, she needed her dress to prove that she was a woman.

Another example of a shift in bodily selfhood lies with Orsino. When he asks Viola to marry him he states: "Give me thy Hand, And let me see thee in thy Woman's Weeds" (Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 193). Moreover, the closing lines of the play (which have been completely erased in TWELFTH NIGHT) feature Orsino saying: "Cesario, come, For so you shall be, while you are a man" (Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 203). In the film, however, these lines have been either completely deleted or rearranged as to create a different message. I will elaborate more on this in my elaboration of Orsino's character. What is important here, is that in the film Viola does not need her clothes for people to believe that she is a woman. This implies a shift in notions concerning the bodily dimension of selfhood. It seems that in the late twentieth century clothes do not constitute identity anymore. As I have argued, Viola's bodily self in post-structuralist interpretations is understood in terms of her sexuality. Since bodily selfhood is no longer understood in terms of clothing and one's outward character, Nunn has altered the lines that refer to this.

The changes are not very striking, and perhaps they could go unnoticed. But by altering and rearranging several lines and scenes, the representation of Viola's selfhood has changed significantly. First, gender differences are highlighted significantly by placing the tale in Victorian society and making the transformation scene explicit. Secondly, Nunn seems to

have been influenced by Butler's notion of gender performativity. Nunn's Viola does not renounce her sex like the original Viola, rather, she is affirmative and embraces her performance. Last, Viola's own sense of self and the way she is perceived by others has been altered. Her identity no longer lies in her female apparel. Costume no longer makes the man, or woman.

### **SIMILARITIES**

Even though Nunn has made several changes to Viola's character, there are still similarities between Viola in the original play and Viola as represented in TWELFTH NIGHT. The greatest similarity lies in the references that are made to Viola's feminine masculinity. In *Twelfth Night* Viola is considered to be a feminine boy and Nunn has incorporated this in the film. An example of this can be seen when Orsino responds to Cesario's femininity and comments on her "smooth" and "rubious" lips and her "small pipe" which is as the "maiden's organ" (TWELFTH NIGHT OR WHAT YOU WILL 1996). These lines are in both *Twelfth Night* and TWELFTH NIGHT. Nunn has incorporated many references that are made to Viola's feminine masculinity and 'boyiness'. He has thus taken up a significant aspect of *Twelfth Night's* original representation of Viola and incorporated it in his film. However, these comments are made under different circumstances. Therefore, they cannot be connected to the bodily self as in *Twelfth Night*. I will elaborate more on this in my analysis of Orsino.

### **3.6 CONCLUSION**

Although Nunn has incorporated sixty-five percent of the original script, Viola's character has been changed significantly. Nunn made one highly influential change. By placing the tale in the Victorian era, gender differences are highlighted. Moreover, Nunn has apparently been influenced by Butlerian notions of cross-dressing. This has affected Viola in the sense that she no longer sees herself as a poor monster. Rather, she makes affirmative comments about her performance of a male gender. Moreover, the shift in the bodily dimension of the self has impacted the representation of Viola as well. The bodily self of the late twentieth century is defined in terms of sexuality. Accordingly, one's desires are constitutive for this. One's clothing and outward appearance are not of the essence in constructing one's identity. Viola's sense of self thus no longer lies in her clothing. Moreover, other characters do not need to see her in her "woman's weeds" to believe that she is Viola. By simply deleting a few essential

lines, an entirely different sense of selfhood is created. Where in the Renaissance her clothing was constitutive for her own identity, Nunn's Viola did not need it to construct her *self*.

### 3.7 ORSINO

Orsino is an important character in relation to Viola. Their relationship is of significance when looking at themes such as homosexuality and heterosexuality. What is interesting is that in *Twelfth Night* Orsino was not of crucial importance as an individual character. He primarily served as the character that brought the others together. However, this has been changed in TWELFTH NIGHT since Nunn has altered Orsino's character in several respects. In fact, Orsino is the character that has been changed the most. The changes are interesting when looking at notions of sexuality. Initially, it seems that with TWELFTH NIGHT'S Orsino the boundaries between homosexuality and heterosexuality are blurred, but this is not necessarily the case.

#### NUNN'S ORSINO

In *Twelfth Night* Orsino's love for Olivia serves as a frame surrounding the events of the play. The first scene of *Twelfth Night* begins with him saying: "If Music be the Food of Love play on, Give me Excess of it, that surfeiting, The Appetite may sicken and so die" (Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 5). This illustrates his melodramatic love for Countess Olivia. In the play he is represented as a self-indulgent person who even enjoys his melodramatic 'suffering'.

In Nunn's production of TWELFTH NIGHT this melodramatic aspect of Orsino's character is still present. However, the relationship between Orsino and Viola/Cesario has been altered, which also changes Orsino's persona. With the alterations it seems as if Nunn has made an attempt at making their marriage declaration at the end of the plot more understandable for a contemporary audience (Osborne in Lehmann & Starks, 2002: 95). Where in *Twelfth Night* Orsino and Viola/Cesario merely had a relationship based on a friendly master/servant bond, TWELFTH NIGHT represents a deeper connection between the two characters. Moreover, explicit insinuations are made that there is a strong sexual and romantic attraction between Viola/Cesario and Orsino.

Several scenes from *Twelfth Night* have been framed differently in the film to create a longstanding relationship between Viola/Cesario and Orsino. Moreover, entirely new scenes

have been created as well. I argue that these scenes are supposed to illustrate the romantic and sexual attraction between Orsino and Viola/Cesario, thus making their love more 'understandable'. Osborne explains that Nunn breaks Viola's encounters with Orsino into smaller segments to illustrate this. An example of this can be found in the alteration of Act 1, Scene 4 where Orsino interrupts Cesario's fencing lessons. This scene is present in *Twelfth Night*, but Nunn has altered it so that the time period in which Viola and Orsino get to know each other appears to be longer. When Orsino interrupts Cesario's lesson he states: "Who saw Cesario, ho?" (TWELFTH NIGHT OR WHAT YOU WILL 1996). Orsino then leads Viola/Cesario to the seaside to ask 'him' for advice. This transition seems longer in TWELFTH NIGHT than it does in the original play. Nunn does this by placing Orsino and Viola/Cesario at the seaside while it is insinuated that the two have been engaged in a lengthy conversation about his love for Olivia. He asks Viola/Cesario to be his intermediary in which 'he' is supposed to profess Orsino's love to Olivia. After having asked for advice, Orsino starts to tease Viola/Cesario about 'his' feminine qualities and 'his' feminine looking moustache and lips, which he defines as "smooth and rubious" whilst comparing it to "Diana's lip". Moreover, he almost discovers Viola's concealed breast while he playfully grabs her jacket. This startles Viola and she punches him in order to keep her secret hidden. This Act is followed by a scene where Orsino is laying on a couch, obviously in pain. While he reaches for Viola/Cesario's hand he says to her (referring to Viola/Cesario being his intermediary): "I know thy constellation is right apt for this affair" (TWELFTH NIGHT OR WHAT YOU WILL 1996).

The text that Nunn used for these scenes is present in *Twelfth Night*. But by inserting three scene changes and by incorporating an interaction of injury and forgiveness, the scene is elongated (Osborne in Lehmann & Starks, 2002: 95). Accordingly, it is implied that Viola/Cesario and Orsino have truly bonded.

A scene that has been created 'from scratch' to create a feeling of romantic involvement shows Viola/Cesario and Orsino playing pool together. Nunn has based Orsino's lines in this segment on the original script. This film scene, however, is nowhere to be found in Shakespeare's original *Twelfth Night*.

Whilst playing a game of pool together, Viola/Cesario and Orsino talk about love and romance. Orsino is represented as the man in charge: he is smooth, his confidence is beaming, his game is good and he constantly brags about himself to Viola/Cesario. He says to her: "If

ever thou shalt love, remember me. Such as I am all true lovers are” (TWELFTH NIGHT OR WHAT YOU WILL 1996). Viola/Cesario is represented as the complete opposite of Orsino. Where Orsino is in full control, active, the one who talks and is good at his game, Viola/Cesario is silent, clumsy and passive.

This scene is directly followed by another segment revolving around these two characters. The original script, as found in Act 2, Scenes 3 and 4, has been used as a foundation for this scene. However, it has been cut and pasted in such a manner that an entirely different representation of the relationship between Orsino and Viola/Cesario has been created. All the other characters that originally played a part in these scenes have been cut out, with the exception of Feste (the play’s fool). Nunn’s representation of this scene revolves solely around Orsino and Viola/Cesario. Accordingly, an atmosphere that exudes intimacy and romance has been created.

The scene shows Orsino and Cesario engaged in a conversation while in the background Feste is playing a song. The shift in type of song Feste plays catalyzes a shift in atmosphere. When Feste starts to sing *Fair Cruel Maid*, a soft dreary song, the sexual tension between Orsino and Viola/Cesario grows. They listen to Feste as they slowly move closer to one another, creating a near-kiss moment (Osborne in Lehmann & Starks, 2002: 93). This moment abruptly ends and the viewer is left in suspense. By altering this scene Nunn has effectively created a romantic image of Orsino and Viola/Cesario. Osborne even states that “No other performance [...] has so radically dispersed the various moments and moods of Cesario’s second scene with Orsino” (Osborne in Lehmann & Starks, 2002: 93). What is interesting here is Orsino’s reaction to this intimate moment. He is not necessarily represented as homosexual or bisexual. Rather, he is confused by what has happened. Accordingly, he quickly moves away from Viola/Cesario and starts talking about his love for Olivia, as if he wants to emphasize his heterosexuality. I will elaborate more on this in my analysis of post-structuralist Orsino.

Another scene which highlights the sexual tension between Orsino and Viola/Cesario is the infamous bath tub scene. Again, the script has been based on *Twelfth Night*, the scene, however, is not present in the original play. When Viola enters the bathroom, she sits down next to Orsino and starts to wash him. Even though Orsino talks about his love for Olivia,

Orsino and Viola/Cesario are represented as the intimate couple (Bullion, 2010: 37). Accordingly, their closeness is highlighted once again.

The last scene that has been altered is the part of the play in which the great revelation takes place. There, the two twins meet each other again and it is revealed that Cesario is Viola. The alterations are not very striking. Merely a few words of the original script have been adjusted. These adjustments can be found in Orsino's lines where he tells Viola that he wants to marry her. In *Twelfth Night* Orsino tells Viola that he will marry her since she has been his loyal servant for so long:

Your Master quits you; and for your Service  
done him,  
So much against the Mettle of your Sex,  
*And since you call'd me Master for so long,*  
Here is my Hand; you shall from this time be,  
Your Master's Mistress.

(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994:  
197, my emphasis)

In TWELFTH NIGHT, however, the script has been altered in such a manner that Orsino marries Viola because of his passionate love for her. Merely a few lines have been rearranged. But the rearrangement of these few lines have greatly impacted the overall message:

Give me thy Hand,  
Your Master quits you; and for your Service  
done him,  
So much against the Mettle of your Sex,  
*Here is my Hand; you shall from this time be,*  
*Your Master's Mistress.*  
Now let me see thee in thy woman's Weeds

(TWELFTH NIGHT OR WHAT YOU WILL  
1996, my emphasis)

Thus, by leaving out one line and inserting another, Orsino passionately declares his love for Viola, instead of merely rewarding her for being a faithful servant to him.

Moreover, in *Twelfth Night* Orsino will only marry Viola once she has proven that she is truly a woman by retrieving her dress. Until she has done so, Orsino continues to call her "boy" and "Cesario", because he considers her to be a young man while still wearing her male costume. This has been altered in TWELFTH NIGHT. There, Viola does not have to prove her female sex and gender through her clothing. Rather, Orsino (and the other characters) immediately

believe Viola. This is an interesting notion, since it illustrates the changing perceptions of identity throughout time. It also influences the representation of Orsino's affection for Viola in *TWELFTH NIGHT*. Nunn has created the feeling that Orsino's love is genuine and long awaited. I will elaborate more on this in my analyses of Renaissance and post-structuralist Orsino. Accordingly, I will create an understanding of how notions of selfhood differ in various historical periods.

Thus, by leaving out a specific line and inserting another, the declaration of their marriage is represented as the long awaited happy ending of the film. This has been made feasible through the alterations that Nunn has made to Orsino's character in relation to Viola/Cesario. Osborne explains that love, according to contemporary assumptions as represented in television shows, movies and romance novels, comes from continuous interaction (Osborne in Lehmann & Starks, 2002: 95). Therefore, I argue that the alterations concerning Orsino and Viola/Cesario are to be understood from this train of thought. By altering several scenes, the viewer gets the impression that Viola/Cesario and Orsino have truly gotten to know one another. Accordingly, Orsino's marriage proposal and their romantic 'happy ending' become understandable for the public.

#### RENAISSANCE ORSINO

As stated above, Orsino is not of great significance as a free standing character in *Twelfth Night*. In the original version of the play, Orsino serves as the character that brings all the others together. His love for Olivia serves as a framework for the entire play. As a character on his own, however, he is not extremely interesting.

In *Twelfth Night* Orsino is represented as melancholic and melodramatic. The play starts with him saying "If music be the Food of Love play on", he states that he wants excess of I, so that his appetite for Olivia's love may die. However, when it goes on too long, Orsino states

Enough, no more,  
'Tis not so Sweet now as it was before.  
-O Spirit of Love, how quick and fresh art  
thou,  
That notwithstanding thy Capacity,  
Receiveth as the Sea. Nought enters there,  
Of what Validity and Pitch se ere,  
But falls into Abatement and Low Price

Even in a Minute. So full of Shapes is Fancy  
That alone is high Fantastical.

(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 5, my emphasis)

This illustrates his melodramatic love for Countess Olivia. Besides from his melodramatic self-indulgent character traits, he does not contribute that much to the play (Ranald, 1989: 92).

Due to the fact that Orsino, as a character, is not as prominent it is quite difficult to elaborate on his sense of selfhood. One thing that is clear though, is that he is rather narcissistic:

There is no Woman's Sides  
Can bide the Beating of so strong a Passion  
As Love doth give my Heart, no Woman's Heart  
So big, to hold so much. They lack Retention.  
Alas, their Love may be called Appetite,  
No motion of the Liver, but the Palate,  
That suffer Surfeit, Cloyment, and Revolt;  
But mine is all as Hungry as the Sea,  
And can digest as much. Make no Compare  
Between that Love a Woman can bear me  
And that I owe Olivia.

(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 81-83).

Orsino thus considers his love, the love of men (for women) as superior, since he believes that women “lack retention”. This can be connected to Montaigne’s idea that women are too frail to maintain a strong (reflective) friendship. As explained in the chapter “Revisiting the Renaissance”, Montaigne argues that women are not capable of having an intense bond with a friend since “the normal capacity of women is, in fact, unequal to the demands of that communion and intercourse in which the sacred bond is fed; their souls do not seem firm enough to bear the strain of so hard and lasting a tie”. Moreover, he states that there “has never yet been an example of a woman’s attaining to this, and the ancient schools are at one in their beliefs that it is denied to the female sex” (Montaigne, 1993: 95). Montaigne thus argues that women were unable to bear the strain of such a bond.

Orsino’s reasoning that women are not able to love as men do can be connected to Montaigne’s reasoning. Where Montaigne states that women are “unequal to the demands of that communion and intercourse”, so Orsino states that, in contrast to men, “no woman’s heart so big, to hold so much. They lack retention” to love. In the Renaissance, women were generally believed to be less rational than men (Traub in Grazia & Wells, 2001: 13).



Accordingly, the idea that women are frail and cannot handle the demands of a communion appears to be a recurring theme.

Due to the fact that Orsino is not such a free standing character, but rather serves as a frame for the other characters, it is difficult to make solid statements regarding his identity. What seems to be the case is that he is melodramatic and that he will do anything to woo Olivia. Through this, the relationship between Viola/Cesario and Orsino develops. This bond can be related to the relational dimension of the self. Their relationship should be understood as a (friendly) master-servant bond. Orsino is able to construct his *self as master* through his relationship with Viola/Cesario. The fact that Viola/Cesario is his page, allows him to do so. Accordingly, Viola/Cesario is able to construct her self as a servant by virtue of Duke Orsino. In this sense, the self is legitimized by virtue of the other. Orsino's self is constructed on what he is to others: the master, the Duke. Therefore, he can be seen as an objectified self. The origins of his self lie in an external perspective. Accordingly, his self is social by definition, Viola/Cesario (as do his other servants) serves as the locus for his selfhood.

As they discuss Orsino's love for Olivia, their connection gets stronger. It can, however, not be compared to the relationship between Antonio and Sebastian (on which I will elaborate in the next analysis). Of course Viola is deeply in love with Orsino, which influences the way she addresses him. Orsino however, does not (yet) seem to respond to Viola in the same way, since he wants to convince Olivia of his love for her.

What is interesting is that Orsino addresses Viola/Cesario in a playful manner. He calls her "boy" and teases her about 'his' feminine qualities such as 'his' "rubious" lips. Nowadays, these comments are regarded as sexual innuendos. In the Renaissance, however, this did not necessarily have to be the case. As explained in my Renaissance analysis of Viola, she did not completely embrace her masculinity in her gender performance. Rather, she presented herself as having renounced her sexuality, due to the fact that she considered herself an androgynous monster. Therefore, Orsino's comments can be seen as referring both to Cesario's boyhood, as well as Viola's femininity (Smith, 1991: 151). The comments Orsino makes about Viola's androgynous appearance can be seen as yet another example of Orsino's lyric and melodramatic persona. The way in which he comments on Viola/Cesario's lack of masculinity, is done with more swift in comparison to the other characters. Orsino's belief

that his proclamations of love for Olivia will be more effective when his youthful “little Ceasar” delivers them is yet another example of this.

Renaissance Orsino is thus represented as melodramatic and narcissistic. His selfhood is constructed through Viola/Cesario. Accordingly, the relational dimension of selfhood is of crucial importance. Orsino is able to construct his self as Duke by virtue of the other, namely Viola/Cesario.

The observations Orsino makes about Viola’s feminine masculinity are understood in a different manner in post-structuralist interpretations of Orsino’s character. Accordingly, his relationship with Viola/Cesario is understood to represent a repressed sexuality rather than a friendship or a master-servant bond. This leads to questions regarding the alterations that Nunn has made to Orsino’s character. How should the alterations in *TWELFTH NIGHT* be understood? Has Nunn stayed ‘loyal’ to the original *Twelfth Night*? Or does his representation of Orsino rely on contemporary interpretations?

#### **POST-STRUCTURALIST ORSINO**

As I have said in the chapter “Post-Structuralist Shakespeare”, Orsino has been subjected to many studies that focus on his sexuality. Therefore, in this analysis I will provide concrete examples of how Orsino’s sexuality can be understood from a post-structuralist point of view. This analysis will rely on what others have already written. I will critically examine the studies that center around Orsino and I will provide an analysis of how Orsino’s character can be seen in a post-structuralist theoretical framework.

Orsino is considered to be both heterosexual and homosexual (Charles, 1997: 131). Here, one can see that the relational and the bodily dimensions of the self are most prominent. However, Orsino’s bodily selfhood is not elaborated upon. Rather, the bodily dimension of Viola/Cesario and Olivia are taken as focus points when looking at Orsino’s (sexual) identity. Even though it is stated that Orsino is both heterosexual and homosexual, his heterosexuality is not discussed in depth. His heterosexual desire is focused on Olivia. However, when analyzing Orsino’s love for Olivia the theme that is most elaborated upon is Orsino’s own character. As I have stated above, Orsino is rather narcissistic. This theme is pursued when looking at the relationship between Olivia and Orsino. The central argument is that Orsino is

more in love with the *idea* of love than he is with Olivia (Ranald, 1987: 96-97). An example of this can be seen when Orsino states:

O, when mine Eyes did see Olivia first,  
Methought she purged the Air of Pestilence!  
That instant was I turn'd into a Hart;  
And my Desires, like fell and cruel Hounds,  
E'er since pursue me.

(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 7)

What is interesting about this scene is that Orsino says this while simultaneously rejecting an invitation by Curio to hunt for “hart” (which is a male deer). Accordingly he draws on the myth of Actaeon, which involves Actaeon stumbling across Artemis bathing, whereupon she turns him into a deer. Subsequently, Artemis sets the hunter's own hounds upon him. In this scene, Orsino sees himself as the hunted hart and his desires are like the “cruel hounds” that chase him. Accordingly, Orsino is considered to be chasing himself. Olivia is merely an object through which Orsino constructs his melodramatic persona (Moliken, 2007: 85).

Orsino's heterosexuality is not further elaborated upon in detail. Rather, his heterosexuality is taken as a starting point to analyze his melodramatic and self centered character.

Orsino's presumed homosexuality, however, has drawn attention. Traub, for instance, describes Orsino as narcissistic and effeminate. She argues that his effeminacy as a gender characteristic “accompanies both his heterosexual desire for Olivia and his homoerotic desire for Cesario” (Traub, 1992: 135). However, according to Traub Orsino fears his homoerotic desire for Cesario, and she thus labels him as homophobic. On the one hand Orsino is able to form a friendship with Viola/Cesario, but there is no possibility for a homoerotic relationship. Moreover, he only wants to marry Viola once he sees her in “maiden weeds” (Traub, 1992: 135). Before he has seen her in her dress, he continues to call her Cesario:

For so you shall be, while you are a Man.  
But when in other Habits you are seen,  
Orsino's Mistress and his Fancy's Queen.

(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 203)

This illustrates the importance of Viola's sex (a bodily aspect of her identity) for Orsino. Accordingly, it defines his sexual identity, which according to Traub should be considered as heterosexual as well as homosocial and homophobic.

Traub's argument does not consider the bodily dimension of selfhood in which clothing played an important role, an idea that was prominent during the Renaissance. Therefore, it is interesting to consider how this scene has been represented in Nunn's representation of *TWELFTH NIGHT*, on which I will elaborate more.

The description of Orsino as both homosexual and heterosexual is a recurring theme in post-structuralist interpretations of *Twelfth Night*. Pequigney also comments on this and he states that "bisexual experiences are not the exception but the rule in *Twelfth Night*" (Pequigney in Barker & Kamps, 1995: 182). Orsino is one such character who explores his sexuality. Pequigney argues that Orsino discovers Viola's true gender when he comments on her "rubious lips" and voice. The already mentioned lines are illustrative for this:

.....Thy happy Years,  
That say thou art a Man, Diana's lip  
Is not more smooth and rubious; *thy small Pipe*  
*Is as the Maiden's Organ, shrill, and sound,*  
*And all is semblative a Woman's Part.*

(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 25-27, my emphasis)

According to Pequigney Orsino's references to Viola/Cesario's femininity do not contribute to heterosexual desire. Rather, they can be seen as a homoerotic tendency. Pequigney explains that ancient Greece was taken as a model in the Renaissance. Moreover, in ancient Greece "what excited a man's love [...] was not the masculine character of a boy, but his physical resemblance to a woman as well as his feminine mental qualities". The sexual object was then someone who "combines the characters of both sexes" and "a kind of reflection of the subject's own bisexual nature" (Pequigney in Barker & Kamps, 1995: 182-183). Orsino's teasing of Viola/Cesario about 'his' feminine traits can thus be considered to be examples of this homoerotic or bisexual desire. Again, Viola/Cesario's bodily traits are taken as a starting point for Orsino's sexual identity. Therefore, the bodily dimension of the self is constructed through an other in post-structuralism.

Pequigney further argues that Orsino's marriage proposal at the end of the tale cannot have merely come from Viola's declaration that she is a woman. He argues that "if it is erotic, then it would have been erotic before; what does change is that marriage suddenly becomes possible, hence the immediate proposal" (Pequigney in Barker & Kamps, 1995: 183). Accordingly, marriage is represented as the heteronormative cherry on the cake. Where homosexuality was not an accepted choice, all has ended well through the confession that Cesario is Viola.

Within post-structuralism the bodily and relational dimensions of the self are most prominent with Orsino. The bodily dimension of the self has experienced a shift though. In the early modern period one's own body was considered constitutive for selfhood. In the late twentieth century, however, the body of one's desires was significant for one's identity. Accordingly, Orsino's selfhood is constructed through both Olivia, which makes him heterosexual, and Viola/Cesario, which makes him homosexual. His homosexuality is feared though, which makes him homosexual as well as homophobic.

### **3.8 TWELFTH NIGHT VS. TWELFTH NIGHT**

Orsino in TWELFTH NIGHT has been altered in various ways. Where in *Twelfth Night* Orsino serves as the frame for the play, beginning with his love for Olivia and ending with his love for Viola, TWELFTH NIGHT represents an 'upgraded' version of Orsino. In the film Orsino has become much more prominent. Nunn has taken his original lines as a starting point, but inserted, rearranged and altered several scenes in order to create a different representation of Orsino.

#### **ALTERATIONS**

Several scenes from *Twelfth Night* have been framed differently in the film to create a longstanding relationship between Viola/Cesario and Orsino. Moreover, entirely new scenes have been created as well.

The first alteration can be found in one of the first scenes where Orsino interrupts Viola/Cesario's fencing lessons. As already argued, this scene was present in *Twelfth Night*.

However, by framing it differently, Nunn created the feeling that the time frame in which these events took place was much longer than in the original version. Accordingly, it appears that Viola/Cesario and Orsino have bonded. The teasing, the intense conversations and the injury Viola caused Orsino and his subsequent forgiveness all contribute to this.

Moreover, several scenes have been specifically created to represent the relationship between Viola/Cesario and Orsino in a different manner than was done in *Twelfth Night*. The scene where Olivia and Orsino play a game of pool, the near-kiss moment in the stables and the bathtub scene all contribute to this. In these scenes, the viewer sees Cesario/Viola and Orsino bond romantically and sexually. Accordingly, the alterations can, most probably, be linked to the post-structuralist interpretations of *Twelfth Night*.

The game of pool portrays Viola/Cesario and Orsino in a manner that can be connected to late twentieth-century notions of femininity and masculinity. As I have argued, Orsino is represented as active and in control, while Viola/Cesario is silent and clumsy. Orsino is thus represented as the one in charge. Iris van der Tuin argues that within the gender binaries the masculine principle is represented as the norm. Phenomenon such as *being active* and *the Self* are assigned to *men*. The woman, on the other hand, is put in the role of *Other* and is associated to *passivity* (van der Tuin in Buikema & van der Tuin, 2007: 15). Orsino and Viola/Cesario are represented as being in a binary opposition in this scene. By representing Orsino as active and in control, while Viola/Cesario is silent and clumsy clear references are made to Orsino's masculinity in relation to Viola/Cesario's actual feminine sex and gender. This can be connected to the Victorian era, as well as to the critique of gender constructions in late twentieth-century post-structuralist theories. As I have argued, in the Victorian era gender differences were more visible than in the early modern period. Accordingly, clear divisions were drawn between men and women. Moreover, gender notions of the Victorian era correspond to late twentieth-century ideas concerning masculinity and femininity. Therefore, Nunn's representation of Orsino (and Viola/Cesario) in this scene can be connected to a late twentieth-century theoretical framework.

Another alteration that is of importance comes to light at the end of the tale. The ending of *Twelfth Night* seemed plausible during the Renaissance. Orsino's marriage proposal was not extremely dubious. This is mainly because Orsino and Viola/Cesario had created a friendly master-servant bond. Viola/Cesario told Orsino throughout the tale that s/he could not love a

woman more than s/he loved him. Her never-ending loyalty was one of the reasons why Orsino wanted to marry her in *Twelfth Night*:

ORSINO: Boy, thou hast said to me a thousand times  
Thou never shouldst love Woman like to me.

VIOLA: And all those Sayings will I over swear;  
And those Swearings keep as true in Soul  
As doth that orb'd Continent, the Fire  
That severs Day from Night.

(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 193)

Through Orsino's next lines, the importance of the bodily dimension of the self becomes visible. Before explicitly asking Viola to marry him, Orsino wishes to see her in her "woman's weeds". Her female sex thus has to be proven in order to validate her female identity. Once that was confirmed, a declaration of marriage was not that much out of the ordinary. This implies that one's bodily self was not only constitutive for how one saw him/herself, as argued in the analysis of Viola. Rather, it had a significant impact on how others perceived one's identity as well, thus blurring the boundaries between the self and the other. Orsino continues to call her Cesario, even as the play ends. In the closing lines he states:

Cesario, come,  
For so you shall be, while you are a Man.  
But when in other Habits you are seen,  
Orsino's Mistress and his Fancy's Queen.

(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 203)

Moreover, in the original play Viola's never ending loyalty was one of the reasons why Orsino wished to marry her. The marriage proposal is thus presented as a reward. Orsino does not claim to love her, as he has so often claimed about Olivia. Rather, he states "Since you call'd me Master for so long, Here is my Hand; you shall from this time be, Your Master's Mistress" (Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 197). Thus, it does not seem to be the case that Orsino proposes to Viola out of sheer desire and love. Rather, he marries her since she called him "master for so long".

As I have argued in my analysis of Nunn's Orsino, these lines have somewhat been altered in Nunn's *TWELFTH NIGHT*. Firstly, Orsino does not comment on Viola's sex, which implies that it does not play a role for him. He believes that she is a woman. Thus, in contrast to *Twelfth Night*, Viola does not have to prove that she is a woman through her female apparel. Secondly, the moment when Orsino asks to see Viola in her "woman's weeds" has been altered. In *Twelfth Night* this happened *before* the proposal. In *TWELFTH NIGHT* however, this moment occurs after the marriage proposal and a passionate kiss. Moreover, the way in which Orsino asks to see her in her dress is different. He says it in a very enthusiastic manner. Viola does not have to prove that she is a woman through her dress. Rather, Orsino is genuinely interested.

These alterations have been made in order to create a relationship between Orsino and Viola/Cesario that would be more understandable for a contemporary public. For the modern viewer the Renaissance ending would most probably be incomprehensible due to the fact that Viola/Cesario and Orsino have not bonded in a romantic manner throughout the tale. The marriage proposal at the end would therefore be considered as implausible. Thus, by altering several scenes, *TWELFTH NIGHT* represents a 'valid' love. Accordingly, Orsino's marriage proposal and their romantic 'happy ending' become feasible.

However, making the relationship between these two characters plausible does not seem to be the only reason for altering Orsino's character and the scenes in which he plays. Notions regarding his sexuality, as discussed in *Post-Structuralist Orsino*, have influenced Nunn's representation of him as well. The idea that Orsino would be both homosexual and heterosexual is a clear theme in *TWELFTH NIGHT*. Accordingly, the relational and bodily dimensions of the self are most prominent for Orsino. His heterosexual self is represented through his desires for Olivia, whom he wants Viola/Cesario to woo for him. He states that he wishes to marry Olivia, for his love for her is strong. However, at the same time it is apparent that Orsino has feelings for Viola/Cesario, which represents his homosexual self. Nunn makes this explicit in *TWELFTH NIGHT*. Specifically Traub's argument revolving around Orsino's homophobia can be connected to the film. Orsino is able to befriend Viola/Cesario. However, Nunn implies that their friendship is not merely amicable. Rather, the two desire each other sexually. This is represented through the teasing, the inserted scenes where the two flirt and exchange meaningful looks, the bath tub scene, which they both seem to enjoy and, of course, the near-kissing scene in the stables. Especially this last scene represents an Orsino who is



definitely confused by his sexual desire. Once Feste stops playing his song and the romantic atmosphere is ruined, Orsino is startled and quickly moves away from Viola/Cesario. As he rushes off, Viola runs after him and Orsino quickly starts talking about his love for Olivia:

ORSINO: Once more, Cesario,  
Get thee to yond same sovereign cruelty.

VIOLA: Sooth, but you must.  
Say that some lady, as perhaps there is,  
Hath for your love a great a pang of heart  
As you have for Olivia: you cannot love her;  
You tell her so; must she not then be answer'd?

ORSINO: There is no woman's sides  
Can bide the beating of so strong a passion  
As love doth give my heart; no woman's heart  
So big, to hold so much; they lack retention  
Alas, their love may be call'd appetite,  
But mine is all as hungry as the sea,  
And can digest as much: make no compare  
Between that love a woman can bear me  
And that I owe Olivia.

(TWELFTH NIGHT OR WHAT YOU WILL 1996)

In this sense, Orsino quickly moves away from Viola/Cesario both physically and emotionally. As he moves away from her in the stables and subsequently starts talking about his love for Olivia, he attempts to erase his homoerotic desire for Cesario, while emphasizing his heterosexual desires. Thus, Orsino is able to form a friendship with Viola/Cesario, yet he attempts to bury his homosexual feelings for 'him'. Accordingly, he attempts to suppress his homosexual self.

Once it is revealed, however, that Cesario is Viola all the issues dissolve into thin air and Orsino confesses his love to her. Moreover, as I have argued, Orsino does not ask Viola to prove her female sex through her clothes. Rather, he believes her immediately. Moreover, he does not refer to her as 'boy' anymore. In fact, the last lines in which Orsino states "Cesario, come, for so you shall be, while you are a man. But when in other Habits you are seen, Orsino's Mistress and his Fancy's Queen" (Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 203) have been deleted. This illustrates that identity, especially the bodily dimension of the self, is viewed very differently in the late twentieth century.

### SIMILARITIES

Due to the fact that Orsino's character has been heavily altered in Nunn's production of TWELFTH NIGHT, similarities between the play and the film are hard to find. The main parallel is Orsino's melodramatic and narcissistic character. The opening lines of the play illustrate his melodramatic exclamations. Here, one gets a first glimpse of Orsino's narcissism and overly dramatic persona. This is incorporated in the rest of the film as well. The example I elaborated upon, in which Orsino states that a man's love is deeper, better and more passionate than that of a woman is present in the movie as well (with the exception of a few lines). However, as I have explained, the context in which this is said in TWELFTH NIGHT differs from the context in which it was stated in the original play. In TWELFTH NIGHT Orsino exclaims this after nearly kissing Viola/Cesario. This implies that these lines merely served to suppress his homosexual desires, and thus his homosexual self.

Although Orsino's main character traits are incorporated in TWELFTH NIGHT, the many alterations made to his character have significantly impacted the tale. Through the many changes, his relationship with Viola/Cesario has been greatly influenced. Accordingly, the entire plot has been affected.

### 3.9 CONCLUSION

Orsino is an interesting character. On the one hand, Nunn has remained fairly loyal to the original script in constructing Orsino's character for TWELFTH NIGHT. However, with Orsino it becomes clear how much cutting, pasting and rearranging scenes can affect a character and thus the transfer of ideas and themes. Moreover, an actor's expression also makes an impact, as can be seen with Orsino's request to see Viola in her "woman's weeds". Nunn's Orsino connects with Cesario/Viola in a very different manner than in *Twelfth Night*. Where in *Twelfth Night* the relational dimension of the self was most prominent, TWELFTH NIGHT'S Orsino constructs his self through his bodily desires. Accordingly, an entirely different Orsino is created. Nunn has, without a doubt, been influenced by post-structuralist interpretations of *Twelfth Night*. Therefore, I conclude that in constructing Orsino, Nunn has not stayed loyal to the original Renaissance version of the play. Nunn may have based his Orsino on the original one, but he has changed him significantly by rearranging several aspects of the plot.

### 3.10 SEBASTIAN AND ANTONIO

The last two characters that I will analyze are Sebastian and Antonio. I will analyze these two together since they are close companions. Their relationship is interesting, especially due to contemporary understandings of it. It has often been suggested that the relationship between Sebastian and Antonio is “the classic homoerotic relationship, wherein the mature lover serves as guide and mentor to the young beloved” (Pequigney in Barker & Kamps, 1995: 181). This can be seen in the fact that Antonio is always there for Sebastian: when he needs rescuing, financial help or a simple word of advice.

#### NUNN'S SEBASTIAN AND ANTONIO

Sebastian is Viola's twin brother. He nearly drowns in the shipwreck, but Antonio rescues him. In *TWELFTH NIGHT* it is insinuated that the two have been together for three months. Thus, when they enter Illyria several months have passed since Viola decided to masquerade as a young page under the name Cesario. Sebastian and Antonio are very close. This is especially clear when looking at Antonio. He loves Sebastian more than anything or anyone, he provides Sebastian with funds and is even willing to risk his own life for him. This can be seen when Antonio sees Viola/Cesario, thinking it is Sebastian. Viola/Cesario is challenged to a duel. Antonio intervenes and fights the fight for her, thinking it is Sebastian: “If this young gentleman have done offence, I take the fault on me” (*TWELFTH NIGHT OR WHAT YOU WILL* 1996). Even though Antonio does not fight Sebastian's battle, but Viola's/Cesario's, it does illustrate the lengths that Antonio will go through for him. He is willing to lay down his life for his companion, which illustrates how deeply he cares for him.

In the film it is suggested that Antonio's love for Sebastian is not merely a love between two friends. Rather, Antonio is represented as harboring deep emotions for Sebastian. This is most clearly visible in the final scene where Sebastian and Viola reveal their identities, Sebastian and Olivia's marriage is brought out into the open and Orsino and Viola declare their love and share a passionate kiss. In this scene, the camera centers around these characters and it is seen that everyone is enjoying their happy ending: Sebastian and Viola embrace each other once more, Olivia is filled with joy and so is Orsino. Furthermore, Olivia's staff is represented as gleeful, as is Feste. When the camera shifts to Antonio, however, a different atmosphere is created. As the joyful music slows down the camera zooms in on Antonio. The viewer sees

him with a melancholic smile on his face. When his smile fades away one is able to sense his pain (TWELFTH NIGHT OR WHAT YOU WILL 1996). Many critics have stated that “Antonio has been left out in the cold” (Pequigney in Barker & Kamps, 1995: 181). This is clearly represented by Nunn in TWELFTH NIGHT since Antonio does not join in the happy endings, despite his best efforts. Moreover, the others are so wrapped up in their own happiness, they hardly notice that Antonio is there.

How this (homoerotic) relationship between Antonio and Sebastian can be understood will be elaborated upon in my analyses of these two characters. Accordingly, I will analyze how selfhood, friendship and sexuality were constructed during the Renaissance and the late twentieth century.

#### RENAISSANCE SEBASTIAN AND ANTONIO

Many contemporary critics argue that the relationship between Sebastian and Antonio should be understood in terms of their (homo)sexuality. However, one might also be able to understand their relationship in a different manner. Stanley Wells is one of the few contemporary critics who states that Sebastian and Antonio are not homosexuals per se: “While I agree [...] that the text portrays sexual desire for Sebastian on Antonio’s behalf, and that Sebastian has loving feelings for the older man, I am less certain that Shakespeare intended to portray a fully realized sexual union” (Wells, 2010: 245). I find this statement interesting, especially since it goes against most other contemporary interpretations. How this relationship should be understood, is not elaborated upon by Wells. Therefore, I will try to create an understanding of how the relationship between these two characters can be understood from the perspective of the Renaissance.

Bruce Smith can be seen as complementary to Wells. In *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare’s England* Smith extensively researches male relationships which were common in early modern England. He states that contemporary understandings of these relations typically revolve around repressed (homo)sexuality. However, such a view proves to be anachronistic and it results in “drawing the lines of sexual distinction very differently from the way they were drawn in Shakespeare’s own culture” (Smith, 1991: 74). Smith attempts to create an understanding of how these relationships can be understood because he finds the extreme focus on homosexuality a cliché. Smith’s view is uncommon, but since his central argument

corresponds to my premises, I will take his study into account in my analysis of Sebastian and Antonio.

As I have stated in previous chapters, the field of study revolving around Renaissance selfhood and relationships has been revisited during the past two decades. Accordingly, Smith is one of the few who looks at male bonding in a different light than most other contemporary historians. Since what has been written on this subject does not comply to Smith's findings and my assumptions, it is difficult to contrast and test his conclusions. Therefore, I will compare and contrast his arguments to Selleck and Seigel's studies. In this manner, I will critically use Smith's study as a framework in this analysis of Sebastian and Antonio.

Smith argues that to talk about male bonds in erotic terms may be understandable for a contemporary critic. However, for an early modern writer, such as Shakespeare, this was not the case. Moreover, often writers contrasted the strength of male friendship with the weakness of erotic love between males and females, as I have elaborated upon in my analysis of Orsino. Orsino believed women were not able to love in the same way that men did, because they "lacked retention". As explained, Montaigne's arguments comply with this. Therefore, this notion seems to be a recurring idea throughout the Renaissance.

It was believed that true friendship was only possible between equals, since men and women were not seen as such there could be no real mutuality. Friendship was considered to be the highest form of love since it was perfectly symmetrical (Smith, 1991: 35-36). Intimate friendships between men were thus not out of the ordinary. On the contrary, it was seen as the highest form of love. Accordingly, the deep connection between Antonio and Sebastian should be viewed as common for that period.

However, there was a line of thought existent during this period that linked male friendship to sexual attraction. Accordingly, it was questioned which love was better, the love between a man and a woman, or the love between two men. Although Renaissance writers were aware of this notion, they condemned it "by and large" (Smith, 1991: 40). Smith argues that Montaigne was one of the few early modern writers that openly and extensively discussed this notion. This did not mean that he agreed with it though. Rather, he condemned it (Smith, 1991: 41). During the Renaissance, male friendships often consisted of a younger boy and a somewhat older man, as can be seen with Sebastian and Antonio. Montaigne argued that because a boy is still immature, he cannot pose the spiritual qualities one needs to erotically love another

individual. Therefore, an erotic male relationship was not a relationship of equals. Moreover, Montaigne argued that homosexuality was not a possibility due to “our customs” (Montaigne in Smith, 1991: 41). The customs Montaigne refers to are the early modern laws, which prohibited men to engage in homosexual relations.

Smith explains that sodomy was indeed against the law in early modern England (as in the rest of Europe). Moreover, several laws made other homosexual acts punishable as well. Homosociality thus had a problematic place in early modern society. On the one hand intense male bonding was fostered. The all male power structure played a significant role in constructing homosocial relations. Accordingly homosociality was a cultural phenomenon. When one looks at institutions such as educational organizations, military units, political assemblies and business organizations of that period this is apparent (Smith, 1991: 33). Renaissance male bonding was thus closely related to the way in which men had contact in society. Moreover, “in this intensely masculine world emotional ties are a function of political ties” and “this too is the world of Shakespeare’s history plays” (Smith, 1991: 57). Yet homosexual acts were sanctioned at the same time. Therefore, the society in which Shakespeare wrote was in conflict. Accordingly, the result was “an intermediacy that keeps homosexuality hidden and elusive but at the same time makes it provocative to the imagination of a perspicacious playwright like Shakespeare [...] It was the vagueness with which homosexuality was defined” (Smith, 1991: 73-74). Homosexuality was thus in a mixed zone. This, of course, leads me to the question of how Antonio and Sebastian should then be understood. Since male bonding and erotic desire are *alike*, how should these two characters be understood?

As I have stated, Selleck explains that the Renaissance characteristically defines selfhood as the experience of an other. There was a strong emphasis on the relational dimension of the self. The self was created and fashioned through the experience with outside sources. Smith supports this argument and states that male bonding was used by various institutions to construct a sense of (male) selfhood (Smith, 1991: 58). Accordingly, Sebastian and Antonio fashion their selves through one another. In their relationship, the other is the locus for the self. This is first illustrated when Antonio and Sebastian enter the play. When they arrive in Illyria, they have been together for several months and have thus bonded over this period of time. When we first meet Antonio and Sebastian, they are about to go their separate ways.

Antonio asks Sebastian if he is sure that he does not want Antonio to accompany him. Sebastian answers:

By your patience, no. My Stars shine  
darkly over me. *The Malignancy of my Fate*  
*might perhaps distemper yours*: therefore I  
shall crave of you your leave that I may bear  
my Evils alone. It were a bad Recompense for  
your Love to lay any of them on you.

(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 53, my emphasis)

This illustrates that close relation between the self and the other. Accordingly, Sebastian and Antonio are intertwined: Sebastian argues that he fears that the malignancy of his fate will influence Antonio's. They are thus deeply connected, even in the sense that their fates might merge.

Another example of their deep bond is illustrated when the two say goodbye. Sebastian is clearly affected by this. He says to Antonio: "If you will not undo what you have done (that is, kill him whom you have recover'd) desire it not. Fare you well at once" (Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 55). Even though Sebastian urges Antonio to go his own way, he clearly finds it difficult to be separated from his close companion. Antonio shares this feeling, which is illustrated by the fact that he continually asks Sebastian if he is sure of his decision to go on his way alone. A little while later when the two are reconciled Antonio states:

I could not stay behind you. My Desire,  
(More sharp than filed Steel) did spur me forth,  
And not all love to see you (though so much  
As might have drawn one to a longer Voyage),  
But Jealousy what might befall your Travel,  
Being skillless in these Parts, which to a  
Stranger,  
Unguided and unfriended, often prove  
Rough and unhospitable. My willing Love,  
The rather by these Arguments of Fear,  
Set forth in your Pursuit.

(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 121)

Montaigne wrote about friendships and how friends were understood to "entermixe and confound themselves one in the other, with so universal a commixture, that they can no more finde the seame that hath conjoined them together" (Montaigne in Selleck, 2008: 37).

Moreover, it was thought that such an interpersonal connection with a friend, created a form of interdependence (Selleck, 2008: 37). This can be seen when Sebastian confides in Antonio or asks him for his advice. Antonio even provides financial aid for Sebastian: “Hold, sir, here’s my Purse [...] Haply your Eye shall light upon some Toy you have desire to purchase, and your Store, I think, is not for idle Markets, Sir” (Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 123-125). Likewise, Antonio cannot bear to be without his companion Sebastian. Here, the inseparability of self and other is stressed. Moreover, they are *interdependent*: “the other is *oneself* by virtue of being indispensable. The inseparability of self and other is stressed” (Selleck, 2008: 37).

These two characters thus have a strong and intense relationship. This was not out of the ordinary though in early modern England. As illustrated it was normalized through various institutions. Accordingly, male friendships were considered the highest form of love and it constructed one’s identity. Therefore, their relationship should not necessarily be seen as a homosexual one. However, certain questions do arise. If homosexuality was in a mixed zone and homosexuality was defined by vagueness, was there then a potential for erotic feelings between Sebastian and Antonio?

An important aspect of the early seventeenth century was the moral importance attached to marriage. Men had to reconcile two demands that stood in sharp contrast to one another. On the one hand they were encouraged by society to form an emotionally intense bond with a male. Yet, at the same time they were encouraged to marry a woman in order to achieve full status within the patriarchy. Smith argues that “the question confronting a young man at sexual maturity in Shakespeare’s day was not, am I heterosexual or am I homosexual, but where do my greater emotional loyalties lie, with other men or with women” (Smith, 1991: 65). Sebastian and Antonio have to answer that same question: where do my greater emotional loyalties lie, with other men or with women?

The scenario of Sebastian and Antonio as two close friends is set at odds by Olivia. Sebastian and Antonio are first represented as inseparable. However, loyalty can be questioned when the relationships of these three characters intermix. Ultimately, Sebastian’s loyalties appear to lie with women. When we first meet Sebastian his focus and loyalty clearly lies with Antonio. However, when he meets Olivia, his loyalty shifts. When she asks him to marry her, he replies: “I’ll [...] go with you; And, *having sworn Truth, ever will be True*” (Shakespeare in



Andrews, 1994: 173, my emphasis). By swearing to “ever be true” to Olivia, Sebastian clearly makes his choice. His loyalty lies with women.

Antonio, however, makes the opposite decision. Antonio completely devotes himself and his life to Sebastian. He risks imprisonment *and* his life for him. Moreover, at the end of the tale, Antonio is the one character that does not join in the declaration of marriage, or heterosexual love. His choice is thus made explicit: his loyalty lies with other men. The importance of male friendship is greater for Antonio than an erotic heterosexual relationship.

In this sense, male friendship yields for heterosexual love. Smith argues that this was often the case in early modern England. This was what happened to most young men when “they left the all male social groups in which they had come to maturity” (Smith, 1991: 72). In this sense, Shakespeare’s Sebastian and Antonio can be seen as exemplary for England during the Renaissance. Accordingly, the relationship between Sebastian and Antonio, as can be understood in the Renaissance, does not revolve around homosexuality. Rather, their relationship was common in early modern England. It was supported by societal institutions. Friendships between two males were considered to behold and represent the highest form of love. A mere focus on (homo)sexuality would thus be much too confined.

#### POST-STRUCTURALIST SEBASTIAN AND ANTONIO

The relationship between Sebastian and Antonio has been extensively researched by late twentieth-century post-structuralist theorists. In these studies Sebastian and Antonio are generally considered to be homosexuals. Especially Antonio is subjected to studies that revolve around his sexuality. Stephen Orgel has, for example, stated that Antonio and Sebastian are an “overtly homosexual couple” (Orgel, 1996: 51). In this analysis I will provide concrete examples of how Sebastian and Antonio’s sexualities are understood within post-structuralist interpretations of *Twelfth Night*. As with the analyses of Viola and Orsino, I will rely on what others have already written. I will critically examine the studies that center around Sebastian and Antonio and I will provide an analysis of how their characters are seen within post-structuralism.

Especially Antonio has been defined as the figurehead of homosexuality in *Twelfth Night*. Pequigney even argues that “the openly amorous language habitual to him whenever he

speaks to or about Sebastian – and rarely does his attention turn to anything else- is the foremost clue to the erotic nature of their friendship” (Pequigney in Barker & Starks, 1994: 179). Thus, it is important to look at Antonio’s use of language as an expression of his homoerotic desire for Sebastian. Traub supports this notion. Accordingly, she discusses “Antonio’s exclusive wish for Sebastian” (Traub, 1992: 130). She argues that the scene in which these two characters are introduced in *Twelfth Night* immediately represents Antonio’s homoerotic desire (Traub, 1992: 132). In this scene, we encounter Sebastian and Antonio, who have arrived in Illyria. Antonio states that he wants to protect Sebastian from the dangerous streets of Illyria. First he begs Sebastian to let him accompany him by stating: “If you will not murder me for my Love, let me be your Servant” (Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 55) which illustrates that he would give his life to be with Sebastian. This is further elaborated upon when Antonio says:

But, come what may, I do adore thee so  
That Danger shall seem Sport, and I will go.

(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 55)

Antonio thus desires to be with Sebastian. As I have explained in the chapter “Post-Structuralist Shakespeare”, Pequigney argues that Antonio is the caregiver in the relationship between these two characters (Pequigney in Barker & Starks, 1995: 181). It is, in fact, Antonio who wishes to look after and take care of Sebastian. This is further illustrated when Antonio gives Sebastian financial aid. Once Sebastian has made it clear that he does not need Antonio to accompany him everywhere he goes, Antonio insists on giving him his money (Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 123-125).

However, Antonio cannot leave Sebastian behind and he goes after him. He states:

I could not stay behind you. My Desire,  
(*More sharp than filed Steel*) did spur me forth.  
And not all love to see you (though so much  
As might have drawn one to a longer Voyage),  
*But Jealousy what might befall your Travel*,  
Being skillless in these Parts, which to a  
Stranger,  
Unguided and unfriended, often prove  
Rough and unhospitable. My willing Love,

The rather by these Arguments of Fear,  
Set forth in your Pursuit.

(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 121, my emphasis)

Antonio finds it unacceptable to be separated from Sebastian. Traub even argues that Antonio clearly fears that his Sebastian might get hurt. Furthermore, he is jealous of “the attractions that might entice him” (Traub, 1992: 134). This may be a justified fear since Sebastian immediately falls in love (and marries) countess Olivia. Moreover, “male desire in Shakespearean dramas is almost always figured in phallic images [...] *Twelfth Night* represents male homoerotic desire as phallic in the most active sense: erect, hard, penetrating” (Traub, 1994: 134). In this sense, Traub argues that Antonio describes his desire in terms of sharp steel which “spurs him on to pursuit, ‘spur’ working simultaneously to ‘prick’ him (as object) and urge him on (as subject)” (Traub, 1994: 134). Thus, Traub sees Antonio’s desire represented as, what she calls, “permanently erect”.

As I have stated in the chapter “Post-Structuralist Shakespeare”, Sebastian is seen as bisexual. His desire for women is focused on countess Olivia, whom he immediately falls in love with and marries. Ranald argues that Sebastian is “sexually awakened” by Olivia and the idea of marriage. Sebastian cannot believe that he is the object of Olivia’s affection and he says to himself:

What Relish is in this? How runs the Stream?  
Or I am Mad, or else this is a Dream.  
Let Fancy still my Sense in Lethe steep.  
If it be thus to Dream, still let me sleep!

(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994:161)

Sebastian is utterly confused by Olivia’s affection. At the same time, however, he makes it abundantly clear that he is happy to be Olivia’s love. This is further illustrated when Olivia tells him to not blame her for her haste, and asks him to marry her. At this point, Olivia and Sebastian have merely known each other for just a few moments. Yet, Sebastian answers: “I’ll [...] go with you; And, having sworn Truth, ever will be True” (Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 173). Olivia and Sebastian are thus wed, which illustrates Sebastian’s heterosexual desire.

Late twentieth-century critics argue, however, that before he conforms to the heterosexual norm Sebastian had sexual desires for Antonio. An example of Sebastian's love for Antonio can be found in their passionate reunion at the end of the tale.<sup>13</sup> There Sebastian states:

Antonio: O my dear Antonio!  
How have the Hours rack'd and tortur'd me  
Since I have lost thee!

(Shakespeare in Andrews, 1994: 191)

Pequigney defines this as "the most impassioned speech" that Sebastian delivers (Pequigney in Barker & Starks, 1994: 182). Accordingly, he calls him "the most extreme exemplar of this recurring theme of bisexuality" (Pequigney in Barker & Starks, 1994: 182).

Sebastian and Antonio are thus seen through their bodily desires in post-structuralist interpretations. The objects of their affections and/or desires constitute their identity. Antonio is considered homosexual, his self lies in his desire for Sebastian. Sebastian, however, is seen as bisexual. His identity is constructed through his desires for both Olivia and Antonio. This implies a shift in selfhood. In the Renaissance their identity was constructed through one another in terms of interdependency and friendship. Within post-structuralism their selfhood is still relational. However, the content of their relation has changed, within post-structuralism they are defined by their bodily desires.

### **3.11 *TWELFTH NIGHT* VS. *TWELFTH NIGHT***

There appears to be a discrepancy in how Sebastian and Antonio can be seen in early modern England and how contemporary critics see them. Contemporary understandings of Shakespeare have been guided by a late twentieth-century point of view that was instructed by post-structuralist theorists. This leads me to the question: how are these two characters represented in Nunn's *TWELFTH NIGHT*? Their lines have hardly been altered. Only the final scene can be seen as a significant change. Has this had a major impact on the representation of their relationship?

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<sup>13</sup> Antonio had been taken into custody by Orsino's men. This happened because Antonio had been banned from Illyria several years ago due to a previous battle at sea.

The representation of Sebastian and Antonio in *TWELFTH NIGHT* has for the most part remained untouched by Nunn. Most of their lines were incorporated in the film and the scenes in which they figure together were left intact. Also the scenes which feature them solo have not been altered that much. A few lines were cut here and there. This did not, however, have major ramifications as with Viola. Therefore, one would almost say that Sebastian and Antonio as represented in the original play and in *TWELFTH NIGHT* are nearly identical. However, at the end of the film, one miniature alteration sets Nunn's representation of these two men apart from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*.

The only alteration can be seen in the film's ending. The alteration is subtle; it consists of a simple filming technique. In the final scene, when the main characters celebrate their (heterosexual) happy endings, the camera slowly shifts to Antonio. Accordingly, the joyful music slows down as the camera zooms in on the lonesome character. The fading away of Antonio's melancholic smile and the dreary music signify his heartache. Many critics have argued that Antonio "has been left out in the cold" (Pequigney in Barker & Kamps, 1995: 181). Nunn makes this explicit in his *TWELFTH NIGHT*. However, what Nunn is precisely insinuating remains inconclusive.

This alteration could be connected to the various post-structuralist interpretations of Sebastian and Antonio. From that perspective, the alteration represents feelings of love and homoerotic desire. At least from Antonio's side. From this perspective, Nunn would have been influenced by post-structuralist interpretations of the play. Accordingly, the clichés regarding homosexuality would have been reinforced.

Can this interpretation stand? Is Nunn suggesting that Antonio is in love with Sebastian? Antonio's expression of despair can be understood as a representation of his heartache, for he is not able to be with Sebastian, the man he loves. However, due to the fact that Nunn has only incorporated one alteration, the change can also be understood differently. Another possible explanation for Antonio's sorrow would revolve around him grieving the fact that he cannot live up to the ideal of heterosexuality. While the others have overcome all the 'gender barriers', Antonio is still alone and unable to marry the person he loves. This would also be a feasible explanation for this alteration. Yet another explanation can be given as well. From a Renaissance understanding of Antonio, one could perceive Antonio's sadness in terms of

grieving the loss of his other self. From this perspective, Antonio would mourn the loss of Sebastian, his close companion. As explained, in the Renaissance young men had to decide where their loyalty lay: with women or with other men. While Sebastian's loyalty lies with Olivia, Antonio has clearly chosen for his companion. The fact that this feeling is not reciprocated could be very hurtful for Antonio. Accordingly, this segment of the film represents his grief.

### **3.12 CONCLUSION**

Sebastian and Antonio are interesting characters. Nunn has remained extremely loyal to the original script in constructing these two characters and their relationship. Whether the alteration I have detected can be connected to late twentieth-century post-structuralist interpretations of Sebastian and Antonio is difficult to discern. The one alteration that is apparent can be understood in different manners. Therefore, which 'side' Nunn takes with his representation of Sebastian and Antonio remains somewhat ambiguous.

## CONCLUSION

By looking beyond my own cultural and historical framework, I have attempted to create an understanding of how Nunn's TWELFTH NIGHT can be seen in relation to Shakespeare's original version of *Twelfth Night*. By analyzing contrasting views on selfhood from different historical eras, I have attempted to discuss Nunn's film in terms of historical and cultural 'faithfulness'. Nunn has stated that he attempted to stay as close to the original as possible, a statement I wanted to subject to further research. He claimed to incorporate sixty-five percent of Shakespeare's text in the film, an amount which stands in sharp contrast to other modern renditions of Shakespeare's work which have only incorporated thirty or forty percent of the original. Nunn's film can thus be considered loyal to Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* in terms of language. On the other hand, however, alterations made to the plot can be connected to late twentieth-century post-structuralist interpretations of *Twelfth Night*. Therefore, I set out to research Nunn's TWELFTH NIGHT through two contradicting hypotheses. Since Nunn stayed close to the original script it seemed fair to reason that Nunn's adaptation of *Twelfth Night* could be understood within the context of early modern England in which Shakespeare wrote this play. However, due to the alterations that Nunn made it could be argued that he has been influenced by post-structuralist interpretations. I thus worked from the premise of two contesting hypotheses. Now the question arises: which hypothesis is best supported?

I have analyzed four central characters in this research, namely Viola, Orsino, Sebastian and Antonio. To construct a balanced understanding of them, I have conducted three analyses of each character. The first revolved around Nunn's representation of them, the second analysis centered around how these characters could be understood from a Renaissance perspective and the last analysis revolved around the way in which these characters are understood in late twentieth-century post-structuralist interpretations. Since Shakespeare's characters are extremely versatile, I have centered my analyses around notions of identity and selfhood.

With each character I have located significant alterations that Nunn made in his version of TWELFTH NIGHT. However, at the same time, similarities can be drawn between Nunn's film and Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. While analyzing the characters and detecting both changes and similarities, both of my hypotheses are, on different levels, correct. What is interesting though, is that the number of changes that Nunn has made differs depending on the character

in question. Where certain characters remained virtually untouched, others have been modified significantly.

The first major alteration is the setting of the tale. Where Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* took place in early modern England, Nunn's rendition of the tale takes place in the 1890s, the late Victorian era. By placing the tale in the Victorian era, gender differences are highlighted since clear divisions of gender roles were drawn in this era. TWELFTH NIGHT thus represents masculinity and femininity in a binary opposition. This is made visible when Viola disguises herself as a young man. The corset is of special significance here. As I have explained, the corset was an important item in constructing middle and upper class femininity during the late nineteenth century. The taking off of the corset is given much attention in TWELFTH NIGHT. Accordingly, the gender differences that Viola has to overcome in performing her masculinity are highlighted. Not only must she dress differently, she must also learn how to walk, talk and act like a man. This was different in the early modern period. Then, clothing was seen as constitutive for one's selfhood. Thus, by altering the tale's setting, gender differences are highlighted. Moreover, social and cultural notions of the Victorian age are closer to late twentieth-century conceptions than those of the Renaissance. This could be a reason for Nunn's alteration. After all, he stated that he altered several aspects of the play in order to "clarify narrative" (Nunn, 1998: 49).

Since gender differences make up an integral part of Viola/Cesario's persona, the change in setting has made a significant impact on her character. The representation of Viola has been altered in several respects. Where in *Twelfth Night* Viola presented herself as having renounced her sexuality, this is not the case in TWELFTH NIGHT. There, she makes affirmative comments regarding her (performance of) masculinity. This can be connected to post-structuralist interpretations. Viola is subjected to Butler's notion of cross-dressing through which gender binaries are disrupted. In Nunn's TWELFTH NIGHT Viola is positive about her successful gender performances. Accordingly, she creates a new type of gender. Therefore, I argue that post-structuralist interpretations regarding Viola's gender performance have influenced Nunn's representation of her.

The last alteration of Viola's character can be connected to the first one: the setting of the tale. Whereas in the Victorian era (and the late twentieth century) clothing did not 'make' the man or woman, the early modern period did see clothing as constitutive for one's identity. In the



final scene, when Viola reveals her true identity, Nunn's Viola does not need to prove her female sex by fetching her dress. The remaining characters immediately believe that she is Viola. Accordingly, Orsino does not need to see her in her "woman's weeds" before asking her to marry him, nor does he continue to call her Cesario. Thus, Viola does not construct her selfhood through her female apparel in Nunn's *TWELFTH NIGHT*. Neither is her clothing a significant aspect of her identity for others. This stands in sharp contrast to the original play, which implies a shift in notions concerning the bodily dimension of selfhood. It seems that, nowadays, clothes do not constitute identity anymore. Accordingly, Nunn has been influenced by a late twentieth-century line of thought.

Besides the alterations, Nunn did live up to his word in some respects. Similarities between Shakespeare's Viola and Nunn's representation of her can be found. The greatest similarity lies in the references that are made to Viola's feminine masculinity. In *Twelfth Night* Viola is considered to be a feminine boy and Nunn has incorporated this in the film. Throughout the entire plot, comments are made about her youthfulness, her lack of masculinity and the perks s/he has for being a feminine boy (especially in the matter of wooing Olivia). In this sense, Nunn has taken a significant aspect of *Twelfth Night's* original representation of Viola and incorporated it in the modern version. However, these comments are represented in a different manner. They are often represented as sexual innuendos, especially when Orsino comments on Viola/Cesario's feminine traits.

In considering the various discrepancies and similarities between the two versions of this Shakespearean play, I conclude that Nunn has definitely based his Viola on Shakespeare's. However, at the same time the alterations illustrate that Nunn has been influenced by post-structuralist interpretations of her. Viola's sense of selfhood, and the way the characters around her perceive her, is not based upon early modern notions of the self. Rather, Viola's sense of femininity *and* masculinity can clearly be placed in the Victorian era (and the late twentieth century). Accordingly, it can be seen that even though Nunn incorporated a great deal of Shakespeare's original script, he did not reciprocate the original themes and ideas about Viola's selfhood.

The object of Viola's affection, Orsino, has been altered significantly in Nunn's *TWELFTH NIGHT*. In the film, Orsino is much more prominent than in the original play. Moreover, Orsino's relationship with Viola/Cesario has been altered in several manners.

First of all, several scenes from *Twelfth Night* have been framed differently in the film to create a longstanding relationship between Viola/Cesario and Orsino. This has been done to create the feeling that Viola/Cesario and Orsino have truly bonded, thus legitimizing their love and marriage at the end of the plot for a late twentieth-century audience. Moreover, the scenes that have been created to represent the relationship between Viola/Cesario and Orsino in a different manner than was done in *Twelfth Night* also serve that goal. For the average late twentieth-century viewer the Renaissance ending would (probably) be incomprehensible due to the fact that Viola/Cesario and Orsino have not bonded in a romantic manner throughout the tale. The marriage proposal at the end would therefore be considered as implausible. By altering and rearranging several scenes, Nunn has again clarified the narrative for a contemporary audience. The happy ending has thus been made feasible.

The alterations that were especially significant regarding selfhood, can be seen in Orsino's script at the end of the tale. There, he makes affirmative comments about Viola's feminine gender identity. As elaborated upon above, in contrast to *Twelfth Night*, Viola does not have to prove that she is a woman through her female apparel. Secondly, the moment when Orsino asks to see Viola in her "woman's weeds" has been altered. In *Twelfth Night* this happened *before* the proposal. In *TWELFTH NIGHT* however, this moment occurs after the marriage proposal and a passionate kiss. Moreover, the way in which Orsino asks to see her in her dress is different. He says it in a very enthusiastic manner. Viola does not have to prove that she is a woman through her dress. Rather, Orsino is genuinely interested. This marks a shift in the *perception* of bodily selfhood.

Post-structuralist notions regarding Orsino's bodily dimension of selfhood have also influenced Nunn's representation of him in *TWELFTH NIGHT*. Late twentieth-century notions of bodily selfhood should, however, be viewed differently than early modern ideas about it. Late twentieth-century bodily selfhood can be understood in terms of sexuality, specifically focusing on one's object of desire. In post-structuralist interpretations of *Twelfth Night* Orsino's character has been described as both homosexual and heterosexual. Accordingly, Olivia is the object of his heterosexual desire, thus representing his heterosexual bodily selfhood. His homosexual desire is focused on Viola/Cesario, who then represents his homosexual bodily self. In *TWELFTH NIGHT* Traub's argument that Orsino fears his homoerotic self is made explicit. While Orsino is able to form a friendship with Viola/Cesario, he is afraid of letting it go any further. As I have argued in my analysis of Orsino, when Viola/Cesario

gets too close, Orsino both physically and emotionally removes himself from his friend. Once it is revealed, however, that Cesario is Viola all the issues dissolve into thin air and Orsino confesses his love to her.

Due to the fact that Orsino's character has been heavily altered in Nunn's production of *TWELFTH NIGHT*, similarities between the play and the film are hard to find. The main parallel is Orsino's melodramatic and narcissistic character.

Although Nunn used the script as a foundation in constructing Orsino for *TWELFTH NIGHT*, his character has greatly been impacted by the rearrangement of various scenes and the changes made to the script. Accordingly, Nunn has created an entirely new Orsino whose sense of selfhood should be viewed in a completely different light. Where in *Twelfth Night* Orsino's self was constructed through his relationship with Viola/Cesario, Nunn's Orsino is constructed through his bodily desires. Orsino in *TWELFTH NIGHT* can clearly be connected to several post-structuralist interpretations. Therefore, I conclude that in constructing Orsino, Nunn has not stayed loyal to the original Renaissance version of the play. The ideas and themes revolving around Orsino's selfhood have been changed significantly.

The last two characters that I have analyzed are Sebastian and Antonio. There are significant differences in how Sebastian and Antonio can be seen in early modern England and how late post-structuralist critics see them. Where in the Renaissance Sebastian and Antonio's relationship was very common and can be understood in terms of relational selfhood, the late twentieth-century post-structuralists defined their relationship as homosexual and discussed their identity in terms of bodily desires.

Sebastian and Antonio in *TWELFTH NIGHT* have, for the most part, remained untouched by Nunn. Most of their original lines were incorporated in the film and the scenes in which they feature together were left intact. Also the scenes which feature them solo have not been altered that much. A few lines were cut here and there. This did not, however, have major ramifications (as with the representation of Viola). Therefore, one would almost say that Nunn's representation of Sebastian and Antonio is virtually identical to the way that Shakespeare represented them in the early seventeenth century. There is, however, one alteration at the end of the film, which has influenced the representation of these two men.

The alteration can be seen in the film's ending. There, Antonio is the only character who does not join in the celebration. Rather, he stands alone, obviously saddened by the events. How

this should exactly be interpreted is still a matter of debate. Is Nunn suggesting that Antonio is in love with Sebastian? Antonio's expression of despair can be understood as a representation of his heartache, for he is not able to be with Sebastian, the man he loves. If this were, in fact, the message Nunn wanted to portray, he would have clearly been influenced by post-structuralist interpretations of *Twelfth Night*.

However, due to the fact that Nunn has only incorporated one alteration, the change can also be understood differently. Another possible explanation for Antonio's sorrow would revolve him grieving the fact that he cannot live up to the ideal of heterosexuality. A different explanation that would match a Renaissance understanding of Antonio would see his sadness in terms of grieving the loss of his other self. Whether Nunn has been influenced by late twentieth-century post-structuralist interpretations of Sebastian and Antonio is thus difficult to discern. For the most part he was extremely loyal to *Twelfth Night*. The one alteration that is apparent can be understood in different manners. Therefore, which 'side' Nunn takes with his representation of Sebastian and Antonio remains somewhat ambiguous.

The central question that I set out to answer is: How can notions of identity and selfhood, as represented in Trevor Nunn's *TWELFTH NIGHT OR WHAT YOU WILL*, be understood in terms of the historical period from which *Twelfth Night or What You Will* originates, the Renaissance, and how do they relate to post-structuralist interpretations of the play? The answer to this question remains somewhat twofold. By placing the tale in the Victorian era Nunn has impacted the plot. This can be stated without even looking at the characters. Early modern England stands in sharp contrast to Victorian England, especially when looking at notions of (gender) identity. Thus, in that respect Nunn has not stayed loyal to Shakespeare's original *Twelfth Night*. The same can be said (albeit a bit more nuanced) for Viola and Orsino. On the one hand Nunn has clearly used the original script to construct these characters. However, the way in which they are represented indicates that Nunn has been influenced by late twentieth-century post-structuralist interpretations. How Sebastian and Antonio should be understood is not completely clear. The representation of these two characters in *TWELFTH NIGHT* is almost identical to the original play. Therefore, the alteration at the ending is ambiguous. Should it be related to post-structuralist interpretations? The alterations that were made to the other characters can be linked to such studies. Thus, making this connection is seductive. However,

as I have argued, other explanations seem plausible as well. Therefore, I cannot, with absolute certainty, give an answer as to how these characters should be understood.

Nunn's TWELFTH NIGHT thus remains in a somewhat ambiguous position. He has clearly been influenced by post-structuralist interpretations on several levels. However, I have detected traces of the original play. Therefore, I conclude that the idea that Nunn's modern rendition of TWELFTH NIGHT remains very close to the original play, as represented by Shakespeare in the seventeenth century, is highly debatable and should be met with skepticism.

Looking for 'the meaning' of Shakespeare's work has fascinated men and women all over the world for centuries now. I am sure that this captivation with Shakespearean plays will not die out any time soon. What I would plea for when analyzing Shakespeare's texts, is to pay attention to the historical and cultural context in which Shakespeare worked. Interesting insights can be overlooked when analyzing cultural phenomenon from merely one's own cultural perspective. Therefore, the value of this research lies in gaining insight into how different historical eras view, perceive and experience certain cultural and social notions, in this case notions regarding selfhood and identity.

Thus, with this research I have provided a model through which one is able to test and determine the 'historical trustworthiness' of a cultural production, by relating it to (1) the 'worldview' that originally gave form to it and (2) the 'worldview' according to which it was adapted. The key term in this is *tertium comperationes*. In order to gain insight into how different historical eras influence one's understanding of certain notions one must look for the common quality, the *tertium comperationes*. This allows one to draw one's findings together. In this research the common quality was selfhood and identity as represented and perceived in the different versions of *Twelfth Night*. *Tertium comperationes* can thus be seen as a method to contrast and compare different notions and concepts in various historical eras.

What is interesting is that this methodology can be used as a model for other film adaptations as well. Accordingly, this research provides insight into how one could approach film renditions of historical plays or novels. Adapting Shakespearean theatre plays or other great historical literary works, such as *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen or *Jane Eyre* by

Charlotte Brontë, for the screen appears to be in demand. There are countless film renditions of such works. Adaptations thus seem to have a hold on contemporary society.

When adapting a theatre play or a historical novel for the screen, one is always susceptible to one's own cultural and historical framework, as can be seen with Trevor Nunn. Also, the possibilities of a director or producer are somewhat confined at times since they have to produce a film that people can understand or relate to. This can be seen with Nunn, who altered the relationship between Viola/Cesario and Orsino in order to make it more understandable for a late twentieth-century audience. If he had remained completely loyal to *Twelfth Night*, people would (most probably) not have understood everything. Therefore, a director or producer has the task of clarifying narrative. This is thus a limitation when adapting a historical piece for the screen.

Despite these limitations, I do find adaptations of great historical works valuable. They can be seen as a reincarnation of cultural heritage. Accordingly, the past is set in a new dimension. However, in doing so one must take the original cultural and historical framework into consideration. Otherwise, certain themes and ideas will be lost in the process, as I have illustrated with Nunn's *TWELFTH NIGHT*. Thus, even though directors and producers are limited by their task of having to clarify narrative and the fact that they are corrupted by their own cultural and historical context, this does not have to mean that all the ideas and themes that are present in the original piece are necessarily lost. By using the methodology that I have set out in this research, historical cultural products can be 'brought back to life' in a new setting. My model provides insight in how to do so, because it clarifies the way in which different historical periods can be compared and related to one another. Accordingly, one is able to look beyond the surface of one's own cultural context and gain insight into how different concepts can be seen in different eras. This enables us to reincarnate the cultural products of the past.

What would be interesting then is to research how other film adaptations of great historical literary novels or theatre plays have been adapted for the screen. An example of this can be seen in the countless film productions of Jane Austen's work. There has been extensive research on both her novels and popular media productions of them. Therefore, it would be interesting to research how these film renditions compare to the original novels and whether

and, if so, how the literature on her work can be related to the film adaptations. Moreover, since there are so many media productions of Austen's work, one could even take this a step further and analyze how the various Austen films from different historical eras relate to one another. This would further our insight into how certain cultural and historical frameworks influence our perception of cultural products of the past. Accordingly, this research does not merely provide a model to determine the 'historical trustworthiness' of a certain cultural production. It can also be seen as a stepping stone for further research revolving around the level of historicity of media adaptations of historical literary novels or theatre plays. Therefore, I look forward to new studies that give a voice to the two protagonists of cultural products: those who are adapting it and those who gave birth to the original.

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