



Transformation of Aggression in *As You Like It*

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Abstract:

As You Like It begins in unrestrained aggression but finds ways of transforming the destructive into the creative. One example is Rosalind's use of the applied wit of trickery and disguise to achieve her aims. Three of Heinz Hartmann's concepts offer us help in exploring how the play reaches its happy ending. One is the regressive detour to progressive goals, as in Arden, a realm of the early mother, where a conflict plays out between the faithless mother and the trustworthy mother. A second is the neutralization of instinctual energy, which the ego can then mobilize for its own purposes. Rosalind uses deidealizing attacks on love, marriage, and women to test Orlando and bring him and herself from infatuation to an enduring relationship. A third is the synthesizing power of the ego, which Rosalind embodies in leading diverse characters to a state of being that is as they like it.

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The outset of *As You Like It* is dominated by aggression: Duke Frederick has usurped the dukedom from his older brother, Duke Senior, and banished him; then, punishing a child for her parent's supposed offenses, Frederick condemns Duke Senior's daughter, Rosalind, to exile or, if she disobeys, death; in doing so, he tears apart his own family as his daughter, Celia, goes into exile with her beloved cousin. In addition, Oliver, the son of the deceased Sir Rowland de Boys, is not content with being his father's sole heir but treats his youngest brother, Orlando, so harshly that the brothers physically attack each other. In this society people find their entertainment in watching Charles the Wrestler crush his challengers, even killing the three sons of one old man. Desperate and enraged, Orlando challenges Charles, and Oliver stirs Charles up to "break his neck" (1.1.146-147).¹ But it is Charles who gets carried out badly injured, and Orlando, warned of danger from Duke Frederick, who hated Sir Rowland, flees the court. Frederick seizes Oliver's property to hold until Oliver brings back his brother or his corpse. Beginning in aggression, the play also begins in melancholy, in which Freud found an inward aggression against the self.² Before he enters the ring, Orlando is virtually suicidal: "in the world I fill up a place, which may be better supplied when I have made it empty." Celia asks Rosalind to be merry, and she responds, "Unless you could teach me to forget a banish'd father, you must not learn me how to remember any extraordinary pleasure" (1.2.191-193, 2-7). From such beginnings the play reaches its comic and romantic end, its achievement of a world to be not dreaded but enjoyed, through the transformation of aggressive impulses and behaviors—indeed, through multiple kinds of such transformation.

I use the term “transformation” rather than “sublimation” for what happens in the play, because while “sublimation” emphasizes the partial satisfaction of a dangerous or inhibited impulse, usually sexual, in an acceptable form, the changes I deal with have goals and effects that may include but go beyond drive gratification to respond to a variety of problems and desires in multiple characters and make life better for the play’s people together. The work of Heinz Hartmann is out of fashion, but I think his concept of the ego’s use of “neutralized” or deinstinctualized sexual or aggressive energy for its own work can help us draw out the themes of the play, as does his stress on the ego as a synthesizing, creative faculty. And his concept of autoplasmic and alloplasmic adaptation, the ego’s changing of the self or of the world, is suggestive for a play that is about a society badly in need of change.³

The process of transformation starts almost immediately. Naturally high-spirited and adaptive, Rosalind counters the oppressiveness of the court and her own despair with wit, which she and Celia trade with each other and with anyone they encounter. That wit, which consists of meeting verbal challenges, answering clever points with cleverer points, and never being at a loss for words, is the first transformation of aggression in the play. Wit keeps the two girls active and assertive; it functions as psychic resistance against an environment that wants to keep them docile. They take out in the realm of words and ideas the aggression they feel in their difficult situation; they duel playfully with each other when no one else is around, and they use the “clownish fool” (1.3.130) Touchstone as what Celia calls their “whetstone” to sharpen their wits (1.2.55).

But he is both whetstone and touchstone in that his wit enables us to appreciate Rosalind’s greater wit. Touchstone is a fool well suited to the world of Duke Frederick.

His wit is abrasive, and Harold Bloom calls the clown himself “rancid” (1998, 209, 211); it is wit in the service of a reflexive personal aggressiveness. But Rosalind’s wit not only relieves anger at her unjust treatment; it is also her way of overcoming despair and maintaining psychic balance. Her wit, further, includes festiveness and not only mental capacity but its joyful exercise. Even more, it becomes an adaptive way of changing the outside world; under the pressure of her situation it will soon become creative trickery. That too is a transformation of aggression. Nevertheless, Touchstone in his own way helps bring wit into Frederick’s world. Wit enters the world as it can.

Touchstone comes into the play specifically to tell Rosalind she “must come away to your father,” where he has taken refuge in the Forest of Arden (1.2.57-58). In this comedy the bearer of wit is the vehicle of summoning to a heroic and healing adventure, the calling that is the first stage in Joseph Campbell’s “monomyth” of a hero’s quest.⁴ Here is a clown’s call to a comic adventure, but the stakes are still life and death. Wit in the play does more than help us survive in an unhappy world; it calls us away to a better world. Touchstone enters the play with a set of quips that make use of reversal: he asks the two girls to swear by their beards; he tells of a knight who swore by his honor that the pancakes were good and the mustard was not when the opposite was true but who was not forsworn because he had no honor in the first place; and he judges it a “pity that fools may not speak wisely what wise men do foolishly” (1.2.86-87). With his reversals he brings into the play the carnivalesque and a creative regression to the primary process. The current adult world is topsy-turvy with Frederick having taken over from Senior, and it will take further reversals to turn things right.

The two girls will leave for the Forest of Arden in disguise, that is, with the applied wit of trickery. With the fluidity of the primary process, they will change their identities. Celia will become Aliena, the estranged one, estranging herself particularly from her father. Rosalind, for the manifest purpose of protection on the journey, will become a young man named Ganymede. With a gender disguise and a name that contains a homoerotic allusion to the boy seized for his beauty by Jupiter to be his cupbearer, Rosalind plunges more deeply than Celia into the changes of the primary process and the latent dimensions of human psyches in general.

The flight to Arden is a flight to the good father, but it is also a flight to the realm where the good father himself sought refuge. The Forest of Arden is the “green world” and the world of festival through which, as Northrop Frye and C. L. Barber have shown, the characters in Shakespearean comedies pass on the way to the realization of their desires.⁵ It is the realm of origins, where in a world without hope we may find a new beginning. It is explicitly associated with the Golden Age (1.1.114-119). It is also the realm of carnival and masquerade and of the regressive. It is the child’s world, and it is the realm implicitly of the figure who presides over that world, the mother. In this play, in which mothers are conspicuously absent, the association of the green world and the good mother is close to the manifest surface, for Arden was the last name of Shakespeare’s mother.⁶ For Rosalind and Orlando, the flight to Arden is a voyage to the beginnings of love in the relationship with the mother of infancy. In Arden the eros that Freud, in his dangerous times, hoped would “assert” itself against aggression can be nurtured.⁷ The implicit idealization of the mother that is the foundation of the comedy’s happy ending is not a falsification of reality or a baseless fantasy but a deep remnant and

after-effect of the infant's experience with the good mother. And it becomes in the play a resource to counter the harshness of the bad father. Orlando's own father, Rowland de Boys, was, in contrast, a good father and much loved in "all the world" (1.2. 235-236). His name in unanglicized French, du Bois, suggests that he was associated with the forest, a man of Arden, of the mother's realm.⁸

Arden is not a flawless ideal. Even to its most passionate appreciator, Duke Senior, it is not exempt from "the penalty of Adam." It exists in the fallen world, and, far from enjoying the eternal springtime of paradise, it can suffer "the icy fang / And churlish chiding of the winter's wind" (2.1.5-7). The old shepherd Corin tells the visitors of the hard, impoverished life he has in that countryside (2.4.75-87). And when Orlando says, "There's no clock in the forest," Rosalind responds that lovers in Arden with their "sighing" and "groaning" mark "the lazy foot of Time" (3.2.300-304). Arden is a better place, not a perfect one. But its imperfection embeds it in reality and moves the hopes it offers closer to possibility.

Despite Corin's complaints, he finds a basic contentment in his bond with nature: he is proud that he is a "true laborer," who has no envy of any other man, and for whom "the greatest of my pride is to see my ewes graze and my lambs suck" (3.2.73, 76-77). That reference to nursing defines for us the core, latent meaning of the bond with nature in Arden. Duke Senior in his own way has found a contentment corresponding to Corin's. What makes him smile even when he "shrink[s] with cold" is that the winds "persuade me what I am," a human being in nature: the forest is "More free from peril than the envious court," and there he "Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, / Sermons in stones, and good in everything," the original, fundamental goodness in the

world of the primal mother (2.1.9, 11, 4, 16-17). But he has attempted to leave behind all aggression—he and his companions “doth shun ambition” (2.5.38)—in favor of a permanent life with that primal mother. He has taken as a final end what in Rosalind is a “regressive detour,” Heinz Hartmann’s term for an adaptive use of regression in the service of progressive goals (1958, 18-19, 36-37). Duke Senior has found peace in place of aggression; but if he were to reclaim his position as a just ruler, his task would be to bring that positive influence of the early mother into the transformation of the larger society, to bring peace into the realm now ruled by his brother.

He himself is aware that peace is incomplete even in Arden, for it “irks” him that he and his fellow-exiles regularly kill the deer, Arden’s “native[s].” Indeed, one of his companions, the “melancholy Jaques,” elaborately grieves for the deer and accuses the Duke of being more of a usurper than his brother (2.1.22, 23, 26). Jaques becomes the vehicle of the theme of melancholy. He is unhappy in what others take to be a virtual paradise, is the spoiler at the festival, and is an aggressor even against the universe: if he “grow musical,” the Duke says, “We shall have shortly discord in the spheres” (2.7.5-6). Jaques clings lovingly to his melancholy: “I can suck melancholy out of a song as a weasel sucks eggs” (2.5.12-13). As Orlando suggests when he calls Jaques “Monsieur Melancholy” (3.2.294), Jaques has made an identity out of his melancholy, and he claims that it is a unique and original one:

I have neither the scholar’s melancholy, which is emulation;
nor the musician’s, which is fantastical; nor the courtier’s,
which is proud; nor the soldier’s, which is ambitious; nor the

lawyer's which is politic; nor the lady's, which is nice [fastidious];
nor the lover's, which is all these: but it is a melancholy of mine own,
compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects. (4.1.10-17)

He calls it "a most humorous sadness" (4.1.19-20). His companions treat it as an affectation, and when he wishes for the freedom of a fool so that he might with satire "Cleanse the foul body of th' infected world," the Duke charges him with hypocrisy since he has been a "libertine / As sensual as the brutish sting" of lust (2.7.65-66).

Jaques's melancholy may be a pose, but it has authentic roots. For Freud, melancholy combines mourning for a lost love-object, incorporation of that object within the ego, regression to a narcissistic identification with that now-internalized object, and a redirection of whatever anger and hate are mixed with the love. Freud writes, "The self-tormenting in melancholia, which is without doubt enjoyable, signifies . . . a satisfaction of trends of sadism and hate, which relate to [the] object, and which have been turned round upon the subject's own self" (1917b, *SE*, 14:251). The primal object is the mother, and Jaques's melancholy is central to the play's exploration of the theme of the mother. That melancholy is also his supreme pleasure, even an oral pleasure in his sucking it out of every experience. He cultivates it and plays with it. It is his ongoing mode of psychic relationship with the mother. But that melancholic relationship also includes ambivalence toward the lost or abandoning or otherwise unsatisfying mother. Jaques both wants to be with the mother and complains about her.

He is thrilled to come upon Touchstone, whom he overhears "rail[ing] on Lady Fortune"—a figure of the courted but unreliable mother—and on a "tale" of life in which

“we ripe and ripe” and then “rot and rot” (2.7.16, 26-28). In Jaques’s own harsh version of that tale, we play seven parts on the world’s stage: the “mewling and puking” infant; the “whining schoolboy”; the sighing lover; the soldier “Seeking the bubble reputation / Even in the cannon’s mouth”; the fat and pompous judge; the shrinking and comical aging man, losing his powers; and at last “second childishness and mere oblivion, / Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything” (2.7.144-145, 152-153, 165-166). He shows us life *sans* the good mother. His great enjoyment is berating the mother. But his tale of life is wishful in that it returns us to “childishness” and thus the mother’s domain.

He invites Orlando to “sit down with me [,] and we two will rail against our mistress the world, and all our misery” (3.2.277-279); and what he particularly loves to complain about is female faithlessness. When one of the exiles kills a deer, Jaques suggests that “the deer’s horns [be set] upon his head, for a branch of victory” (4.2.4-5), and he asks another lord to sing a song about wearing horns:

Take thou no scorn to wear the horn,
It was a crest ere thou wast born,
Thy father’s father wore it,
And thy father bore it.
The horn, the horn, the lusty horn,
Is not a thing to laugh to scorn. (4.2.13-18)

Both those who are nature’s children and those who kill them have horns, and those who take the world for a mistress will wear them too. For Jaques, there is no escape from

cuckoldry. His “sullen fits” (2.1.68) are those of the small child betrayed by what Freud called the “faithless mother” (1917a, 374; 1933, 123), who once nursed him and then denied him the breast; who forced him to use the privy, or jakes;⁹ who gave birth to another child; who rejected his oedipal ambitions; and whose betrayals returned in the young man’s faithless mistress. But for Jaques the dreaded horn is a horn of plenty.

We should also take seriously Jaques’s melancholy for another reason. It doesn’t belong only to him; the play began in a general mood of depression. But localized and concentrated in Jaques in the Forest of Arden, it is modulated. Far from the devastating burden it can be in reality, it becomes, in part, a role he enjoys acting on the stage of the world for an audience of friends. The one who criticizes the people around him is yet safely and affectionately ensconced in their midst and in an environment through which he wanders about in comfort. Melancholy, which in Duke Frederick’s realm was associated with the threat of death, is still real now; but, as “a most humorous sadness” (4.1.19-20), a moodiness, perhaps, or an eccentricity of temperament or a “whimsical” sadness, it seems no longer connected to actual danger or intense despair.¹⁰

The comic transformation of aggression continues in the extended middle of the play, featuring a series of confrontations in which aggressiveness is lightened, refocused, detoxified, and ultimately brought under the sway of eros, which radiates from a sense of the mother as basically good even in her realistic wintry changes. When Orlando enters Arden and searches for food, he comes upon the Duke and his men at a banquet and, with the instincts and expectations of the world he has left behind, he threatens to kill any man who touches the food before he takes what he needs. But the Duke welcomes him and invites him to sit with them and eat. Orlando says in surprise, “Speak you so gently?”

Pardon me, I pray you. / I thought all things had been savage here” (2.7.106-107). He is quickly integrated into a peaceful, generous ambiance, and he loses the rage that was his leading characteristic in the beginning of the play.

When soon he and Jaques meet in the forest, they take an instant dislike to each other and engage in a duel of words, especially when Jaques takes exception to Orlando’s writing love poems on the trees of the forest:

Jaques. Let’s meet as little as we can.

Orlando. I do desire we may be better strangers.

Jaques. I pray you mar no more trees with writing love-songs in
their barks.

Orlando. I pray you mar no more [more] of my verses with reading
them ill-favoredly.

Jaques. Rosalind is your love’s name?

Orlando. Yes, just.

Jaques. I do not like her name.

Orlando. There was no thought of pleasing you when she was
christened. . . .

Orlando. . . . I am weary of you.

Jaques. By my troth, I was seeking for a fool when I found you.

Orlando. He is drowned in the brook. Look but in and you shall
see him.

Jaques. I’ll tarry no longer with you. Farewell, good Signior Love.

Orlando. I am glad of your departure. Adieu, good Monsieur
Melancholy. (3.2.257-267, 284-288, 291-294)

Here is the dozens, Arden-style. In the world of Charles the Wrestler, they might have settled their antipathy violently. Here they go through the formalities of hostility in a way that is detached from hot feelings but focused on quick, clever, precise, and elegant wording. Such aggression is an enjoyable form of play for Jaques, and he admires his adversary's "nimble wit" and even, if ambiguously, his entire personality: "The worst fault you have is to be in love" (3.2.276, 282).

Jaques's aggression is gratuitous, and his contest with Orlando is a stylish comedy routine and an end in itself. But Rosalind's aggression is purposive, and she uses it against Orlando to shape eros from infatuation to a deeper, more durable form of love. In her disguise as a boy, she tells him that she will cure him of his Rosalind-"madness." He will imagine her to be the real Rosalind and come every day to woo her, and she will be so infuriatingly changeable—she "would now like him, now loathe him; then entertain him, then forswear him; now weep for him, then spit at him"—that she will "wash your liver as clean as a sound sheep's heart, that there shall not be one spot of love in 't" (3.2.400, 415-419, 422-424). Such treatment worked so well on her last patient, she claims, that he became a monk. Wooing a fake Rosalind under these hostile conditions is apparently better than not wooing any Rosalind, and so he agrees. In subjecting him to this harsh therapy, she is testing his love, to see if it has a future in the outside world and also to see if it is capable of enduring the wintry weather that affects even relationships in Arden. But she is not an objective and detached clinician; she is also protecting herself,

testing her own infatuation and exploring whether he is worthy of her. She is adding realism to idealization for both of them.

But her realism is an exaggerated anti-idealization. After she inflicts on him the maddening, disorienting changes of a lover's mistress, she exposes him to the changes of a wife's oppositional nature: "Maids are May when they are maids, but the sky changes when they are wives. I will be more jealous of thee than a Barbary cock-pigeon over his hen, more clamorous than a parrot against rain, more new-fangled than an ape, more giddy in my desires than a monkey. I will weep for nothing . . . and I will do that when you are dispos'd to be merry; I will laugh like a hyen, and that when thou art inclin'd to sleep." And what about a woman's uncontrollably headstrong, unconfined "wit," which in this passage includes her thoughts, wishes, mental quickness, and will? "Make the doors upon a woman's wit, and it will out at the casement; shut that, and 'twill out at the key-hole; stop that, 'twill fly with the smoke out at the chimney." Orlando suggests asking such a wife whether she has lost her wits. Rosalind's instant comeback is that he should save that reproof "till you met your wife's wit going to your neighbor's bed."¹¹ When Orlando asks, "What wit could wit have to excuse that?," she fires back, "To say she came to seek you there. You shall never take her without her answer, unless you take her without her tongue" (4.1.148-156, 161-164, 167-173). The argument to cure Orlando of love comes down to woman's faithlessness.

But Rosalind may well have male faithlessness on her mind, for that is the topic to which she now turns. She makes Orlando promise not to be late for their next meeting, warning him that "if you . . . come one minute behind your hour, I will think you the most pathological break-promise. . . that may be chosen out of the gross band of the

unfaithful” (4.1.190-195). Indeed, she has previously told Celia that Orlando’s “very hair is of the dissembling color,” red like Judas’s (3.4.7). While Orlando’s feelings for her remain unimpeachable under her assault, she herself reveals to Celia that she is virtually trembling with uncertainties about love, men, and him and is just as infatuated as she accuses him of being. She tells Orlando that the romantic stories of death from love are “all lies: Men have died from time to time, and worms have eaten them, but not for love.” But she herself says to Orlando, when he leaves her for dinner with the Duke, “Go your ways; I knew what you would prove. My friends told me as much . . . That flattering tongue of yours won me . . . and so come death!” And she tells Celia that the “blind rascally” Cupid, “born of madness,” could “judge how deep I am in love. . . . I cannot be out of the sight of Orlando. I’ll go find a shadow, and sigh till he come.” Celia, when Rosalind is in such moods, adopts the oppositional role of the down-to-earth realist: “And I’ll sleep” (4.1.106-108, 182-185, 211-218).

When Rosalind corrects him that although there are no clocks in the forest there is indeed time, she means inner, human time. An important kind of inner time relevant to her is the gradual passage of adolescence, filled with the aggressions of developmental conflicts. She leaves for Arden thinking about her father, but once in the forest she doesn’t reveal herself to him, and he becomes, in effect, her rival, for Orlando must repeatedly leave her to attend him. That rivalry is one facet of the conflict within her as she moves into an adult romance from a childhood attachment, from being a Ganymede, cupbearer to a royal father. “What talk we of fathers,” she says to Celia, “when there is such a man as Orlando?” (3.4.38-39). But in becoming a boy named Ganymede, she also seems to be running away from the onset of overwhelming heterosexual impulses,

sheltering herself both in her closeness with a same-sex companion, Celia, and in a pseudo-male identity that blocks her from Orlando.

Paralleling her topsy-turvy, dreamlike version of heterosexual development in adolescence is Orlando's relationship with one whom Jaques calls a "pretty youth" (4.1.1), whom Orlando thinks is a boy but treats as his mistress. His quickness to fall into that relationship, and even his failure to recognize Rosalind—Bloom asks how he could not do so (221)—far from being unrealistic contrivances of comic romance, serve a deeper psychological realism. The quality of the relationship for both characters is dreamlike because the adolescent changes are too tempestuous, mystifying, and overwhelming to be admitted fully into consciousness. The prevailing heterosexual desires of the two lovers work themselves out in a gradual maturation, doing so in psyches that contain multiple and contradictory impulses and, also, remnants of earlier developmental phases.

On the whole, Rosalind applies to the experience of time, passage, and growth extraordinary strength. She even embodies a dream of mastery of adolescence, which most people live through tumultuously, and of love too, famed for its unpredictable and uncontrollable nature. But her strength and capability are humanly credible because in moments when she is not in role with Orlando she shows herself to be at the mercy of love and adolescence, like everybody else. Yet it is as if she is able to transform the aggressiveness in her conflict with Duke Frederick and in her developmental conflicts into a neutralized energy that she can use to give creative shaping to those processes.

The courtship of Rosalind and Orlando is juxtaposed to the courtship of

Touchstone and the country girl Audrey and that of the shepherd and shepherdess Silvius and Phebe. Audrey is immediately acquiescent, and Phebe is rejecting and hostile. The simple goat girl Audrey is an easy and passive plaything in the hands of Touchstone, fresh from the court, dripping with sophistication, contemptuous of country people, and comparing himself to “honest Ovid . . . among the Goths,” pronounced “goats.” He dazzles her with his slick wit, using words she doesn’t understand and mercurial double meanings. When he wishes she were poetical, she asks what “poetical” means and whether it is “honest in deed and word . . . a true thing.” Touchstone explains that it is not, “for the truest poetry is the most feigning [most imaginative, best fashioned], and lovers are given to poetry, what they swear in poetry may be said as lovers they do feign [falsify]” (3.3.8-9, 17-22). He goes on to wish she were poetical because then she might be feigning, or lying, in saying she was honest, or chaste. Touchstone is the kind of man who would reinforce Rosalind’s concerns about male faithfulness. He insists that he and Audrey get married right away and chooses for the ceremony an incompetent vicar who will not be “like to marry me well; and not being well married, it will be a good excuse for me hereafter to leave my wife” (3.3.92-94). It may also be that Audrey’s association with goats, with their lusty reputation, suggests that she and Touchstone are well suited, at least in his view; but she wants marriage “with all my heart” (5.3.3). Perhaps back at the court he would not have bothered with any kind of marriage, and so at least to the extent of his trying a weak marriage Arden may have a tempering effect on him.

Rosalind is so appalled by Phebe’s scornful treatment of the importunate Silvius that she intervenes to excoriate the girl for her “proud and pitiless” treatment of one who is “a thousand times a properer man / Than she a woman” and to tell her that, as ordinary

as she is, she should go “down on your knees, / And thank heaven, fasting, for a good man’s love.” But her advice backfires: Phebe responds, “Sweet youth, I pray you chide a year together; / I had rather hear you chide than this man woo” (3.5.40, 51-52, 57-58, 64-65). And the more abusive Rosalind tries to be, the more intoxicated Phebe becomes. In a passionate love letter, Phebe claims that if she is refused she will do what Rosalind said men never do, die for love. Instead of helping Silvius, Rosalind seems to have completed his downfall. Even for Rosalind, mastery of the intricacies of eros is hardly simple. However, she has unwittingly drawn Phebe into the carnivalesque and liminal condition that prevails in Arden, and she has also unloosed the potential for infatuation, even to a masochistic degree, in the hard and cruel Phebe.

Meanwhile two relationships are settled. Touchstone has to deal with Audrey’s previous suitor, William, who still “lays claim” to her, although Audrey herself no longer is interested in him. Touchstone tells him, “I will kill thee a hundred and fifty ways: therefore tremble and depart.” Audrey adds, “Do, good William,” and he does, saying “God rest you merry, sir” (5.1.7, 56-59). Touchstone seems not to have absorbed the non-violent spirit of Arden, and he elaborates his threat of murder in some detail. However, outside Arden Touchstone might have been faced with carrying out his threat, while here at least he achieves his goal by the torrent of words he unleashes against his rival. But Audrey and William play their parts in this resolution. William accepts the reality that Audrey wants someone else, and he departs without resistance, recrimination, or lamentation, and even with good wishes for his rival. Here is both a wishfully easy disposal of rivals and a wishful freedom from the pain of rejection.

The second settled relationship is a new and sudden one. The evil brother, Oliver, banished to the forest to dispose of his brother, is saved by Orlando from being killed by first a snake and then a lioness. Imperfect Arden has not only winter and poverty but also predatory animals. Orlando is wounded in saving his brother, and his actions and sacrifice in place of expected vengeance, as well as the welcome extended by “the gentle Duke,” have a transforming impact on Oliver (4.3.142). Not only is he reconciled with Orlando, but very shortly he and Celia fall in love and plan to marry, he gives his patrimony to Orlando, and he resolves to spend the rest of his life as a shepherd in Arden. We may smile at the quickness and extremity of this change, but our smile may be a response less of criticism or condescension than of a sudden pleasurable uncovering of the fluidity and power of the wish in the primary process.

Both Oliver’s brutal malice and his transformation are rooted in the bad mother and the overcoming of her influence. The bad mother does appear in Arden and must be engaged. Orlando has to fight and defeat the lioness “with udders all drawn dry” (4.3.144), representation of the denying mother, who withholds what is necessary to both physical and emotional life. A second representation of the bad mother is the female snake that is just about to enter the sleeping Oliver’s mouth. This nightmare figure evokes a mother who, more than withholding, is poisoning. It also expresses fears of homosexuality emanating from Rosalind’s disguise as Ganymede. It may, further, engage the fantasy of a woman with a penis, the phallic mother, that develops from a boy’s confusion of penis and breast and, according to the *Encyclopedia of Psychoanalysis* (Eidelberg, 306), is “a recurrent image in the analysis of overt homosexuality and melancholia.” Relevant here also is the paralyzing dread of the Medusa, whose many

snakes growing from her head, Freud writes, symbolize, in a representation by the opposite, an absence of the penis, or castration (1922, 273-274). If such possibilities seem far-fetched when applied to Orlando's encounter with the lioness and snake that threaten his brother, I would suggest that it should not be surprising if what Bloom powerfully calls Shakespeare's "invention of the human" includes intimations of the complexity and turbulence of the human mind and emotions, especially in adolescent development. And part of that complexity is that the unsettling forces do not cease to exist after they have been surmounted but may remain in a latent state. The sequence ends as the female snake, frightened by Orlando, "did slip away" (4.3.112) into the same bush that conceals the lioness, as if into the darkness of unconscious fantasies. But the dispersal, or repression, of lioness and snake helps clear the way for the full emergence of the influence of the good mother and her love.

Oliver and Celia will be married tomorrow, and so will Touchstone and Audrey, and even Touchstone seems giddy about the "joyful day" (5.3.1). But for the other lovers eros remains unfulfilled. The impatient Orlando is in love with one who "is not here, nor doth not hear," like a bad mother (5.2.108). Phebe and Rosalind are the objects of unwanted love; Phebe and Silvius are in love with ones who reject them. Silvius, Phebe, Orlando, and Rosalind try to clarify the mysterious experience of being in love, Silvius beginning by saying, "It is to be all made of sighs and tears" (5.2.84), and all four adding their own refrains:

Silvius. And so am I for Phebe.

Phebe. And I for Ganymed[e].

Orlando. And I for Rosalind.

Rosalind. And I for no woman. (5.2.85-88)

After three such choruses, Rosalind tells them, “Pray you, no more of this; ‘tis like the howling of Irish wolves against the moon” (5.2.109-110). But the madness will end if they all agree to meet with her tomorrow. Her own aggressiveness is no longer that of the tester of Orlando or the chider of Phebe but that of a confident and benign trickster. And when tomorrow comes, she makes Orlando promise to marry Rosalind if she appears, her father to give his daughter to Orlando if she appears, Silvius to marry Phebe if she is willing, and Phebe to marry Ganymede if he is willing and, if not, to marry Silvius. When they all agree, she leaves, and her promise to return points to the first promise made by the early mother: to come back.

In her absence, Touchstone gives us an interlude on the transformation of aggression, including a demonstration of the power of the word Rosalind has been emphasizing, “if.”¹² Back at court he “had four quarrels, and like to have fought one” (5.4.46-47). That one began when he insulted another courtier’s beard. The two proceeded through the regulated stages of courtly aggression, from the Quip Modest to the Reply Churlish and on to the Reproof Valiant, the Countercheck Quarrelsome, the Lie Circumstantial, and the Lie Direct. In actuality, “I durst go no further than the Lie Circumstantial, nor he durst not give me the Lie Direct, and so we measur’d swords and parted.” They quarrel “by the book,” turning aggression into a set of formalities, and even in Touchstone’s rendition a joke, all of which keeps delaying the violence neither of them wants, until finally the aggression exhausts itself. Even if you get to the Lie Direct, he

goes on, “you may avoid that too with an If.” Once he saw a quarrel ended when one of the parties said, “‘If you said so, then I said so’; and they shook hands and swore brothers. Your If is the only peacemaker. Much virtue in If” (5.4.85-87, 90, 97-98, 101-103). This dissolution of hostility through elaborate ritual and particular language—here it is distanced into a past conditional state—is a further example of the containment and taming of aggression; such comical but effective peacemaking was not seen in the harsh and violent court at the beginning of the play, but it emerges retrospectively in Arden. Even the abrasive Touchstone, who threatened to murder William, wants to save face and achieve his purposes while avoiding violence.

True to her word as a lover and, symbolically, a departing mother, Rosalind now returns, and she does so in her true identity. Her father, Orlando, and Silvius are overjoyed, and the duped Phebe, who was in love with not Rosalind but Ganymede, renounces hopes that she now sees are impossible. But the Rosalind who now appears is not the same one she was before Ganymede. When Oliver earlier told the story of his rescue and transformation, he shows as proof of his tale the bloody “napkin,” or “handkercher,” in which he wrapped Orlando’s wound from the lion (4.3.93, 97). A child at times might think of a mother as a dangerous aggressor and even as a predatory devourer, taking away the child’s liberty and overwhelming its identity. But a bloody napkin in a story of an adolescent girl may also be a displacement of menstruation and of the coming loss of virginity in her life. In her disguise as a boy Rosalind hides her incipient womanhood, her sexual maturity, her future as a lover, a wife, a mother; and she hides her vagina as a source of blood. When she returns, she is accompanied by Hymen, god of marriage, who will “make conclusion / Of these most strange events.” Hymen has

“from heaven brought” Rosalind, as a new being (5.4.126-127, 112); she is reborn from the psychic passage and strange events of adolescence, in which the person is, as in Celia’s exile name, “aliena,” not only from its parents and the general society but from its childhood self and its future adult self.

When Hymen accompanies her, he does so as a symbolic affirmation of her mature femaleness and her readiness for the common experiences of a woman in her culture, including marriage. That Rosalind enters in the company of the male Hymen suggests that she is ready for a life not as, or as if, a male but with a male. Perhaps the fact that she was played on the stage by a boy functions not only as a meta-joke but also as an acknowledgment that the life of a woman in a male-dominated culture has a special complexity. She is brought into the institution of marriage by a male figure and the relationship she will know in marriage will be companionate but under the lead of the husband. But in a play that emphasizes the power of the mother, Rosalind’s new identity has another dimension. In her re-creation of the disappearance and return of the early mother, Rosalind, not the actual mother, is the one in control: she ensures the return; she becomes the mothering individual and exercises that power for the circle of people she finds herself among and cares about. That leadership is a culminating transformation of aggression in the play.

Emerging into the self and life she desires, Rosalind takes with her a company of others who have been alien to their own desired selves and lives, at least in the sense of not yet having achieved what they wanted. For each, life becomes as he or she likes it. For those who wanted marriage life should become as two people like it, and Hymen, evaluating each couple, underscores that this will happen for Orlando and Rosalind,

whom no quarrel will be great enough to “part.” He tells Oliver, who once seemed heartless, and Celia that they “are heart in heart.” He says to Phebe, “You to his love must accord, / Or have a woman to your lord,” that is, given her heterosexual orientation, it could be worse (5.4.131-134).

There are all sorts of marriages in Arden, and that includes the one of Touchstone and Audrey, who are “sure together / As the winter to foul weather” (5.4.135-136). Theirs will be a wintry marriage, and Hymen is playing with Audrey’s own eccentric use of language, for she thanked the gods she was “foul”;¹³ but it will be a real and well-matched marriage, not the provisional one that Touchstone was at first envisioning. And indeed he has been moving, in spite of himself, in that more committed direction, not only in getting rid of William, who would not be an obstacle if Touchstone were interested only in casual sex; even before Jaques told him he should get a real and competent vicar to marry him, he gave a speech on the inevitability of cuckoldry for husbands and pronounced that “as a wall’d town is more worthier than a village, so is the forehead of a married man more honorable than the bare brow of a bachelor” (3.3.59-61). This back-handed compliment to marriage might be a joke at the expense of marriage by someone who is not seriously planning on a permanent one; but it might also be an attempt to talk himself into seeing positive possibilities in a bad situation, or seeing marriage as worth the downside. At the end, he is very much a husband, worried and bossy about his wife’s appearance in public, telling her that she should “bear her body more seeming” (5.4.68-69). He has been caught up in the marrying spirit. Even Phebe seems transformed, telling Silvius, “I will not eat my word, now thou art mine; / Thy faith my fancy to thee doth combine” (5.4.149-150).

For the non-marriers, life is as they like it too. Duke Frederick has led an army into the forest to put an end to his brother and his followers, but he met “an old religious man” and was “converted / Both from his enterprise and from the world,” leaving the dukedom to its rightful possessor (5.4.160-162). Those most in need of reformation, Oliver and Frederick, wish to live permanently in Arden in the different ways that appeal to them. What is most to Celia’s liking is Oliver, and so she makes no objection to Arden forever. Jaques will stay in Arden too, for his own melancholic reasons. Duke Senior and others will return to the court, which is what they happen to like, as well as the Duke’s Shakespearean rightful place. Life as it is at the moment is not what William wanted, but his good-natured acceptance of reality augurs a not-bad future.

All this happens in Arden, a green world of nature, a healing counter-world to court and civilization when court and civilization are sick. Arden is also a play world, a world of feigning, make-believe, wishfulness; it is a world of the childlike, needed not only as a refuge from the world that is in the hands of failing adults but also as a means of influencing that world for the better. Arden is also a place in the psyche where growth happens, where inner struggles can work themselves out. That includes, at least in Rosalind’s hands, a Shakespearean experience that has some similarities to the transference, which Freud writes takes place in a *Tummelplatz* or playground within the analysis (1914, *SE* 12:154).¹⁴ Arden can work in enchanting ways, but it is not purely a place of enchantment: it has winter; it has inhabitants who can be mean to each other; it is a place where lovers can move beyond the enchantments of early love and into a fulfilling reality. It is the place of the good mother in a world in which actual human

mothers are absent and symbolic mothers are notoriously unreliable, like Touchstone's "Lady Fortune" (2.7.16), or destructive, like the lioness and the serpent.

But Arden by itself does not bring about the happy resolution in the play. For that we need both Arden and the strength of Rosalind, who does the work of the good mother among the characters, who makes things better and works out problems, even as she goes through her own process of development. Her strength is at bottom a strength of the ego. She keeps a world of ideals and enchantment in contact with reality and enables regression to serve realistic, adaptive, and healing adult purposes. Bloom calls her "as integrated a personality as Shakespeare created" (209), and integration is a function of the ego. She also plays an integrating role for the characters. She brings them to "meet" not only in one place but in a new concord, and she enables their various likes to come together. When she asks the lovers Orlando, Phoebe, and Silvius to meet her, she, as Ganymede, adds, "I'll meet" (5.2.120). In her case, concord is inner as well as outer. In effect, her disguised self will meet her true self. And in her case feigning meets truth, as she realizes Touchstone's point that the truest poetry is the most feigning in a way he did not intend. He was playing with that idea in a clever and flashy way and making it a strategy of seduction. For Rosalind, though, feigning is a way to truth, a disguise that enables a reality to emerge, a trick used to facilitate mutual happiness.¹⁵ In the festive high spirits encouraged by Arden, she tells Orlando, "Come, woo me, woo me; for now I am in a holiday humor, and like enough to consent" (4.1.58-69), and she leads him through a feigned marriage, officiated by Celia, and then through the possible problems of the married relationship after that. This holiday feigning is a rehearsal for the reality to come.

Bloom calls Rosalind “free of malice” (208), but she is not free of aggression. In the feigning and trickery through which she works, aggression is not banished but integrated into the sphere of the ego and there integrated with eros. As I have noted, her wit is one of the forms her aggression takes; that wit is ultimately good-natured and is used to achieve ends that go beyond her own gratification. Wit, with its penchant for bringing together things that are unlike, is allied in her not with harsh mockery or satirical attack but with eros. For Freud, civilization serves eros by combining individuals into larger entities like marriages and communities (1930, *SE*, 21:122). And in the vision of *As You Like It*, each of those individuals has his or her own distinct likes, a condition that, as Anne Barton puts it eloquently, has the potential for conflict but works out peacefully: “the various rivalries the comedy sets up,” such as “court and country . . . realism and romanticism . . . laughter and melancholy,” are represented and debated by different characters, but in Rosalind, or, I would say, through her, these “warring opposites are reconciled and live at peace without for an instant losing their force or individuality” (Introduction, Riverside edition, 400). I would also add to this formulation that the peace comes about through the transformation of aggression in the totality of the play.

In Rosalind’s encounters with Touchstone and Jaques we see her ability to correct the aggression of others, and we also see the play’s integration of aggression into its comic vision. When Touchstone mocks the love poetry Orlando writes in the trees, Rosalind silences him, taking his comparison of the poetry to bad fruit and elaborating it into a joke about his being a medlar, a fruit that can’t be eaten before it begins to rot, and a meddler. She outwits him, but alone with Celia she herself criticizes Orlando’s bad verse before going into raptures about the man who wrote it. She integrates Touchstone’s

deidealizing and also detoxifies it of its sourness, transmuting it into realistic criticism and placing that criticism within a larger positive context. The play itself both limits Touchstone's aggression and gives it a place within a realm of eros. In the penultimate scene the clown criticizes a song of springtime, love, and *carpe diem*, and he leads Audrey away from such foolishness. Perhaps he doesn't want her to get any ideas about free love; perhaps his anti-romanticism assures us that he's still himself. But he now also sees himself as part of a couple: "Come, Audrey," he says as they exit together (5.3.41).

Jaques doesn't want to be integrated: "I am for other than for dancing measures" (5.4.193). He won't be part of the comedy, and he certainly won't be part of any marriages, for what he likes is to be a solitary. He will remain in Arden, living in caves, or wombs, as Duke Senior's men have been doing. Oliver, Celia, and Frederick will find a new way of life in Arden, but he will continue there as he has been, clinging to that lost mother, whom he both loves and hates. Like the Freudian melancholic, he has recalled her into himself and punishes her there by being unhappy, one part of his ego attacking another.

Like Touchstone, Jaques is witty in his negativism, and like Touchstone he is outwitted by Rosalind. When he tells her proudly that he loves his melancholy "better than laughing" and that "'tis good to be sad and say nothing," she answers, "Why then, 'tis good to be a post." When he says, "I have gain'd my experience" in his travels, she answers, "And your experience makes you sad. I had rather have a fool to make me merry than experience to make me sad—and travel [or travail] for it too" (4.1.4, 8-9, 26-29). Jaques has no answer for her.

But like Touchstone he is not banished. He is put in his place, and in two senses. He is criticized, contained, not allowed to infect the world with his sadness, and he is also given a place. Sadness, melancholy, the longing for the lost mother, the criticism of the mother for failing to remain: these are real feelings and will continue to exert their influence. Instead of being banished, or repressed, Jaques is integrated as a challenger to hopes, raptures, and idealizations. His critical nature, born of his reflexive dissatisfaction, has served to test people. That he likes Orlando and also wants to be “better acquainted” with Ganymede (4.1.1-2) indicates that they have passed his test. He recognizes goodness. And with his negativism, his skepticism, and his high standards, he is given the role at the end of judging the chances for happiness of others: he leaves the Duke to his “former honor,” which his “patience” and “virtue well deserv[e]”; Orlando to a love that his “true faith doth merit”; Oliver to “land, and love, and great allies” in his new pastoral life, things that eluded him in life under Duke Frederick; and Silvius to “a long and well-deserved bed” (5.4.186-190). That the cranky Jaques, the spoiler at the festival, becomes the vehicle of such closing praise and good hopes is another transformation of aggression. The happiness that Jaques certifies is made more credible because it includes a note of realism in his judgment on the quarrelsome Touchstone, whom he leaves to “wrangling, for thy loving voyage is but two months victualed” (5.4.191-192).

Jaques is also at the end a remarkably happy melancholic, and, although the Freudian melancholic has withdrawn interest from the world and the people in it, Jaques is sociable and curious. He likes being alone in the company of others. Right now he is off to see Duke Frederick, for “Out of these convertites / There is much matter to be heard and learn’d” (5.4.184-185). Bloom writes that “the glory of Rosalind, and of her

play, is her confidence, and ours, that”—as in the common vision of comedy—“all things will go well” (207). Though Jaques alone characteristically thinks otherwise, it seems that all will go reasonably well even for him. He has life as he likes it. Such is melancholy in the world of the good mother. Besides, when Duke Senior insists that he will go after him as soon as the weddings are done, Jaques says he will wait at the Duke’s cave to see what he wants. Hope is held out that Jaques will himself be a reverse convertite and accompany the Duke back to the court. He may in his exit be acting out the leaving of the mother from the nursing dyad. Perhaps he will come back to the court so he can keep leaving. For the other characters, the Duke begins the marriage “rites, / As we do trust they’ll end, in true delights” (5.4.197-198). The world of the good mother is one of trust. Unlike Fortune, she can be counted on.

Hartmann calls the ego the harmonizing, creative faculty of the psyche and compares its work to “the binding power of Eros” (1956, 291). Rosalind embodies that work in *As You Like It*, and it is appropriate for her to close the play with an Epilogue that underscores the integrating, synthesizing theme, encouraging us to “meet,” or come together outwardly and inwardly. She calls on the women in the audience “for the love you bear to men, to like as much of this play as please you, and I charge you, O men, for the love you bear to women (as I perceive by your simp’ring none of you hates them) that between you and the women the play may please” (Epilogue, 13-17). If she were an actual woman, not a feigned one, she says she would kiss all the men in the audience whose beards and complexions she liked and whose breath she didn’t dislike, and she hopes that “for my kind offer, when I make curtsy,” they will “bid me farewell” with applause (Epilogue, 22-23). This play that began in unrestrained aggression ends in liking

and loving, doing so through a transforming integration of aggression into the constructive purposes of the ego and through a reactivation of our earliest erotic emotions from within their entanglement with our earliest angers; both the eros and the anger are rooted in the relationship with the mother. In her Epilogue, Rosalind expands the comic and erotic community on the stage to include the audience, hoping that the play is as they like it.

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¹ Quotations from the text, with act, scene, and lines, come from the Riverside Second Edition, Evans, Gen. ed., with *As you like it* edited by Anne Barton, with her introduction and notes.

² Freud writes that in the melancholic “one part of the ego sets itself over against the other [and] judges it critically.” (1917b, *SE*, 14:247).

³ See Hartmann 1964 on neutralization, pp. 226-230, and on the ego’s synthesizing work, pp. 290-291. See Hartmann 1958 on alloplastic and autoplasic adaptation, pp. 26-27, and on adaptation in general, pp. 22-56.

⁴ Campbell 1968, on the monomyth, pp. 3, 245-246, and on “The call to adventure” pp. 49-58.

⁵ For the influence of festival on Shakespearean comedy, see Barber 2011, especially Chapter 1, his general introduction, and Chapter 9 on *As you like it*. For the green world, see Frye 1957 pp. 182-184. I am grateful to Frye’s chapter on “The mythos of spring: Comedy,” pp. 163-186, for its influence on my understanding of comedy over the years and of *As you like it* in the current article.

⁶ Arden also has often-noted literary associations with the Ardennes, the French forest where Thomas Lodge set his romance *Rosalynde*, which Shakespeare drew on for *As you like it*. It was also the setting for Ariosto’s *Orlando furioso*, which likely gave him the name Orlando. (See, for example, Boyce 1990, 31-32, 40-41.)

⁷ Freud in his famous conclusion to *Civilization and its discontents* expects that Eros “will make an effort to assert himself in the struggle with his equally immortal adversary,” Thanatos (1930, *SE*, 21:145).

⁸ Noting “du Bois” as the [best] French translation, Garber adds that the name Orlando is French Roland in Italian, suggesting that Orlando is of Sir Rowland’s three sons the one most in the father’s mold (2004, 440).

⁹ Bloom notes the possible double entendre (1998, 212). See also Garber (2004, 446).

¹⁰ The Riverside (p. 425) and Norton (p. 1639) editions gloss *humorous* as “moody,” the New Cambridge as “whimsical” (p. 234).

¹¹ The Riverside text has “wive’s,” with a footnote modernizing it (4.1.168, p. 426).

¹² For Rosalind’s repetitions of “if,” see 5.4.4-25. Garber is excellent on Rosalind’s “crescendo of if’s in the final scenes” and “the play’s imponderable ‘if’s’” (2004, 454, 461).

¹³ See the exchange of Audrey and Touchstone on her foulness (3.3.33-41).

¹⁴ *Tummelplatz* appears on p. 134 of the German text, “*Errinern, widerholen und durcharbeiten*” in 1991, *Gesammelte werke, X*: 126-136, London: Imago Publishing Co.

¹⁵ Relevant to the idea of feigning as a way to truth in the play is Jonathan Lear’s fine discussion of Rosalind’s development, in which we see her “coming to be in her masks” (2017, 126 and throughout his treatment of *As You Like It*).