
A REVERSAL OF GENDER ROLE IN SHAKESPEARE'S PLAY AS *YOU LIKE IT*

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Abstract

This research paper has been conducted to examine Shakespeare's comedy As You Like It from the perspective of gender study. The voice against the strict codes, conducts and stereotypical role that are imposed on women in a patriarchal society can be seen in the play. For the analysis of the text the ideas of feminism have been used as the methodological tool to interpret it. In the play, Rosalind disguised as Ganymede, Phoebe falls hopelessly in love with Ganymede. Orlando fails to show up for his tutorial with Ganymede. Rosalind, reacting to her infatuation with Orlando, is distraught until Oliver appears. Oliver describes how Orlando stumbled upon him in the forest and saved him from being devoured by a hungry lioness. Oliver and Celia, still disguised as the shepherdess Aliena, fall instantly in love and agree to marry. The conclusion of this paper is that masculinity and femininity are not the opposites but they are interrelated. As a qualitative research, this researcher has adopted the play as a primary text and it is analyzed by using gender theory and feminist perspective as a tool to interpret it.

Keywords: Gender, Femininity, Masculinity, Disguise, Role Reversal

1. Introduction

This research paper is focused on the issue of gender role in Shakespeare's play, As You Like It. The major female characters have made a masculine disguise in this play. Here in the play Shakespeare makes the female characters dress-up as men as a strategy to produce the comic effects. It makes protagonist's gender identity as masculine. This shows that how women wanted to gain the greater liberty in male dominated contemporary Elizabethan society. Rosalind plays her role as a boy to escape from the palace. Shakespeare gives the masculine quality to his female character which deconstructed Elizabethan gender stereotypes, the binary opposition of male and female. Although England may have barred female performers from the stage during the

Elizabethan era, there were instances where females performed, not only in specific kinds of productions, but also in other European countries. Regardless of the reasons why England chose to ban females from the formal stage, the role of women in Elizabethan society was very distinct.

The play is about the hidden identity, disguise, love, exile and sexuality. This research explores reasons why Shakespeare presents gender role reversal into his comedy play *As You Like It*. Banished from the palace by her uncle, Rosalind went to the forest with her cousin Celia and her jester. There, she joins her already exiled father and disguising herself as a boy. In the guise of a young man, she instructs her would be lover Orlando in the ways of love. The internal motif of reversing women as a boy by Shakespeare is significant. Traditional gender roles cast men as rational, strong, protective, and decisive. They present women as emotional, weak and submissive. These gender roles have been used very successfully to justify such discrimination.

Gender is everyone's costume, and everyone puts on his or her own gender identity. The feminist theorist, Judith Butler's main metaphor for cross-dressing is 'drag', that means the dressing like a person of the opposite sex. All genders are a form of drag; there is no real core gender to refer to. Butler assumes that gender is a performance. Butler thinks that the interrelation between gender and clothes is based on cultural inferences, which might be wrong.

When a man is dressed as a woman or vice versa, normally we regard his or her real gender as the reality without costume, the anatomy of the person. This kind of naturalized knowledge is based on a series of cultural inferences, but some of which might be erroneous. With regard to transsexuality, it is no longer possible to derive a judgment about stable anatomy from the clothes that cover and articulate the body.

Rosalind and other female characters play a major role for the dramatic smoothness of events in Shakespeare's plays. Just as in reality, women of Shakespeare's dramas have been bound to rules and conventions of the patriarchal Elizabethan era. Therefore, it was very common in Elizabethan England to compel woman into marriages in order to

receive power, legacy, dowry or land in exchange. Even though the Queen herself was an unmarried woman, the roles of woman in society were extremely restricted. Daughters had been the property of their fathers and handed over to their future husbands through marriage. In Elizabethan time, women were considered as the weaker sex and dangerous, because their sexuality was supposedly mystic and therefore feared by men.

Renaissance women were supposed to represent virtues like obedience, silence, sexual chastity, piety, humility, constancy, and patience. All these virtues, of course, have their meaning in relationship to men. The role allocation in Elizabethan society was strictly regulated; men were the breadwinners and women had to be obedient housewives and mothers. However, within this deprived, tight and organized scope, women have been represented in most diverse ways in Shakespearean plays. The construction of female characters in Shakespeare's plays reflects the Elizabethan image of woman in general. For all that, Shakespeare supports the English Renaissance stereotypes of genders, their roles and responsibilities in society; He also puts their representations into question, challenges, and also revises them. Those, for tragedies typical early, unnatural deaths are considered as an erotic quality, which seems to be slumbering in all of Shakespeare's female characters. What is more, all of them appear to have guilt upon them.

2. Review of Related Literature

Many critics and theorists have interpreted and analyze the play from different perspectives. The Father of English Drama and the dramatist of all times, Shakespeare stands the test of time and situation. His play, *As You Like It*, is widely held as the play of undying quality. Crash (1959), a famous critic, makes the following comment on the content of the play:

Shakespeare's characterization conforms to the view that a man and a woman can be defined in Platonic terms; at the same time, his plot teaches the Biblical lesson that, because they are mortal creatures, men and

women should forgive each other their trespasses and unite/reunite in a spirit of brotherly or not -so-brotherly love. (12)

So, Shakespeare's aims in the play are to demonstrate that a man has a tri-partite soul. In particular, It aims to show that a man such as Orlando is not a balanced individual until the three parts of his soul are in complete harmony.

The traditional patriarchal concept that men are superior to women has been used, feminists have observed, to justify and maintain the male monopoly of positions of economic, political and social power, in other words, to keep women powerless by denying them the educational and occupational means of acquiring economic, political, and social power. Regarding the inferiority of typical female characters, Angler (2010) comments as:

That is, the inferior position long occupied by women in patriarchal society has been culturally, not biologically, produced. [...] But because it has been defined as a female problem, hysterical behavior in men won't be diagnosed as such; instead, it will be ignored or given another less damaging name, for example, shortness temper. (65)

The above quotation means men generally have been made by nature with stronger muscles, they have been made with any other natural superiority are often derided, by both patriarchal men and women, as weak and unmanly, as if the only way to be a relationship to the male; obedience, silence, sexual chastity, piety, humility, constancy, and patience.

Amalgamation of masculine and feminine in both males and females might help to explain how easy it was for the Elizabethan stage to employ and accept all male and female characters like Juliet, Lady Macbeth, Cleopatra, and Kate. Robert (2014) says, "The way in which Renaissance society viewed men and women's role differed. Men were generally seen as having the ruling voice as father, husband, masters, teachers, preachers, soldiers and lords." (12). Shakespeare's interest in the loyalty of gender roles may very well have been influenced by England's ruler.

The critic, Underwood (1987) praises tact of William Shakespeare as the popular dramatist of all time. Underwood claims that Shakespeare is guided by the practical notion of how to entertain audience. William Shakespeare reflects and at times supports the English renaissance as stereotype of women and men and their various roles and responsibilities in society. He is also a writer who questions, challenges, and modifies those responsibilities. In this regard, Beardwood (1999) takes the following stand:

... Shakespeare seems to have been raising questions about the standard images of male and female about what the characteristics of each gender are, about what is defined as masculine and feminine, about how each gender possesses both masculine and feminine qualities and behaviors, about the nature and power of the hegemonic patriarchy, and about the roles women and men should play in acting out the stories of their lives.
(32)

Steiner (1997) comments *As You Like It*, as the fusion of plenty of available modes of romantic rendering. From Roman tropes to pastoral modes, this play does not leave a moment to seize upon any available dramatic tricks and gimmicks. Steiner says:

As You Like It belongs to the literary tradition known as pastoral: which has its roots in the literature of ancient Greece, came into its own in Roman antiquity with Virgil's *Eclogues*, and continued as a vital literary mode through Shakespeare's time and long after. Typically, a pastoral story involves exiles from urban or court life who flees to the refuge of the countryside. (15)

In the play, characters disguise themselves as shepherds in order to converse with other shepherds on a range of established topics. It develops many of the traditional features and concerns of the pastoral genre. Focusing on its nexus with pastoral mode, Underwood (1987) makes the comment:

This comedy examines the cruelties and corruption of court life and gleefully pokes holes in one of humankind's greatest artifices: the conventions of romantic love. The play's investment in pastoral traditions leads to an indulgence in rather simple rivalries: court versus country, realism versus romance, reason versus mindlessness, nature versus fortune, young versus old, and those who are born into nobility versus those who acquire their social standing. (17)

This play offers up a world of myriad choices and endless possibilities. In the world of this play, no one thing need cancel out another. In this way, it manages to offer both social critique and social affirmation. It is a play that at all times stresses the complexity of things. At its heart lies the simultaneous pleasures and pains of being human.

All the afore-mentioned critics and reviewers examined the play *As You Like It*, from different angles and viewpoints. But, none of them tries the issue to discuss over the inverse role of female. Most of the female characters are assigned with the masculine role to perform. To achieve this objective of the research, they are instructed to put on male clothes, codes and conducts. So, the classical norms regarding gender are denied. Traditional gender role is no longer stabilized.

3. Research Methodology

This research is based on library research. The researcher makes use of theoretical insights gender and feminism as a tool. Mostly, the idea of Judith Butler, regarding gender has been used in it. Assuming for the moment the stability of binary sex, it does not follow that the construction of men will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males. As Butler (1999) says:

The presumption of a binary gender system implicitly retains the belief in a mimetic relation of gender to sex whereby gender mirrors sex or is otherwise restricted by it. When the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice. With the consequence that man and masculine might just

as easily signify a female body as a male one, and woman and feminine a male body as easily as a female one. This radical splitting of the gendered subject poses yet another set of problems. (76)

It means, gender is not to culture as sex is to nature. Gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which sexed nature or a natural sex is produced and established as pre-discursive. This production of sex as the pre-discursive ought to be understood as the effect of the apparatus of cultural construction designated by gender.

As we know gender roles restrict what both males and females can do. In fact, each societal construct of masculinity varies over time and according to culture, age and position within society. Butler (1999) posits:

Men, though, while unique individuals, share one thing in common gender privilege. The socialization can lead boys and men to feeling justified in subordinating women and girls. Exclusive role that women play in this socialization process itself is confining. The privileging of boys begins early with differential child-rearing strategies and parental expectations. Such strategies are usually reinforced by the more-present mother. (53)

It means these sex roles confine people, forcing us to be what others want us to be. Gendered norms and behaviors are assimilated rather than being natural or genetic. While mass culture likes to assume that there is a fixed, true masculinity. The development or flourishing of persons according to their varying conceptions of the good constitutes the basis of lesbian mode of analysis. For the purposes of legitimating same-sex desire, the novel imagines amorous and consumerist modes of desire as practically identical. The homology underwrites Carol's righteous defense against the family court's accusations of her frailties and degeneration. Erotic intimacy, she insists, is a question of pleasure after all.

Gender role created gender discrimination. So, feminist movement came seeking out equal right and status for women. The patriarchy, considers women weaker in every

field of household and social life. Because of this biological or physical construction and deep-rooted gender conception, men dominate women. Domination of men over women in every social, economic, cultural and religious situation of human life has precipitated the hierarchical power relation. Setting, subject and theme are interwoven in such a complex way that it is not easy to guess what sort of effect is likely to arise from such combination. Exotic setting suits quirky content. The ineffectuality of tradition and disintegration of life-affirming grace are brought to the public acknowledgement so that people will feel tempted to cast aside their obsolete customs and adopt the new outlook on life. The restrictive thoughts of the past should be dismissed however painful it might be. A good deal of headstrong disposition is instrumental in stabilizing some of the progressive changes that have appeared in life.

The researcher makes use of the theory of postmodern feminism and Judith Butler's version of feminism. The core concept of Butler's performance based gender is instrumental in conducting the thorough analysis of the text. Entire gamut of Butler's thought is marked, in part, by a linguistic turn. This tenet of thought puts forward a view of gender as a discursive construction and performance rather than a biological fact. Butler (1999) says:

The conflation of sex and gender, essentialist generalizations about men and women, and the tendency to view gender as fixed, binary, and determined at birth, rather than a fluid, mobile construct that allows for multiple gender expressions. The gender dichotomy of man/woman so pervasive in Western culture can be understood in terms of the cultural imperative to be heterosexual. (59)

So, Butlerian feminism rejects a dualistic view of gender, hetero-normativity, and biological determinism. Butler gives her argument against the assumption that all women share a common oppression and exploitation.

4. Textual Analysis

Rosalind, the Duke's daughter, who is still at court, falls in love with Orlando, who has been denied by his older brother Oliver the education and upbringing that should have been Orlando's right as a gentleman. To escape Oliver's murderous hatred, Orlando flees to the Forest of Arden with his faithful old servant Adam. Soon Rosalind is banished too, merely for being the daughter of the out-of-favour Duke Senior. She flees to Arden accompanied by her cousin Celia and the jester Touchstone. Disguised as a young man named Ganymede, Rosalind encounters Orlando, lovesick for his Rosalind, and promises to cure him of his lovesickness by pretending to be that very Rosalind, so that Orlando will learn something of what women are really like. Oliver appears in the forest intending to kill Orlando, but, when Orlando saves his brother from a hungry lioness and a snake, Oliver experiences deep remorse. He then falls in love with Celia. Revelation of the girls' true identities precipitates a group wedding ceremony. When word arrives that Frederick has repented, the Duke's exile is at an end.

In the play, Rosalind, the main female character, disguises herself with man's clothes. She also changed her name from Rosalind to Ganymede. Under the disguised man's name, she acts as man and her masculine characteristics are shown. Yet, she still keeps her femininity. Therefore, cross-dressing merges two identities together: a woman and a man. Having both masculine and feminine characteristics, her gender is ambiguous. In disguise, Shakespeare's heroine reveals her masculine characteristics. Thus, Rosalind constructs her masculine appearance before traveling, which proves that masculinity is constructed in it.

Gender role reversals are usually complementary and interdependent. One does not exist without the other. They are also opposites that strive for unity. Each side is encouraged to understand the point of view of its own counterpart and to find a peaceful way of co-existence. The person taking the role of the other 'is not only feeling but doing; he is both constructing and reconstructing a present or an absentee subject in a specific role relation. Often it matters little whether the reconstruction is an identical copy of a

natural setting, as long as he projects the dynamic atmosphere of the setting; this may be more impressive than its identical copy.

Role reversal involves responses which are based, not only on how audience perceives the character. Surely, complete role reversal is impossible. No one can fully conceptualize the feelings, attitudes and motives of another person, and much less reproduce what the writers perceive. All differ in our ability to put ourselves in the position of another person and in our skill to reproduce the inner experience of that other person in action. The ability to role reverse is not only dependent on a certain degree of intellectual, imaginative, emotional and interpersonal functioning, but also on role-taking and role-playing skills which are insufficiently developed in many persons.

Shakespeare creates a sense of sexual ambiguity, which is embodied in Rosalind and friends and extends to their dress, romance, disposition, and speech. The following extract clarifies the playwright's concept regarding gender:

Rosalind. Or else she could not have the wit to do this: the wiser, the waywarder: 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. A man that had a wife with such a wit, he might say 'Wit, whither wilt?' Rosalind. Nay, you might keep that check for it till you met your wife's wit going to your neighbor's bed. (IV. i. 142-50)

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Touchstone: Of a certain knight that swore by his honor they were good pancakes, and swore by his honor the mustard was naught. Now I will stand to it the pancakes were naught and the mustard was good, and yet was not the knight forsworn.

Celia: How prove you that, in the great heap of your knowledge?

Rosalind: Ay, marry, now unmuzzle your wisdom.

Touchstone: Stand you both forth now: Stroke your chins, and swear by your beards that I am a knave. (1. ii. 13)

Rosalind, the daughter of Duke Senior, is considered one of Shakespeare's most delightful heroines. She is independent minded, strong-willed, good-hearted, and terribly clever. When her cruel uncle Frederick, who has usurped her father's dukedom and banished him, banishes Rosalind too on no justifiable ground, the conflict between them arises. Earlier, her uncle has let her stay at court as his daughters. Celia and Rosalind are very good friends and cannot live without each other. When Celia pleads with Duke Frederick to allow Rosalind to stay, she points out that the pair has always slept in the same bed.

Rather than submissively sneaking into defeated exile, she resourcefully uses her trip to the Forest of Ardenne as an opportunity to take control of her own destiny. She decides to own masculinity so as to escape the oppressive patriarchy. When she disguises herself as Ganymede, a handsome young man, Rosalind's talents and charms are on full display. Elizabethans could be very inflexible in their notions of the sexual and social roles that different genders play. They placed greater importance than we do on the external markers of gender such as clothing and behavior.

Rosalind's decision to masquerade as a man may have been more thrilling and perhaps even threatening to the social order. By assuming the clothes and likeness of a man, Rosalind treats herself to powers that are normally beyond her reach as a woman. By

subverting something as simple as a dress code, Rosalind ends up transgressing the Elizabethans' carefully monitored boundaries of gender and social power.

Rosalind: O, they take the part of a better wrestler than me.

Celia: O, a good wish upon you! You will try in time, in despite of a fall. But, turning these jests out of service, let us talk in good earnest. Is it possible, on such a sudden, you should fall into so strong a liking with old Sir Rowland's youngest son?

Rosalind: The Duke my father loved his father dearly.

Celia: Do not therefore ensue that you should love his son dearly? By this kind of chase I should hate him, or my father hated his father dearly; yet I hate not Orlando. (1.iii.23)

Rosalind underscores the liberation that awaits her in the woods. Ganymede is the name of Jove's beautiful young male page and lover, and the name is borrowed in other works of literature and applied to beautiful young homosexuals. But while the name links Rosalind to a long tradition of homosexuals in literature, it does not necessarily confine her to an exclusively homosexual identity.

Rosalind is confident because she is more than common tall; she suits to be like a man, which implies that tall is related to men. If a woman is tall, she owns masculinity to some degree. Though Celia does not disguise as man, Celia's devotion to Rosalind is unmatched, as evidenced by her decision to follow her cousin into exile. To make the trip, Celia assumes the disguise of a simple shepherdess and calls herself Aliena. This reflects a woman's solidarity with the plight of another woman victimized by patriarchy.

Rosalind's motives for cross dressing are less straight-forward than other occurrences of playacting in Shakespeare. It is a question we seldom, if ever, ask of other Shakespearean characters who take on roles and disguises, and the fact that we feel the need to do so suggests that the answer, buried somewhere in Rosalind's psychology, remains uncertain, subterranean, and ever-elusive. Rosalind has no emotional reason to

pretend to be Ganymed and that she is entirely unmotivated by logic and reason, nor that she allows herself to be completely carried away by the force of her emotional whims.

Rosalind's reasons for taking on the role, and keeping it, are complex and over determined, and ought to be carefully examined. Rosalind is in the middle of tumultuous change and upheaval in her life-and in the midst of it all, she consciously and deliberately makes the decision to take on a male identity. Her motivation for cross-dressing, later in the play, can be perceived as a bizarrely circuitous ploy to seduce Orlando. Her motivations for becoming Ganymed try to frame her male disguise as a way to safely navigate the choppy, unfamiliar waters of love. However, his reading of Rosalind's change in identity fits more with my reading of Orlando's change in identity and language when he is faced with the unknown. I have suggested that Orlando clumsily takes on the persona of a stock character when confronted by alien circumstances whether encountering Duke Senior's party in the forest, or falling in love; partly out of caution, and also partly out of uncertain naiveté.

Rosalind assumes her male disguise as a method of protection against thieves and assailants might be sound. It fails to hold upon recalling that, in the final lines of the scene. Rosalind suggests inviting Touchstone to join them on their flight from Duke Frederick's kingdom. The nobleman's son Orlando, who has fallen in love with Rosalind at first sight, runs through the Forest of Ardenne, mad with love after defeating the court wrestler, Charles. Another reason why he leaves his house is that his faithful servant Adam warns of his elder brother Oliver's plot against his life. Out in the forest, he hangs poems that he has composed in Rosalind's honor on every tree, hoping that passersby will see her. Rosalind enters, disguised as Ganymede. She reads one of Orlando's poems, which compares her to a priceless jewel.

Rosalind: I could find in my heart to disgrace my man's apparel, and to cry
like a woman; but I must comfort the weaker vessel, as doublet and hose

ought to show itself courageous to petticoat; therefore, courage, good aliena.

Celia: I pray you bear with me; I cannot go no further.

Touchstone: For my part, I had rather bear with you than bear you; yet I should bear no cross if I did bear you; for I think you have no money in your purse. (11.iv.35)

Touchstone, a clown mocks the verse, claiming that he could easily churn out a comparable succession of rhymes. He does so with couplets that liken Rosalind to a cat in heat, a thorny rose, and a prostitute who is transported to the pillory on a cart. Rosalind rebukes Touchstone for his meddling. Just then, Celia enters disguised as the shepherdess Aliena. She, too, has found one of Orlando's verses and reads it aloud. The women agree that the verses are terribly written, yet Rosalind is eager to learn the identity of their author.

Orlando and Jaques clearly do not care for one another's company and exchange a series of barbed insults. Jaques dislikes Orlando's sentimental love, declaring it the worst possible fault, while Orlando scoffs at Jaques's melancholy. Eager to part, Jaques walks off into the forest, leaving Orlando alone. Rosalind decides to confront Orlando. She approaches him as the young man Ganymede, and speaks of a man that has been carving the name Rosalind on the trees. She claims to recognize the symptoms of those who have fallen under the spell of true love, and assures Orlando that he exhibits none of them. He is, she says, too neatly dressed to be madly in love. She promises to cure him if he promises to woo Ganymede as though Ganymede were Rosalind.

Cross-dressing permeates Shakespeare's work, in both the writing and the performance. On the most fundamental level, women were not permitted to act on the Elizabethan stage, so all female characters were played by men in women's attire. Cross-dressing becomes an important plot device throughout Shakespeare's plays. By blurring gender lines, Shakespeare confronts his audience with the fact that much of its judgment of male and female behavior is tied to preconceived notions of how each gender should

behave, rather than to each character's individual needs and motives. While this tactic may not be novel to a twenty-first-century audience, it unquestionably challenged the way gender roles were perceived in the Elizabethan era.

In Shakespeare's play, Celia uses the language of marriage to define her identity and legitimize her desire for Rosalind while adhering to the hetero-normative institutions of society. Because no concept of a homosexual identity existed when Shakespeare wrote the play, Celia turns to marital identities to express her desire. She offers her father to her cousin to equalize their love. As Celia and Rosalind's mirroring begins to dissipate, Celia loses the foundation of her identity, which leads to more and more open silences. When Duke Frederick banishes Rosalind, Celia accepts the same sentence of banishment herself, emphasizing that because of their closeness, she, and her cousin must both be exiled.

Ganymede also relies on his hat to signal his masculinity, although the hat emphasizes his maleness, thereby underscoring how his relationship with Phoebe is both homoerotic and heterosexual. Phoebe is attracted to Ganymede because of his physical feminine qualities and recounts to Silvia:

There was a pretty redness in his lip,
A little riper and more lusty-red
Than that mixed in his cheek was just the difference
Betwixt the constant red and mingled damask. (III. v. 119-22)

Ganymede tries to play up his masculinity by pulling hat. As Phoebe likes the feminine features of the youth, this action fails to dissuade her from falling in love with the sweet youth. Wearing the hat completes Ganymede's costume and underlines his masculinity and actually reconfigures Phoebe's desire as heterosexual. Shakespeare's England would present the extra layer of a boy actor for both Rosalind and Phoebe, therefore on the playhouse level.

Yet a recovery of Celia and Orlando certainly does not result in a eclipsing of Rosalind's character. This kind of simplistic reasoning makes the same error in judgment as Duke Frederick does when he characterizes the relationship between the two girls as somehow competitive, suggesting that Rosalind's presence dims Celia in some way:

Duke Frederick. Thou art a fool; she robs thee of thy name,
And thou wilt show more bright and seem more virtuous
When she is gone, Then open not thy lips:
Firm and irrevocable is my doom
Which I have passed upon her; she is banished.
Celia. Pronounce that sentence then on me, my liege,
I cannot live out of her company. (I.iii.80-86)

Celia does not directly contradict her father's suggestion that Rosalind upstages her. Instead she reiterates that her close bond with Rosalind is absolutely unbreakable and absolutely necessary to her being. But she needn't put into words what she and the audience already instinctively know. Duke Frederick is wrong. Rosalind's presence does not dim Celia's light, nor can it be said that the opposite might occur. Rather, the two girls light one another. One's identity is constituted in relation to the other through love and affect.

Both, Rosalind and Celia are set against one another as equals in their mastery of language. The witty repartee between the two women that fills the first half of the scene reveals that both are uncannily adept at manipulating language for comic and persuasive effect. Furthermore, throughout the first scene in which they appear, the two women are continually conflated and occasionally confused.

Oliver and Duke Frederick simply cannot be moved by rhetoric, for they harbor a deep-seated distrust of which Rosalind and Oliver are, premised on the idea of inheritance. Duke Frederick makes his discrimination against Rosalind and her linguistic ability clear when he banishes her from his court, declaring that she is a traitor. Rosalind

appropriately asks him what makes him believe that she is a traitor, to which he responds plainly, “Thou art thy father’s daughter, there’s enough” (I.iii.58). Rosalind argues against this logic:

So was I when your Highness took his dukedom,
So was I when your Highness banished him.
Treason is not inherited, my lord,
Or if we did derive it from our friends,
What's that to me? My father was no traitor. (I.iii.59-63)

Rosalind uses logic to try to persuade Duke Frederick to change his mind but must tread on careful ground to avoid seeming disrespectful. Rosalind archly insinuates through deliberate diction that it is, in fact, Duke Frederick who is the traitor. He is the man who committed treason by dethroning the rightful duke and banishing Duke Senior from his own dukedom.

The group congregates before Duke Senior and his men. Rosalind, still disguised as Ganymede, reminds the lovers of their various vows. She then secures a promise from Phoebe that if for some reason she refuses to marry Ganymede she will marry Silvius. She is mindful of a promise from the duke that he would allow his daughter to marry Orlando if she were available. Rosalind leaves with the disguised Celia, and the two soon return as themselves, accompanied by Hymen, the god of marriage. Hymen officiates at the ceremony and marries Rosalind and Orlando, Celia and Oliver, Phoebe and Silvius, and Audrey and Touchstone.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the research paper tries to present the reverse gender and how it creates balance in gender relation. Shakespeare's *As You Like It* has been critically examined to justify this idea. From the above analysis, it can be concluded that the play conforms an excellent example of a woman’s empowerment against patriarchal world, which was dominated by masculine supremacy, and rejoices over masculinity through role reversal.

To sum up, femininities applied in the play has been the main point to establish love and the identity through role reversal. The main female character deconstructs the conventional Renaissance gender stereotypes. Cross-dressing makes her gender ambiguous, and gender ambiguity deconstructs the binary opposition of gender. It proves that gender is not fixed; masculinity and femininity are not opposed, but united in every individual. So the researcher emphasizes the importance of femininity in the play for making female more powerful than male. It ends the concept of gender hierarchy.

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