EARLY MODERN LITERARY STUDIES

Imaginative Language and the Simile in *As You Like It*

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> 'In notes, examples and similes are always useful. If I could give you enough of them, that would be all that would be necessary. Usually we think of similes as second-best things, but in philosophy they are the best thing of all'.
>
> Ludwig Wittgenstein

Between 1550 and 1551, Thomas Cranmer and Stephen Gardiner waged a war of words that fundamentally reshaped England's religious, political, and literary landscape. In his *A defence of the true and Catholic doctrine of the sacrament of the body and blood of our saviour Christ*, the reform-minded Cranmer suggests a new way of understanding the Sacraments, saying that 'the washing in water of baptism is, as it were, shewing of Christ before our eyes, and a sensible touching, feeling, and groping of him, to the confirmation of the inward faith, which we have in him'.[1] Cranmer simultaneously acknowledges the corporeal experience of both the Eucharist and baptism, but he conceals skepticism behind the dubious figurative phrase 'as it were', embracing the Sacrament's figurative nature. He complicates the distinction between the literal and figurative, the known and the imagined, allowing the reader to interpret the phrase as 'baptism *is* touching Christ' or the figurative 'it is *as if* baptism touches Christ'. In response to Cranmer casting doubt on the material presence of Christ, the conservative bishop, Stephen Gardiner, responds that Cranmer 'hath diffamed as it were the termes carnally, and corporally, as termes of grossenes, to whom he vsed always to put as an aduerstiue, the term spiritually, as thoughe carnally, and spiritually might not agre in one'.[2] Gardiner parodies Cranmer's skepticism,

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[1] Thomas Cranmer, *The Works of Thomas Cranmer*, ed. by John Edmund Cox, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1884), p. 41.

[2] Stephen Gardiner, *An Explication and assertion of the true Catholique faith, touchyng the most blessed Sacrament of the aulter* (Rouen, 1551), sig. G8r.

asking if Cranmer would ‘Callest thowe not this substance, this goode rownde thicke piece [of bread]’ before claiming that in Cranmer’s phrase there ‘is sophistrie in deade, for here is substance & no substance, matter of bread & no bread’.[3] Gardiner understands that Cranmer’s language conceals revolutionary theological and philosophical ideas. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, ‘as it were’ is a ‘parenthetic phrase used to indicate that a word or statement is perhaps not formally exact though practically right’.[4] The phrase, then, functions as an *ad hoc* proxy to unite the imprecise language we use with the complex things we describe.[5] ‘As it were’ is used when speakers cannot agree on the fundamental terms of the discussion as they build toward consensus. Cranmer’s deliberate equivocation plays an important role in the Reformation process that introduced controversial theology and revolutionized the role of language in early modern thought. Their disagreement over the correct use of language demonstrates how rhetorical figures can become a fulcrum in major intellectual conversations. Over the next fifty years, rhetoricians reiterate that figurative words can bear truth only if their reference is agreed upon by the linguistic community.[6] The semantic flexibility of ‘as it were’ functions as the kind of placeholder to which the rhetoricians refer. The polysemous elasticity of figurative language allows for the consensus-building that is necessary for intellectual cultures to develop.

The early modern theater, like Cranmer’s phrase, questions the boundary between the literal and figurative. As I will argue below, Shakespeare’s *As You Like It* constructs new ways of imagining female agency through figurative language. In her conversations with Orlando, Rosalind uses similes that teach him how to be a man, positioning herself as the authority, and, like Cranmer, she uses similes to open new avenues of discourse with Orlando. The early modern theater uses figurative language to enact consensus-building on a larger scale, both to produce entertaining language and to provoke audiences to thought. In the past several decades, renewed interest in formalist studies has sparked a revival in critical analysis of figurative language that examines the relationship between

[3] Gardiner, sig. O4v.

[4] *OED*, ‘as it were, p.II.2a’.

[5] While it is not strictly a simile, Cranmer’s ‘as it were’ plays an important, though controversial, role in legitimizing his philosophical project because of the phrase’s ability to fuse the known and unknown. It does not function as a simile on a linguistic level, but it does function as a simile on a figurative level.

[6] This is central to Francis Bacon’s theory about rhetoric, to which I will turn later, but Bacon is not the first to recognize the importance of consensus. In fact, Henry Peacham notes that ‘Necessity was the cause that Tropes were first invented, for when there wanted words to express the nature of diverse things, wise men, remembering that many things were very like on another, thought it good to borrow the name of one thing to express another that did in something much resemble it’; see Henry Peacham, *The Garden of Eloquence* (London: H. Jackson, 1577), sig. B1v.

language and culture. The ways critics perceive figurative language have been polarizing; in general, critics, such as Judith Anderson, see figuration as generative. Anderson suggests that cultural and philosophical paradigm 'shifts occur and are subsequently stabilized through… figurative thinking'.[7] The play exhibits a variety of rhetorical uses precisely because linguistic diversity stabilizes paradigm shifts. Other critics, like Madhavi Menon and Jenny Mann, emphasize figuration's radical and subversive nature. Menon claims that 'drama provides the most sustained and rigorous look at rhetorical "fracture"… that language generally enacts'.[8] Mann recognizes the generativity in subversion, suggesting that 'English rhetorics wonder whether a common space of rhetoric might produce not just an eloquent nation but also bands of outlaws in revolt against the polity'.[9] Mann goes on to show that rhetorical subversion is central to the development of national identity, demonstrating that multiple uses of rhetoric, both vernacular and formal, coexist. Menon's approach, however, flattens rhetoric to the degree that it is only ever subversive. Menon's view of rhetoric echoes Brian Vickers' assertion that 'The dominance of rhetoric as a communication system applicable to poetry, literary criticism, and other arts, meant that it produced a unified and homogenous culture'.[10] Vickers emphasizes rhetoric's apparent standardization. These critical approaches limit the diverse ways that rhetoric is used in everyday practice; in fact, *As You Like It* includes multiple uses of rhetoric that demonstrate a conspicuous lack of homogeneity.

Because figurative language is semantically flexible, it can confuse or generate meaning, a quality that is exploited in *As You Like It* to produce a more stable social world. The play has received much critical attention for its treatment of language due to its diversity in linguistic styles. While some scholars emphasize the play's language as reflected through the pastoral, satire, or polemics, Robert Watson argues that the play's use of simile registers widespread anxiety about the tension between humans and the world.[11]

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[7] Judith Anderson, *Go Figure: Energies, Forms and Institutions in the Early Modern World*, ed. by Judith Anderson and Joan Pong Linton (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), p. 11.

[8] Madhavi Menon, *Wanton Words: Rhetoric and Sexuality in English Renaissance* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2004), p. 28.

[9] Jenny Mann, *Outlaw Rhetoric: Figuring Vernacular Eloquence in Shakespeare's England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), p. 25.

[10] Brian Vickers, *English Renaissance Literary Criticism*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), p. 21.

[11] For pastoral, see Rosalie Colie, 'Perspectives on Pastoral: Romance, Comic, and Tragic', in *Shakespeare's Living Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), pp. 243-83; Linda Woodbridge, 'Country Matters: As You Like It and the Pastoral-Bashing Impulse', in *Re-Visions of Shakespeare: Essays in Honor of Robert Ornstein*, ed. by Evelyn Gajowski (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004), pp. 189-214; Caroline Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery: What it Tells us* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). For satire, see Tristan Samuk, 'Satire and Aesthetic in *As You Like It*', *Renaissance Drama*

Watson claims that, due to the artificiality of language, ‘Efforts to bridge, through simile, the gap between ourselves and nature, and between our minds and reality, again only confirm that there is really no way back’.[12] Watson indicts the simile as ‘appropriative’ and ‘violent’, which ultimately leads to a deeply unstable relation between humans and reality.[13] Discussing Jaques’ romanticizing of deer, Watson asks ‘Which has done more insidious violence to pristine nature as a collectivity during its long siege by humanity: shooting it with arrows or shattering it into similes?’[14] An examination attentive to the social practice of rhetoric, such as Rosalind’s use of simile, shows that rhetoric also creates meaning without shooting or shattering. Watson rightly identifies that Jaques’ use of similes is indicative of his outlook on the world, but he notes that Touchstone’s language ensures that ‘getting down to “reality” is impossible’ because ‘the truest poetry is most feigning’ (3.3.19-20).[15] While Watson helpfully calls attention to the confusion appropriative and artificial language produces, the play also presents an example of generative language in Rosalind. In fact, the predominant use of ‘feigning’ in the period is ‘The action of Feign v. in various senses… unfeignedly, sincerely’ and ‘Given to inventing; imaginative’.[16] Touchstone puns off the use of feigning as deceptive; furthermore, the line also refers to Orlando’s faining poetry and recalls the poet as craftsman, which underscores the poet’s responsibility to create a well-wrought simile. Building upon Watson’s analysis of simile, I show the ways that similes work against Jaques’ appropriative register or Touchstone’s feigning and instead shape understanding. Because the simile imagines new ways to consider our society, it is a useful tool that is central to early modern drama’s ability to muddy the distinction between literal and figurative, the quality of language that sparked the debate between Cranmer and Gardiner.

By analyzing discussions of simile ranging from Thomas Wilson in the mid-sixteenth century to Francis Bacon in the early-seventeenth century, I will show that the rhetorical figure was considered a means to build and communicate knowledge. Wilson’s and Bacon’s approach to figurative language is theoretical, but *As You Like It* demonstrates figuration’s practical utility. In the play, simile is used to reach common ground between the way Orlando and Rosalind view the world, and Rosalind repeatedly uses similes to

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43.2 (2015), 117-42. For polemics, see Dale G. Priest, ‘*Oratio* and *Negotium*: Manipulative Modes in *As You Like It*’, *Studies in English Literature* 28.2 (1988), 273-86; Cynthia Marshall, ‘The Doubled Jaques and Constructions of Negation in *As You Like It*’, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 49.4 (1998), 378-91.

[12] Robert Watson, *Back to Nature: The Green and the Real in Late Renaissance Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), p. 78.

[13] Ibid., p. 100.

[14] Ibid., p. 82.

[15] Ibid., p. 98.

[16] *OED*, ‘feign, *n*, II, 1A’. Rosalind’s similes most align with the imaginative aspect of ‘feign’.

imagine a more equitable world. The simile is a powerful taxonomical mechanism; it grounds knowledge of an unknown thing by comparing it to a relatively more known thing, an associative power that is integral to theater's ability to blend the real and fictive. Furthermore, examining the utility of similes and other tropes allows us to better understand how the theater influenced society through engagements with rhetorical theory. *As You Like It* is fundamentally a play about the power of language. Jonathan Lamb discusses the 'bare-plotted' nature of the play, asking 'Why doesn't anything seem to happen?'[17] In the play, similes are seams that stitch together the plot, beginning with the errors of inapt similes and gradually moving toward increasingly more free, imaginative language in Arden. The language of the court, with its literalness and formality, becomes far more figurative and generative in Arden, and Rosalind's use of simile demonstrates how to instruct through language. The primary issue at stake in the play, then, is the role of language in shaping society, which is amplified by the representational nature of the theater.

As You Like It foregrounds the power of imaginative language, the elasticity that allows Rosalind to imagine more social agency or Jaques to imaginatively assume the perspective of an animal. Watson invokes George Puttenham's definition of rhetorical resemblances as 'common vsurpations' to underscore Jaques' appropriative use.[18] The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines usurpation, using the same Puttenham quote, as 'The action of taking into use or making use of a thing; acceptance or agreement in the use of anything; usage, employment'.[19] Early modern rhetoricians thought of the simile as 'very necessary by which we not onely bewtifie our tale, but also very much inforce & inlarge it'.[20] While Jaques appropriates nature, rhetorical manuals, such as Thomas Wilson's *The Arte of Rhetorique* in 1553, see that 'similitudes, examples, comparisons from one thyng to another, apte translacions, and heaping of allegories and all suche figures as serue for amplifiyng, do muche commende the liuely settyng forthe of any matter'.[21] Vital to the claim that similes appropriate and do damage to nature is the claim that humans can only know the word definition of a thing, never the complete thing itself. Early modern thinkers, who almost unilaterally hold that only God has access to nature's secrets, do not claim that language can exhaust reality. In fact, similes are necessarily supplemental, allowing extrinsic meaning to remain; the figure does not combine two halves into a perfect whole. In *The Garden of Eloquence* (1577), Henry Peacham argues that

[17] Jonathan Lamb, *Shakespeare and the Marketplace of Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 105.

[18] Watson, p. 83.

[19] *OED*, 'usurpation, n. II. 6a'.

[20] Puttenham, p. 247.

[21] Thomas Wilson, *The Arte of Rhetorique* (London: Richard Grafton, 1553), p. 95.

'Necessity was the cause that Tropes were first invented' by people who 'wanted words to expresse the nature of diverse things', who noticed that 'many thinges were very like… and so began to use translated speech, and declare their meaning by wordes that made a likely similitude, of those thinges which they signified'.[22] Tropes, then, are semantic prostheses. They allow two speakers to bridge a semantic gap, allowing one speaker to understand the other through associative and vivid similes, but they are also used to fill in a basic lack in vocabulary when we simply do not have the word to express our mind. This second function is akin to Cranmer's 'as it were', substituting a deliberately vague phrase to account for the mysteries of the divine. The simile's elasticity stimulates multiple possibilities for interpretation; the figure's function as a rhetorical tool relies on this ability to amplify. Thomas Wilson avers that 'similitudes are not onelye vsed to amplifie a matter, but also to beautifie the same, to delite the hearers, to make the matter playne', and the speaker cannot 'perswade effectuouslye, and winne men by weyght of his Oration, withoute the helpe of woordes altered and translated'.[23] Rather than attempt to objectify nature, the simile leads the audience to better understand it. These two functions, the prosthetic and the amplifying, echo Horace's aphorism that poetry should instruct and delight. There are, however, two ways to abuse the simile, which are illustrated by Orlando and Touchstone.

In the play, there are many types of similes. In addition to Jaques' appropriative similes, Orlando's similes recall the impetuous Petrarchan lover and Touchstone's satirize scholastic quibbling.[24] In many ways, each character's use of simile embodies the general style with which they are associated.[25] Orlando and Touchstone fail rhetorically, but Rosalind's rhetorical use is consistent with what early modern rhetoricians advise. Orlando's and Touchstone's inapt similes are a mixture of what Peacham calls absurdity and obscurity. Henry Peacham adds a 'Caution' that similes should 'be not unlike that

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[22] Peacham, sig. B1^{V}. Wilson also suggests that similes are necessary for linking words with things, saying 'There is nothing in all the worlde, but the same may have the name of some other worde, the which by some similitude is like unto it' (Wilson, p. 172).

[23] Wilson, pp. 190 and 173.

[24] According to Susan Schreiner, 'humanists mocked the barbarity of language, the verbal games, and the useless quibbles of the scholastics'; see *Are You Alone Wise?: The Search For Certainty in the Early Modern Era* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 29. Humanism emphasized truth as the highest objective, but the scholastics privilege form over content. Though the debate between humanism and scholasticism is on the periphery, its effects were felt in the theater, and Touchstone's frequent use of rhetorical terminology clearly indicates his prior exposure to scholasticism.

[25] Jonathan Lamb recalls a general early modern attitude that 'a person's style informs us about that person's mind' (p. 132). While Lamb emphasizes the use of poetry or prose, I suggest that reading a character through their similes reveals their internal temperament and their basic philosophical outlook. Touchstone's similes, for instance, indicate the he finds 'truth' a thing to be quibbled over.

part wherein they be compared', and they should 'be not straunge and unknowne, by the one there is an absurditie, by the other obscuritie'.[26] If a comparison is absurd, it will be too unrealistic to be effective; if it is obscure, it will not be understood. In addition to forging unreasonable comparisons, similes are also associated with the irrational pursuits of Petrarchan lovers. In Sonnet 130, Shakespeare satirizes the hyperbolic comparisons of courtly love poets, and he explicitly derides the simile in 'A Lover's Complaint', saying 'Take all these similes to your own command, / Hallow'd with sights that burning lungs did raise'.[27] Before they leave the court, Celia and Rosalind exchange banter punctuated by multiple sophisticated uses of simile, but Orlando's 'better parts / Are all thrown down', and he cannot contend with her wit (1.2.233-4).[28] Once he enters Arden, however, Orlando adopts a dangerously reductive perception of Rosalind. His poem admits that 'Rosalind of many parts…was devised, / Of many faces, eyes, and hearts', and when Jaques asks how tall Rosalind is, Orlando responds with the absurd simile that she is 'Just as high as my heart' (3.2.136-8, 241).

Orlando forges a monstrous Rosalind, combining 'Helen's cheek' and 'Cleopatra's majesty', and he understands her stature only in relation to his heart (3.2.133-4). Orlando's absurdity exposes his unrealistic conception of her, a fantasy that denies the real Rosalind. His blazon makes visible that his desire disfigures Rosalind.[29] Celia shrewdly notes that she found Orlando under a tree 'like a dropped acorn', stretched on the ground 'like a wounded knight', and 'furnished like a hunter' (3.2.209, 214, 219). She notes that 'It is as easy to count atomies as to resolve the propositions of a lover' (3.2.206-7). Orlando's absurd comparisons not only fail to evoke a meaningful image, but they also indicate his distorted vision of Rosalind; Celia's similes, however, figure romantic knights and erotic hunters as obstacles to love. The apt similes meaningfully link early modern tropes to Rosalind's present predicament.[30] Seeing that Rosalind is momentarily blind to Orlando's ridiculous construction of her, Celia reminds Rosalind through edifying similes that this kind of lover is dangerously unstable. Celia plays the role of the

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[26] Peacham, sig. B1^{V}.

[27] William Shakespeare, *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, ed. by Katherine Duncan Jones (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1997), ll. 228-9.

[28] William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, in *The Riverside Shakespeare* (2nd ed.), ed. by G. Blakemore Evans (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997). All subsequent references to the play are from this edition and will appear parenthetically in the text by act, scene, and line number.

[29] Puttenham notes that vices associated with blazons, such as excessive ornamentation, 'do disfigure the stuffe and spill the whole workmanship taking away all bewtie and good liking from it' (p. 222).

[30] I will use Peacham's formulation to assess speakers' similes. Similes that are obscure or absurd are inapt, but apt similes use concrete images to 'teach, to exhort, move, perswade, and to many other such like effects' (sig. B1^{V}).

tutor, helping Rosalind regain perspective, and she shows Rosalind that Orlando's type of love is irresolvable. When Rosalind asks Celia for a simple answer to a barrage of questions, Celia invokes education, saying 'To say ay and no to these particulars is more than to answer in catechism' (3.2.203-4). Catechism was the only type of formal education widely available to early modern women, and Celia's reference signals a transition from playful to instructive.[31] Celia demonstrates the powerful didactic value of similes, and in the following encounter between Rosalind and Orlando, Rosalind puts Celia's instruction into practice by using the simile in a similar way to manage Orlando. Figurative language is central to Rosalind's performance as Ganymede. In *The Art of English Poesy* (1589), George Puttenham remarks that rhetoric envelops language, 'disguising' instruction and making rhetoric 'more amiable in euery man's eye', which 'allure[s] as well the mynde as the eare of hearers'.[32] The levels of Rosalind's disguise, then, are more complex than just 'the semiotics of dress'.[33] She is clothed, too, in rhetoric.

During her first encounter with Orlando as Ganymede, Rosalind assumes the role of responsible instructor. Under the guise of a witty exchange about time and location, Rosalind begins to teach Orlando. When Orlando asks her about the swift foot of time, she tells him that though a thief go to the gallows 'as softly as foot can fall, he thinks himself too soon there', and when he asks her where she lives, Rosalind responds 'here in the skirts of the forest, like fringe upon a petticoat' (3.2.290-1, 296-7).[34] A consummate rhetorician, Rosalind instructs Orlando through the simile. She feminizes location to expand his narrow perception of women, but because common parlance for the liberties was 'the skirtes of the cittye', Rosalind also conflates femininity with the precarious freedom London's suburbs offer.[35] Because London's theaters were predominantly located in the liberties, Rosalind figures Arden as the theater. The skirts, Rosalind suggests, are a space where people have the freedom to perform the agency they desire, underscoring the power of both similes and performance. The simile aptly compares a geographically precarious space with femininity, and, as Wilson recommends, the simile

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[31] For more on women's education and the catechism in its domestic context, see Kenneth Charlton, *Women, Religion, and Education in Early Modern England* (New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 188-91.

[32] Puttenham, p. 114.

[33] Jean Howard, 'Crossdressing, the Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England', in *As You Like It*, ed. by Leah S. Marcus (New York: Norton, 2012), p. 351. Howard also notes that the play shows Rosalind 'manipulating…representations in her own interest, theatricalizing for her own purposes what is assumed to be innate, teaching her future mate how to get beyond certain ideologies of gender to more enabling ones' (p. 351).

[34] It is worth noting that the second simile is entirely lost on Orlando. While this is somewhat understated in the text, Orlando's ignorance of women could be played up in performance.

[35] For more on 'the skirtes' of London, see Natasha Korda, *Labours Lost: Women's Work and the Early Modern English Stage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), p. 50.

subtly persuades Orlando to gradually understand women's precarious social status. She tells Orlando he should not count the time by lovers' sighs, and that 'Time travels in divers paces with divers persons' (3.2.274-5). Love, she indicates, should not quantify or be the totality of a person's life. If one should not count time by sighs, then his current romantic timeframe must be altered. Rosalind exploits Orlando's obsession with love to ground his sense of time and space, showing him through explicitly gendered language that love must be realistic. She shows him that distractedly running through the forest ignoring time and space 'is merely a madness', a madness that would surely lead to future instability in their relationship (3.2.346). It is precisely this unrestrained passion Rosalind warns against when she says later that 'men are April when they woo, December when they wed; maids are May when they are maids, but the sky changes when they are wives' (4.1.121-3). Rosalind points out that the kind of passion that frenziedly ignores time in the woods is the same passion that cools after marriage. In her later interactions with Orlando, punctuality and location become major aspects of his education. Orlando asks where she is from, and Rosalind answers 'As the cony that you see dwell where *she* is kindled' (italics mine, 3.2.299). On one hand, Rosalind's simile functions to locate her in the symbolically innocent, pastoral landscape thereby free of societal and parental restriction.[36] On the other hand, the words skirts, petticoat, and cony have explicitly female connotations to which Orlando seems completely unaware. She conflates the freedom of the forest with femininity, and she localizes her space in distinctly vulnerable terms as a flight animal on the outskirts of society. Rosalind associates femininity with freedom and vulnerability, encouraging Orlando to see women as more than a static love-object.

By presenting time as relative and location as gendered, Rosalind invites Orlando to see the world through her eyes; she encourages him to understand women through figurative language. She also tests her performative abilities in these lines, challenging Orlando to interpret her language and discover her secret. Rosalind assumes the role of performer, and Orlando becomes her attentive audience. Upon entering the forest, Rosalind struggles to 'comfort the weaker vessel, as doublet and hose ought to show itself courageous to a petticoat', but in this scene, she fully embraces her role as Ganymede, reveling in the exuberant freedom performance offers (2.4.4-5). These lines also demonstrate Rosalind's remarkable ability to educate through rhetorical performance, and she uses the concrete

[36] Shirley Sharon-Zisser states that the play's 'title links two gender-neutral pronouns by means of two similaic copulas'; see *The Risks of Simile in Renaissance Rhetoric* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), p. 216. I find that the title refers to the liberty and freedom of Arden – Rosalind's and Orlando's freedom to reshape themselves apart from social restrictions – and the freedom of the theater. The title refuses to fix gender as much as it denies what or who 'it' is that 'you' like.

images ‘the foot of time’ and ‘the skirts of a forest’ to illustrate her lesson. She attempts to correct Orlando’s hyperbolically romantic vision of women, saying that because he deifies the name of Rosalind, Orlando ‘seems to have the quotidian of love upon him’ (3.2.319-20).[37] To disabuse him of this quotidian view of women, Rosalind tells Orlando that he is ‘rather point-device in your accoutrements as loving yourself than seeming the lover of any other’ (3.2.334-5). She challenges Orlando’s artificial vision of love by showing him that he only performs the role of the disheveled lover. Rosalind’s role as instructor is made clear by her emphasis on punctuality and performance. According to Lynn Enterline, humanist schoolmasters emphasized punctuality and performance, structuring curriculum around a ‘method of constant imitation’.[38] In grammar schools, students were compelled to imitate their schoolmasters, replacing the students’ identity with that of the tutors. Furthermore, Richard Sherry’s *Treatise of Schemes and Tropes* (1550) shows that correctly identifying rhetorical figures is central to the role of a schoolmaster, saying ‘The common scholemasters be wont in readynge, to saye unto their scholers: *Hic est figura:* and sometimes to ask them, *Per quam figuram*’.[39] Rosalind uses the same grammar school methods to reshape Orlando into a more suitable partner. She beckons Orlando to imitate her and not Petrarch. While Rosalind’s role as tutor is certainly meant to instruct, it also confers authority upon her. The authority of the male schoolmaster was, according to Enterline, ‘designed to intervene in social reproduction’ that defines gender and social roles, which Rosalind confronts.[40] Even after she reveals her identity at the end of the play, Orlando will be indebted to her wisdom and direction.[41] In the first scene, Orlando’s main contention with Oliver is that he has not been given proper education; it is fitting, then, that Rosalind becomes the schoolmaster Orlando so

[37] It is worth noting that Rosalind’s rebuke of Orlando for ‘deifying’ is linguistically similar to defying her; he defies Rosalind the ability to be herself by creating a false, deified image of her.

[38] Lynn Enterline, *Shakespeare’s Schoolroom: Rhetoric, Discipline, Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), p. 6.

[39] Richard Sherry, *A Treatise of Schemes and Tropes*, ed. by H.W. Hildebrandt (Gainesville: Scholars’ Facsimiles & Reprints, 1961), p. 3.

[40] Enterline, p. 9. In addition to her role as schoolmaster, Rosalind’s oratorical skill also upsets the classical tradition that views the ideal orator as male.

[41] In a similar way, Karen Newman points out that Portia’s defense of Antonio makes Bassanio indebted to her; see ‘Portia’s Ring: Unruly Women and Structures of Exchange in *The Merchant of Venice*’, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 38.1 (1987), 19-33. In a culture where women did not have access to many positions of authority, Shakespeare’s powerful women – like Rosalind and Portia – consistently use rhetorical skill to carve out spaces of authority.

desperately lacks.[42] Orlando's vision of love signals his boyish immaturity, and Rosalind plays the male tutor to teach Orlando how to become a man.[43]

After giving an exhaustive itinerary of her lesson plan, Rosalind claims 'this way will I take upon me to wash your liver as clean as a sound sheep's heart, that there shall not be one spot of love in't' (3.2.263-5). The distinct image of a clean liver and spotless sheep locates Orlando's symptom, a hypertrophied liver, which leads him to an unstable passion. Orlando claims that he is beyond curing, and Rosalind responds 'I would cure you, if you would but call me Rosalind' (3.2.267). Rosalind's treatment is embodied simile; she will cure Orlando only if he believes Ganymede is like Rosalind. No longer a linguistic exercise, Rosalind asks Orlando to perceive Ganymede's body as Rosalind's. She tries to build consensus between Orlando's view of the world and her own, using simile to illustrate how his worldview lacks perspective. Like Cranmer, Rosalind codes revolutionary ideas into her similes by repeatedly questioning male authority.[44] The evocative image diagnoses Orlando and proposes to rectify the disease. 'Yet', Rosalind says, 'I profess curing it by counsel' (3.2.349-50). Although Rosalind attempts to instruct Orlando, he continues to resist her more realistic worldview by frequently insisting that love kills.[45] Orlando claims that he is so 'love-shaked' that he 'would not be cured' (3.2.321, 366). His opposition to Rosalind's instruction further establishes his youthful obstinacy. Their discussion is marked by a profusion of similes, and while Orlando is slow to learn, Rosalind uses simile to gradually guide Orlando to a more realistic view of women. If Orlando adopts Rosalind's view of women, it will benefit the couple's domestic marital relation, but because the marriage puts Orlando next in line to become duke, this lesson will also improve Orlando's ability to govern a stable society.[46] Rosalind's similes are apt comparisons that instruct Orlando by clearly connecting abstract concerns with concrete images.

[42] For more on Orlando's feud with Oliver over education, see 1.1. 16, 54-5, 130-1.

[43] Enterline traces the tradition of schoolmasters performing the role of female to teach boys how to become men (pp. 63-4). Enterline also notes the 'erotic charge' of early modern instruction, which Rosalind exploits (p. 6).

[44] Of the revolutionary ideas, Rosalind questions male authority by performing the role of tutor, she nearly performs the marriage before Hymen steps in (5.4.94), and she questions her father's authority (3.4.30-1).

[45] For later examples, see 4.1.77 and 4.1.86-91. The idea that love kills, which suggests that something immaterial can cause material effects, is what most explicitly irks Rosalind, the very problem that prompted the disagreement between Cranmer and Gardiner.

[46] The immensely popular conduct manual, *A Godly Forme of Houshold Government*, maintains that 'it is impossible for a man to understand how to governe the common-wealth, that doth not rule his owne house'; see John Dod and Robert Cleaver, *A Godly Forme* (London: R. Field, 1621), sig. A8^{V}.

The remarkably sensuous language in *As You Like It* is a stunning illustration of rhetoricians' interest in language's materiality. In fact, many early modern rhetoricians explore how language turns abstract ideas into material language, and they develop theories to account for such a process. In his educational manual, *De Tradendis Disciplinis* (1531), Juan Luis Vives maintains that language is an instrument to express the body's sense data, saying that without language our thoughts are 'shut in by the grossness and density of the body'.[47] Language makes sense of our senses, so the 'tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, / Sermons in stones' that 'feelingly persuade' Duke Senior are senses mediated by language (2.1.11, 16-7). Language helps translate inner thoughts, not only for the audience's sake, but also so that the speaker can manifest her own perceptions. The boundary between words and the world, however, is bridged by simile, which Francis Bacon calls 'those Common adjuncts of things'.[48] Similes, Bacon says, can codify and classify, giving them the potential to signify connections beyond language. Bacon argues that rhetorical figures, primarily the simile, 'reduceth conceits intellectual to Images sensible'.[49] By materializing thought, sensible similes distill the mind and encode it into material images, which are then transmitted to audiences.

Sensible images are a form of embodied language. By giving language concrete form, the speaker can trace the contours of thought more readily than through abstract language. Bacon's image allows the audience to experience a thing directly. This function has a long history in rhetorical manuals. While Bacon sees 'lively images' as the chief medium of serious thought, early modern rhetoricians use the distinctly literary term *Energeia*.[50] Puttenham's *Energeia* is a 'strong and virtuous operation' that 'the noble Poets sought by their arte to remoue or appease, not with any medicament of a contrary temper, as the Galenistes vse to cure *contraria contrarijs* but as the Paracelsians, who cure *similia similibus* making one dolour to expell another'.[51] *Energeia*, then, consists of lively images that use likeness to cure audiences. In *De copia*, Erasmus maintains that *Energeia* materializes language by providing it sensuous characteristics that 'fill in the colours and

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[47] Juan Luis Vives, *De tradendis disciplinis*, (1531), qtd. in Foster Watson, *Vives and the Renascence Education of Women* (Cambridge, 1912), p. 90.

[48] Francis Bacon *Novum Organum and Other Writings*, ed. by Anthony Uyl (Ontario: Devoted Publishing, 2016), p. 219.

[49] Ibid., p. 140.

[50] Although they were initially separated by Aristotle, *Energeia* and *Enargeia* are typically conflated in the early modern period. For Aristotle, the latter meant representation or evidence, and the former are figures – like simile and metaphor – that are 'expressions that represent things as in a state of activity', allowing the poet to give 'to lifeless things in his well-liked similes'; see Aristotle, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*, trans. by George Kennedy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 248.

[51] Puttenham, p. 98.

set [the matter] up like a picture to look at', so that 'the reader seems to have seen rather than read'.[52] In *Garden of Eloquence*, Henry Peacham describes *Energeia* as 'evidence or perpicuitie called also descipcion rethoricall, is when a thygne is so described that it semeth to the reader or hearer that he beholdeth it as it were in doing'.[53] The simile creates an imaginative presence whereby the audience is presented an image of the object.[54] As we have seen with Rosalind's lessons, this materialization allows playwrights to articulate abstract concepts in tangible terms. In a period that had not yet experienced the Cartesian separation between mind and body but viewed humanity as embedded in a vast network, '"Like" does not purport to be or not to be', writes Bruce Smith, 'it compares and approximates, it blurs the boundary between inner and outer'.[55] The simile connects the subject and object by blurring the boundary between them. It is precisely this boundary that Rosalind questions when she invites Orlando to see the world as she does. It is not merely a rhetorical figure but also an epistemological instrument. The simile reveals how language was used by authors to understand their relation to the world, an understanding that can 'cleanse the foul body' (2.7.60). *Energeia*, like Bacon's lively image and the simile, professes to cure by counsel by turning abstract thoughts into sensible images.

Early modern rhetorical manuals show that similes have the unique ability to imaginatively construct what it is *like* to be something else.[56] To examine the simile as a tool, however, reveals the utility of language for early modern thinkers. In *Novum Organon* (1620), Francis Bacon presents the Idols of the Theater as the tendency –largely aimed at Aristotelian scholastics – to reduce language to quibbling proofs, suggesting that in such pedantry 'There is no possibility of argument, since we do not agree either about the principle or about the proofs'.[57] Similes create consensus about principles so that

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[52] Desiderius Erasmus, *De Copia in Collected Works of Erasmus: Literary and Education Writings,* ed. by Craig R. Robinson, vol. 7 (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1989), p. 577.

[53] Peacham, p. 66.

[54] In *Sermon XXVI*, John Donne notes that rhetoric makes 'absent and remote things present to your understanding'; qtd. in Theresa M. Kelley, *Reinventing Allegory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 27.

[55] Bruce Smith, *Phenomenal Shakespeare* (Hoboken: Wiley Blackwell, 2010), pp. 1-2.

[56] Rhetorical manuals point to the simile as a taxonomy tool that bridges the gap between known and unknown things, so in Bacon, for instance, it is used as a scientific procedure. The uses are far-reaching. If I perceive a similarity between X and Y and know X but not Y, I can reasonably deduce that Y is *like* X, which is clearly useful for Bacon's inductive reasoning.

[57] Bacon, pp. 49-50. Similarly, Judith Haber argues that the meaning of certain similes is 'dislocated' or 'unstable'. Her analysis of *Henry V* argues 'at the outset of the play, that 'the thing itself' is merely a matter of acting, of performing likeness'; see '"I cannot tell wat is like me": Simile, Paternity, and Identity in *Henry V*', *Shakespeare Studies* 41.1 (2013), 127-47 (p. 129). Haber's analysis is more performative than textual, commenting on how similes underscore the artificiality of theater.

speakers can avoid quibbling. Correct use presupposes an understanding of nature. Puttenham notes that users must understand proportion and likeness in nature, so they can 'liken yellow to gold, white to silver, red to rose'.[58] Wilson observes that 'those that delite to proue things by Similitudes, must learne to knowe the nature of diuers beasts', and similes dilate arguments 'for amplification'.[59] Both rhetoricians acknowledge that correct use depends on knowledge of nature, and Wilson points out the educational possibility of simile to prove and amplify arguments through rhetoric. In a similar way, Orlando must correctly understand the nature of women to untangle Rosalind's instructive similes. Quibbling attempts to prove principles through abstract propositions, but the simile uses likeness as a reference point. Touchstone thrives in the logical paradoxes Bacon wants to move past. Like his earlier simile, that he is 'as the most capricious poet, honest Ovid', Touchstone defeats Jaques by quibbling that cuckoldry is natural and preferred, saying 'the noblest deer hath them as huge as the rascal. Is the single man therefore blest? No, as a walled town is more worthier than a village, so is the forehead of a married man more honorable than the brow of a bachelor' (3.3.6, 44-7). Touchstone becomes the capricious poet by using simile to create an image that is both salacious and obscure. This proposition bewilders Jaques precisely because it is a paradox. His image connects a deer and a walled town to a human, which makes little sense, satirizes love, and degrades humanity. Touchstone uses simile to subdue his interlocutors, but Rosalind uses lively images to imagine change.

Soon after Touchstone's bizarre simile, Jaques asks him if he will disparage the sanctity of marriage, and Touchstone responds 'As the ox hath his bow, sir, the horse his curb, and the falcon her bells, so man hath his desires; and as pigeons bill, so wedlock would be nibbling' (3.3.56-59). For early modern rhetoricians, a figure is only successful if its meaning corresponds to the image that is used to convey it; however, Touchstone's similes lack such correspondence and seem to have little matter at all beyond the thrill of the pun. Rhetoricians believed that the world is inscrutable enough already, so the speaker's responsibility to be clear is paramount. Touchstone's lack of meaning, however, is deliberate. Instead of imagining change, he uses his rhetorical skill to confound and defeat opponents. Touchstone's function in the play, like all of Shakespeare's fools, is to puncture misconceptions other characters have about themselves. His discourse has no goal other than to illustrate the confusion inapt language causes; his jibes are an indiscriminate response. He acts mostly as a social leveler, showing that kings and bumpkins are equally susceptible to human frailty. The folly of rhetorical skills steeped

[58] Puttenham, p. 329.

[59] Wilson, pp. 188-9.

in quibbling and proofs is that it empties the matter of discourse, and it makes refutation the goal of rhetoric.

Touchstone disables Corin by proving that everyone in the country is damned for never having courtly manners, he overpowers William with ‘figures in rhetoric’, and he astonishes Jaques in his *tour de force* speech about the ‘degrees of the lie’ (3.2.11-75, 5.1.9-53, 5.4.62-89). In each of these exchanges, Touchstone reveals the absurdity of his own rhetorical effusiveness. In his discussion with Corin, for instance, Touchstone tells the shepherd that he is ‘damned, like an ill-roasted egg all on one side’ (3.2.31-2). This delightful simile is an absurd image, but it challenges reverence by comparing human damnation to overdone eggs. Challenging the distinction between two relatively alike things might have an edifying payoff, but Touchstone’s comparisons are too absurd to offer any reward. Touchstone establishes, as a scholastic proof, that country and city people abide by the same customs, arguing that ‘is not the grease of a mutton as wholesome as the sweat of a man?’ (3.2.47-8). To each of Corin’s responses, however, Touchstone calls for a better ‘instance’, revealing that he cares more for the form of the dispute than coming to some productive conclusion (3.2.44, 49, 52, 59). Throughout the play, Touchstone proves that he ‘will bandy with thee in faction’ and ‘o’errun thee with policy’ (5.2.49-50). Rather than cure by counsel, as Rosalind professes to do, Touchstone only seeks to win arguments. Self-interest and the thrill of puns guide his interactions.

Both Rosalind and Touchstone share a shrewd wit, but Touchstone’s remarks are opaque witticisms. Although Touchstone clearly sees through social pretenses, he does not use his wit to counsel change. Touchstone approximates Rosalind’s own sense of imaginative language when he says ‘there is much virtue in “if”’ (5.4.89). He understands the power of conditional language, the power of imagining a better world, but he uses this rhetorical skill to defuse meaningless quarrels. Touchstone’s images are purposely enigmatic because his point is not to lead others. His language is ripe with wit, but his rhetoric ‘yields bad fruit’ (3.2.104). He always puts some degree of emotional distance between himself and other characters. He reveals the disparity between love and marriage, country and court, and good and bad poetry. Touchstone’s purpose, it seems, is to separate, but the purpose that animates Rosalind always works to unite. With Orlando, her instructions begin with similes that anchor him in a concrete reality, and she works to dispel his notion of idealized love. Rosalind’s similes infuse language with humanity, and in the play’s final scenes, her similes become a powerful integrative force.

Rosalind begins to assume a more important role as the play continues, acting as mediator between three marriages. After teaching Orlando the importance of location and punctuality, he still arrives late to their meeting, and Rosalind somewhat jokingly tells

him ‘I had as lief be wooed of a snail’ (4.1.43). This simile, like many of Rosalind’s, has two grammatical functions; it is both a conjunction and a comparative adverb. Rather than shooting or shattering, as Watson suggests Jaques’ similes do, Rosalind conjoins the snail and Orlando through simile. She reiterates the importance of timeliness throughout so that she can increasingly anchor Orlando in reality. Just before telling Orlando that no one has ever died of love, Rosalind informs him that he is ‘graveled for lack of matter’ and that ‘good orators’ are like ‘lovers lacking (God warn us) matter’ (4.1.62-64). She continually circles back to grammar school lessons on love, time, and having purpose. For Rosalind, unlike Touchstone, both oratory and love are meaningless without matter. When Orlando claims that he will die, Rosalind responds, ‘No, faith, die by attorney’ because ‘not any man died in his own person, *videlicet*, in a love cause’ (4.1.78-80). Referring to her previous statement about oratory, Rosalind here refers to *inventio*, the part of rhetoric that teaches students how to produce or find arguments.[60] Rosalind asks Orlando to develop a legal proof that love kills. By explicitly linking love and education, Rosalind again establishes her authority over Orlando, and the connection between love and the law underscores that love is a contract that he must take seriously. In both cases, Rosalind’s instructions announce her superiority. In the final act, Rosalind begins to capitalize on the instructive similes she has been cultivating throughout the play by enacting change through simile.

In addition to an instructive tool, the simile becomes a powerful concretizing force in the play. Exasperated by fictional lessons, Orlando says ‘I can no longer live by thinking’ (5.2.41). Orlando does not reject intellectual thinking but unrealistic thinking. Jonathan Lamb suggests that ‘Orlando’s refusal to play the game gives him a kind of victory by forcing Rosalind to remove her disguise’, but the real victory is Rosalind’s; she instructs Orlando to reform his artificial, highly idealized attitude toward love.[61] After all their lessons together, Orlando finally begins to recognize that he was living in a fantasy. Perceiving Orlando’s development, Rosalind says that she will speak ‘no longer with idle talking. Know of me then, for now I speak to some purpose’ (5.2.43-4). Transitioning from using simile as imaginative to using it as declarative, she states that she will ‘set her before your eyes tomorrow human as she is and without any danger’ (5.2.55-6). Before she taught Orlando through images, but now she will cement those by leading him to *know* her, and Orlando confirms that he accepts her more realistic worldview when he

[60] Cicero defines *inventio* as ‘the discovery of valid or seemingly valid arguments to render one’s case plausible’; see *De Inventione*, ed. by H.M. Hubbel (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949), 1.7.9. For more on the importance of *inventio* in early modern grammar school, see Lorna Hutson, *The Invention of Suspicion: Law and Mimesis in Shakespeare and Renaissance Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 2.

[61] Lamb, p. 137.

responds, saying 'Speak'st thou in sober meanings?' (5.2.57). She builds linguistic consensus by gradually convincing Orlando to abandon his romantic language and imitate her more realistic language, going so far as to ask her if Rosalind is speaking with earnest gravity. While earlier similes instruct through imagination, she now promises to materialize herself as Rosalind. Her seemingly magical ability to conjure Rosalind is, Shirley Sharon-Zisser claims, central to the play's emphasis on 'the similaic in conjunction with the category of the archaic as the site of a non-ontological philosophy not fixated on Being'.[62] She argues that the simile 'is conceptually marked not with the stasis of Being but with the open-endedness of… becoming'.[63] Throughout the play, other characters associated with simile, such as Touchstone or Jaques, are static. Those characters exit the play as they entered, but Rosalind's agential similes become. Rosalind's similes allow herself and others to become something more. After hearing the conflicting demands of Orlando, Silvius, and Phoebe, Rosalind promises to satisfy their radically disparate desires. She responds 'Pray you, no more of this – 'tis like the howling of Irish wolves against the moon… I will content you… As you love Rosalind, meet: as you love Phoebe, meet: and as I love no woman, I'll meet' (5.2.95-103). Rosalind's first simile demonstrates that the lovers' rash desires are inhuman, and she again comments on the nonfixity of identity. Rosalind once again critiques Orlando's wooing for its abstract nature, insisting that he remain in the concrete world she has been guiding him toward. The multiple uses of 'as' that follow perform a double function; on one hand, they are conjunctions that indicate by way of comparison, but on the other hand, they function as adverbs that compare qualities of love. Though they are not strictly similes, these speech acts contract the lovers through imaginative language. The syntactic joining materializes the later joining at the marriage ceremony. Rosalind simultaneously imagines and binds the lovers through simile.

Throughout the play, Touchstone's similes remain static; he begins and ends the play using similes to satirize human foibles. In contrast, Rosalind demonstrates the dynamic potential of figurative language. She begins the play using similes in games of wit between her and Celia, but she later uses similes as an epistemological tool. Rosalind's similes allow her to think through her rapidly changing social situation after being expelled from court, and she uses similes to understand and temper her affection for Orlando. When she finds Orlando, he uses similes to express unstable Petrarchan love, and after their lessons, his last simile of the play is 'I sometimes do believe and sometimes do not, / As those that fear they hope and know they fear' (5.4.3-4). Orlando uses the figure to sound out and work through his own anxieties and expectations, concluding that

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[62] Sharon-Zisser, p. 220.

[63] Ibid., p. 213.

his hope in achieving love overwhelms his fear. This final simile creates a vivid image of two Orlandos: the one fears to hope and the other knows he fears, a dialectic which demonstrates that he understands how to temper his conflicting emotions. Rosalind's use of lively images helps guide Orlando to a fuller understanding of himself and a more enabling understanding of Rosalind. She helps others fashion themselves through figurative language. Rosalind began the play as a victim of unfortunate circumstances, but she quickly adapts and becomes a creative force, a force that creates opportunity out of misfortune. Her rhetorical skill cultivates 'effective virtue' through *Energeia,* which Puttenham regards as essential to the poetic arts.[64] Rosalind and Orlando's rhetorical development throws Touchstone's stasis into stark relief. Jenny Mann avers that 'The aim of classical and Renaissance rhetoric is *movere*, which is why successful persuasion always results in motion of some kind, as when unruly people are drawn into new social formations or the emotions are stirred into a commotion'.[65] Rosalind's moving similes suggest that the line between fictional and real is fine, and the play shows how imaginative language can move audiences.

The simile plays a central role in Rosalind's ability to move Orlando through imaginative language. Unlike those rhetoricians who thought that simile was an inherent part of language, Bacon advocates using simile as a meaning-making machine to build a taxonomy: 'if any one wish to let new light on any subject into men's minds' the author must 'call in the aid of similitudes'.[66] Similes, then, are the foundation for creating discourse, but as the sciences gain consensus, they gradually displace the need for similes. The function of the theater operates on a similar logic. Jean Howard notes that the theater is 'a social institution signified by change. It blurred the boundaries between degrees and genders'.[67] The theater, like Bacon's simile, interrogates social practices and imagines alternatives through lively images. By calling on the aid of similitudes, the theater imagines social change that society can enact. The contracts that Rosalind forms through simile are enacted by Hymen, the embodiment of the marital institution. Rosalind imagines social action that is subsequently formalized. Through similes, Rosalind stabilizes social order and imagines greater female agency. Because Rosalind is the play's source of stability, the audience is exposed to the social potential of women. By presenting women as imagining change that social institutions can then cement, the play

[64] Puttenham, p. 224.

[65] Jenny Mann, 'The Orphic Physics of Early Modern Eloquence', in *The Palgrave Handbook of Early Modern Literature and Science*, ed. by Howard Marchitello and Evelyn Tribble (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), pp. 231-56 (p. 236).

[66] Bacon, *Of the Wisdom of the Ancients* (1609), qtd. in Paolo Rossi, *Francis Bacon: From Magic to Science* (London: Bloomsbury, 1964), p. 94.

[67] Howard, p. 354.

carefully avoids upsetting hierarchical structures, but it does provide a more agential role for women. The feigning of theater, therefore, is not so much artificial as it is generative.

The epilogue seemingly discards Rosalind's performativity, allowing her to strip herself of staged illusions and present her authentic self.[68] It proleptically theatricalizes Bacon's claim that similes are needed during the initial stages of progress, and Rosalind's transformation from female character to male actor is the final stage. However, this interpretation of the epilogue disregards Rosalind's frequent and instrumental use of simile.[69] Rosalind says 'I am not furnished like a beggar; therefore to beg will not become me' (7-8). The Rosalind boy-actor, maintaining Rosalind's assertive buoyancy, refuses to demean himself before the audience.[70] The actor's response 'is to conjure you' (9). Just as Rosalind confirms her authority by playing the tutor, the boy-actor confirms his authority by refusing to play the traditional part of the begging epilogue. While they are not similes, the actor uses 'as' seven times to conjoin and bind: 'like as much of this play as please you', 'men, for the love you bear to women – as I perceive by your simpering', and 'I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me, complexions that liked me, and breaths that I defied not' (10-15). The conjunction 'as', though not a simile, works by a similaic logic, fusing the men and the women and the actor to everyone. 'As' blurs the boundaries between spectator and spectacle. By inviting the audience to 'like as much of this play', the actor means to enjoy, but the invitation also comes with the added performative connotation that sends the audience home to continue this performance; it asks the audience to *be like* this play. Resist being, the actor suggests, and become. The actor capitalizes on the intimate relationship he has constructed with the audience throughout the play, saying 'as many as have good beards or good faces or sweet breaths will for my kind offer, when I make curtsey, bid me farewell' (16-18). 'As' fuses these three separate groups of people through binding language to unanimously celebrate the performance; in fact, 'as' functions the same way in the contracts between Orlando, Silvius, and Phoebe. The simile creates lively images, but it also unites characters in marriage and the audience with actors. In the margins of the play, the epilogue ends by disrupting notions of identity, by uniting fictional characters and the real audience. It highlights the power of rhetoric by demonstrating language's ability to conjure applause.

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[68] Jeffrey Masten points out that what we think of as Rosalind's authentic self is always already disturbed by the text; see 'Ganymede's Hand in *As You Like It*', in *Field Work: Sites in Literary and Cultural Studies*, ed. by Marjorie Garber (New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 153-63.

[69] Jean Howard notes that the epilogue's performativity questions hierarchical structures: 'If a boy can so successfully personate the voice, gait, and manner of a woman, how stable are those boundaries separating one sexual kind from another… The epilogue playfully invites this question' (p. 352).

[70] I use the male pronoun to indicate a shift from the female Rosalind contemporary audiences imagine and the boy-actor early modern audiences saw.

As You Like It illustrates the utility of similes. Emphasizing this utility generates new ways to conceptualize how the theater stimulated audiences through language, and such emphasis reveals key insights into the early modern mind, particularly how debates about language among religious figures and rhetoricians possibly infiltrate early modern dramatic practice. Tracing the use of simile in the play illustrates the figure's instructive potential for both characters and audiences, and we can see – in the play and in Cranmer's use – that speakers use the semantic ambiguity of rhetorical figures to code subversive ideas. While rhetoricians and philosophers diagnose language from a detached point of view, playwrights like Shakespeare, whose craft depends on the value of imaginative image, reveal the precise way language instructs others. Instead of claiming to exhaust the meaning of something, the simile indexes and categorizes information by drawing productive links between things, the goal of which is to reach a common consensus. Rosalind shows the powerful instrumental value of both the theater and the simile, demonstrating with verve how language confers authority.