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## The Place of a Cousin in *As You Like It*

JULIE CRAWFORD

FOR A NUMBER OF SUMMERS I have taught in an NEH-funded program for high school teachers at the Theatre for a New Audience in New York City. For two weeks, the participants spend their days studying and performing Shakespeare's plays with academics and theater professionals.<sup>1</sup> Among many other subjects, we frequently discuss and provide a critical language for the homoeroticism that is so prominent in plays ranging from *Romeo and Juliet* to *The Winter's Tale*. On the whole, the participants are very interested in this topic, if frequently apprehensive about how they might teach it in highly monitored public schools to sexually attuned young people who can barely get over finding out that "to die" is a sexual pun. Yet amid such discussions, one thing has always remained remarkably consistent: the participants' investment in the genre of comedy as a template for the ultimate vindication of heterosexuality. Comedies end in marriage, they insist, and thus the homoeroticism we see between Rosalind and Celia in *As You Like It*, for example, or between Sebastian and Antonio in *Twelfth Night*, is temporary, or, to use Valerie Traub's still influential term, "(in)significant"—a minority concern not only resolved in the plays' concluding marriages, but also easily ignored in class discussions necessarily devoted to the big issues in Shakespeare.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.tfana.org/education/neh-summer-institute-school-teachers>.

<sup>2</sup> Valerie Traub first used the term in "The (In)significance of 'Lesbian' Desire in Early Modern England," in *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, ed. Susan Zimmerman (New York: Routledge, 1992), 150–69. See also the chapter sharing this title in Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002). In her groundbreaking work, Traub argued that the marriages that Shakespeare's comedies present as woman's "inevitable lot" render women's bonds "temporary, firmly located in childhood or adolescence, and necessarily giving way to patriarchal marriage" (174). She was clear that this betrayal was less the result of psychosexual necessity than socioeconomic imperative, but her readings were nonetheless circumscribed by fixed ideas about both sexuality and genre. For a particularly overzealous claim about marriage and "the fixity of traditional gender" in *As You Like It*, see Maurice A. Hunt, *Shakespeare's "As You Like It": Late Elizabethan Culture and Literary Representation* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 146. For recent discussions of the not always marital endings of comedies, see Julie Crawford, "All's Well That Ends Well, or Is Marriage Always Already Heterosexual?," in *Shakespeareer*, ed. Madhavi Menon (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2011), 39–47; Julie Crawford, "Shakespeare. Same Sex. Marriage," in *The Oxford*

Yet marriage does not necessarily mark the end of same-sex relationships in Shakespeare's comedies; indeed, it is often an enabling condition for their continuation.<sup>3</sup> Many of Shakespeare's comedies end in marriages that structurally resecure the same-sex and homoerotic relations that played such important roles in bringing them about. At the end of *Twelfth Night*, for example, Olivia's devoted gentlewoman attendant Maria marries Olivia's kinsman Sir Toby Belch ("Am not I consanguineous?" [2.3.72]), allowing for a new instantiation of her intimate relationship with Olivia.<sup>4</sup> Marriage, moreover, is not a self-evident or transhistorically consistent institution. Recent work has shown that the marriage-centered "Restricted Patriarchal Nuclear Family" that historians have claimed was the dominant form of social organization in the past was not quite as dominant as its insistent capitalization suggests.<sup>5</sup> Extended family networks enabled many kinds of relationships, including same-sex ones, and households were far more diverse than the dyadic and nuclear model posits.<sup>6</sup> Early modern

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*Handbook of Shakespeare and Embodiment: Gender, Sexuality, and Race*, ed. Valerie Traub (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2016), 251–68; and Kathryn Schwarz, "Comedies End in Marriage," *Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare and Embodiment*, 269–86.

<sup>3</sup> On marriage as an enabling condition, see Julie Crawford, "The Homoerotics of Shakespeare's Elizabethan Comedies," in *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works, Volume III: The Comedies*, ed. Richard Dutton and Jean Howard (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), 137–58; and Crawford, "Is Marriage Always Already Heterosexual?"

<sup>4</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from Shakespeare's plays other than *As You Like It* are from *The Norton Shakespeare*, gen. ed. Stephen Greenblatt, 3rd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2016), cited parenthetically. On Olivia and Maria, and ladies and attending gentlewomen more generally, see Julie Crawford, "Women's Secretaries," in *Queer Renaissance Historiography: Backward Gaze*, ed. Vin Nardizzi, Stephen Guy-Bray, and Will Stockton (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), 111–34.

<sup>5</sup> "The Restricted Patriarchal Nuclear Family 1550–1700" is the title of part 3 of Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500–1800* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977). See Alan Bray's critique of the concept in *The Friend* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2013), 2–4, 307–23; and my discussion of its ongoing influence in "Shakespeare. Same Sex. Marriage," esp. 263–64.

<sup>6</sup> Miranda Chaytor's research on households that included (among other things) multi-generational cohabitation, foster parenting, and adoption shows that early modern households could be productively understood as the "point where kin groups joined by marriage shared and redistributed their resources." See "Household and Kinship: Ryton in the Late 16th and Early 17th Centuries," *History Workshop Journal* 10 (1980): 25–60, esp. 39. One of Chaytor's arguments is that people once deemed "rejects" and "wastage" should be understood as integral parts of households. Bray argues that some historians' insistence on the historical dominance of the restricted patriarchal nuclear family was intended to serve as a limit case on the claims of the social welfare state within their own moment: normative nuclear families had always, and would always, best take care of the needs of society; see *Friend*, 307–14. Amy Froide's research on the prevalence of single-woman-headed households—the same women once deemed "rejects" or "wastage"—as well as on the revelatory fact that a "woman was likely to be unmarried for two-thirds of her life span" drew new attention to the work of feminist historians on the effects of

marriage was usually a covenant made between the friends of two parties rather than simply between the two parties themselves, and it was not the only form of ritual or chosen kinship celebrated and recognized in Shakespeare's world and plays.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, Shakespeare's plays allude to and stage myriad vows, including those of godparenthood (Edgar, for example, is Lear's godson); adoption (the Countess of Roussillon adopts Helena in *All's Well That Ends Well*); sworn brotherhood (Bardolph, Nym, and Pistol declare themselves "sworn brothers" in *Henry V* [2.1.10]); and chastity (Emilia invokes such vows in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*).<sup>8</sup> These forms of ritualized kinship often intersect with marriage, but they do not map neatly onto it and are not clearly subordinate to nor replaced by it. As Alan Bray has argued, premodern (or what he calls "traditional") society was held together by a "web of obligations and friendship" created by multiple forms of ritual or oath-based kinship, including, but not exclusive to, marriage.<sup>9</sup> Kinship, that is, was created by promise as well as by blood. My interest here is thus in rethinking marriage in Shakespeare's comedies and in the critical traditions that have held in place a certain vision of it and thus of same-sex relations. *As You Like It* has long served as the test case for the thesis that female homoeroticism registers in Shakespeare's plays primarily in (adolescent) passing, necessarily giving way to marriage.<sup>10</sup> I want to argue that the webs of kinship and obligation in the play center on same-sex vows between women that enable

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late (and non) marriage on women's economic and thus social power; see *Never Married: Singlewomen in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005), 4.

<sup>7</sup> As Bray puts it, "the covenant to marriage that in the traditional society this book describes was properly made between the 'friends' of the two parties, between their parents and families and indeed between all those who might have an interest in the projected marriage: it was they who made the match" (*Friend*, 102). See also Diana O'Hara, "Ruled by my friends': Aspects of Marriage in the Diocese of Canterbury, c. 1540–1570," *Continuity and Change* 6.1 (1991): 9–41; and *Courtship and Constraint: Rethinking the Making of Marriage in Tudor England* (Manchester, UK: Manchester UP, 2000).

<sup>8</sup> In *King Lear*, Regan asks Gloucester, "What, did my father's godson seek your life? / He whom my father named, your Edgar?" (Q, 2.1.93–94). The Countess of Roussillon claims that "Adoption strives with nature, and choice breeds / A native slip to us from foreign seeds" in her praise of Helena (*All's Well That Ends Well*, 1.3.130–31). Perdita is raised by foster parents in *The Winter's Tale*. We hear about sworn brotherhood in *Coriolanus* (2.3.90); *2 Henry IV* (3.2.287); *Henry V* (2.1.10, 3.2.39–40); and *Much Ado about Nothing* (where Beatrice describes Benedick having "every month a new sworn brother" [1.1.58]). And we see women who have made vows to Diana (and with each other) in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (1.3.48–85) and, in a variation, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (esp. 1.1.215–16).

<sup>9</sup> Bray, *Friend*, 105.

<sup>10</sup> See Traub, *Renaissance of Lesbianism*; Mario DiGangi, *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997), 50–62; and Jessica Tvordt, "Female Alliance and the Construction of Homoeroticism in *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*," in *Maids and Mistresses, Cousins and Queens: Women's Alliances in Early Modern England*, ed. Susan Frye and Karen Robertson (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999), 114–30.

and are further enabled by marriage. The play offers a rich illustration both of the embedment of marital couples in wider networks of kinship, and of the public recognition of the ethical utility and social primacy of oath-based intimate relationships between women.<sup>11</sup>

### I. THE PLACE OF A COUSIN

Since Louis Montrose's influential 1981 essay, "The Place of a Brother," relations between men in *As You Like It* have figured prominently in scholarship on the play.<sup>12</sup> In many ways, this makes sense; the play's political crisis focuses on a duke unjustly usurped by his younger brother, and its central plot features a younger son, Orlando, unjustly disenfranchised by his elder brother. The union between the play's heroine, Rosalind, and Orlando, Montrose argued, "entails the weakening of her ties to her natural father [Duke Senior] and to a cousin [Celia] who has been closer to her than a sister; Orlando's union with Rosalind entails the strengthening of his ties to his elder brother [Oliver] and to a lord [Duke Senior] who becomes his patron."<sup>13</sup> In Montrose's reading, marriage marks the end of both female independence and same-sex bonds, and the male traffic in women is presumed to be its dominant logic. Hymen's wedding song at the end of the play, Montrose concluded, "incorporates man and woman within a process that reunites man with man."<sup>14</sup> Yet while marriage is certainly overdetermined in this play—Hymen famously oversees four of them at its conclusion—it also serves to reunite woman with woman, or, more precisely, it provides a new instantiation for what we might usefully call the "place of a cousin."

The play begins with Orlando meditating on "the place of a brother" and the rights owed to him by his elder brother, Oliver.<sup>15</sup> For his part, Oliver is anxious about both Orlando's challenge to his own superior status and the larger relations of power in which he finds himself. As Oliver says, Orlando is "of all sorts enchantingly beloved, and indeed so much in the heart of the world, and espe-

<sup>11</sup> For an excellent discussion of Bray's exclusion of women, see Lorna Hutson's "The Body of the Friend and the Woman Writer: Katherine Philips's Absence from Alan Bray's *The Friend*," *Women's Writing* 14.2 (2007): 196–214.

<sup>12</sup> Louis Montrose, "'The Place of a Brother' in *As You Like It*: Social Process and Comic Form," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 32.1 (1981): 28–54.

<sup>13</sup> Montrose, "Brother," 28.

<sup>14</sup> Montrose, "Brother," 29.

<sup>15</sup> *As You Like It: Texts and Contexts*, ed. Pamela Allen Brown and Jean E. Howard (New York: Bedford/St. Martins, 2014), 1.1.14. All subsequent references to *As You Like It* will be taken from this edition and cited parenthetically. The Bedford text is based on the edition of David Bevington, ed., *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, 6th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson, 2009).

cially of my own people, who best know him, that I am altogether misprized" (1.1.121–24). When he seeks from Charles the "new news at the new court," he is particularly interested in the whereabouts of the usurped Duke Senior's daughter, asking "if Rosalind, the Duke's daughter, be banished with her father?" (ll. 71, 77–78). Oliver thus recognizes Rosalind not only as the Duke's heir, but also as a political force to be reckoned with. Indeed, as we find out shortly, Rosalind, like Orlando, "Speak[s] to the people," and her powerful uncle, Duke Frederick, is about to banish her as well (1.3.68).

Yet Charles's well-known response to Oliver's question about Rosalind's whereabouts also introduces the audience to her actual field of operations: "Oh, no," he replies, "for the Duke's daughter, her cousin, so loves her, being ever from their cradles bred together, that she would have followed her exile or have died to stay behind her. She is at the court, and no less beloved of her uncle than his own daughter, and never two ladies loved as they do" (1.1.79–83). From the outset, then, Celia and Rosalind are identified not only as cousins—a term, like "friend," that encompasses a wide range of relationships—but also as being *in excess* of that nomination: "bred together" from the cradle and unsurpassed in their love, "never two ladies loved as they do."<sup>16</sup> Their bond, in other words, is a public one, noted and admired by the wider society. It both countenances Rosalind's place in the court and helps to manage the costs of the enmity between the dukes.<sup>17</sup> When another member of Duke Frederick's court, the courtier Le Beau, later identifies Celia and Rosalind as women "whose loves / Are dearer than the natural bond of sisters" (1.2.218–19), he similarly highlights the extent to which their relationship exceeds conventional familial nominations and secures a special kind of fidelity.<sup>18</sup> (*The Two Noble Kinsmen's* Arcite and Palamon share a similar bond; Arcite identifies Palamon as "dearer in love than blood / And our prime cousin" [1.2.1–2]). For Celia and Rosalind, the affective and habitual intensification of their consanguinity—"dearer than the natural bond of sisters"—serves not only as a guarantor of mutual fidelity but also, as the play illustrates in myriad ways, of other kinds of rights as well. Their cousin-

<sup>16</sup> Bray singles it out as one of the kinship terms whose rich historical meanings have been lost (*Friend*, 214). Karen Robertson argues that "linkage through cousinage," particularly for women, "overlaps with the category of friend." See "Tracing Women's Connections from a Letter by Elizabeth Raleigh," in *Maids and Mistresses, Cousins and Queens*, 149–64, esp. 160. See also n. 34 below.

<sup>17</sup> Bray defines countenance as "the *appearance* of friendship to the public eye that was itself a kind of currency that could be turned to advantage, when others sought to make use of it for themselves" (*Friend*, 54).

<sup>18</sup> For a comparable claim, see Proverbs 18:24: "A man that hathe friends, oght to shew him self friendly: for a friend is nerer then a brother." All citations from the Bible are from the *Geneva Bible. A Facsimile of the 1560 Edition*, ed. Lloyd E. Berry (Peabody, MA: Hedrickson, 2007), cited parenthetically.

ship is thus both structural and idiosyncratic—a socially and legally recognizable category (they are the daughters of brothers) that is nonetheless specific to the distinct material circumstances in which they live and the quality of affection they share with one another: “dearer in love than blood.”<sup>19</sup>

Celia’s first line in the play perfectly encapsulates the nature of their relationship: “I pray thee, Rosalind, *sweet my coz*, be merry” (1.2.1, emphasis added). As Jeffrey Masten has recently argued, the term “sweet,” which the cousins use to refer to each other throughout the play, almost always marks the homoerotic in Shakespeare’s work.<sup>20</sup> “Coz,” I want to argue, carries a similar erotic valence. In addition to its strict familial sense, “cousin” was used as a term of intimacy, friendship, and familiarity more generally.<sup>21</sup> Its diminutive, “coz,” often functions in early modern comedies as a kind of erotic condensation of such intimacy. In Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton’s *Honest Whore*, for example, Viola invites her brother Fustigo to “Call me your love, your ingle, your cousin,” in order to fool her husband, and Fustigo, for his part, chooses “cousin, or rather coz” because it is a “gulling word” used by sexually manipulative women—“it’s a common thing to call ‘coz,’ and ningle nowadays all the world over” (he too calls Viola his “sweet coz”).<sup>22</sup> Celia’s use of this term to refer to Rosalind thus hints at the erotic as well as the affectionate nature of their bond. Rosalind answers that she cannot be merry unless Celia “could teach [her] to forget a banished father,” and Celia, in turn, responds, “Herein I see thou lov’st me not with the full weight that I love thee” (ll. 3–4, 6–7). As Juliet Dusinberre suggests in her edition of the play, Celia’s use of the familiar “thou” in her response underlines her devotion to, and “in-group membership” with, Rosalind.<sup>23</sup> Despite her

<sup>19</sup> *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford UP, March 2018), s.v. “cousin, n.,” 2a. In *Measure for Measure*, when Isabella identifies Juliet as her cousin, Lucio wonders at her nomination (“Is she your cousin?”), and she replies, “Adoptedly, as school-maids change their names / By vain, though apt, affection” (1.4.48–49). On the crucial role of place in same-sex eroticism, see Stephen Guy-Bray, *Homoerotic Space: The Poetics of Loss in Renaissance Literature* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2002).

<sup>20</sup> Jeffrey Masten, *Queer Philologies: Sex, Language, and Affect in Shakespeare’s Time* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2016), 72.

<sup>21</sup> *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford UP, March 2018), s.v. “cousin, n.,” 5.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton, *The Honest Whore, Parts One and Two*, ed. Nick de Somogyi (London: Nick Hern Books, 1998), sc. 2, p. 14; and sc. 7, p. 49. In scene 7, Fustigo comes to their shop and calls for his “Sweet coz,” claiming that they had “good sport” “after candlelight” the previous evening (p. 48). Florio defines “to ningle” as “wantonly to dally with [boys] against nature”; see *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford UP, June 2018), s.v. “ningle, v.” Hero calls Beatrice “good coz,” (*Much Ado about Nothing*, 3.5.85), and Arcite addresses Palamon with a plaintive “My coz, my coz” (*Two Noble Kinsmen*, 3.1.58).

<sup>23</sup> *As You Like It*, ed. Juliette Dusinberre, Arden Shakespeare Third Series (London: Thomson Learning, 2006), 160n8. Dusinberre credits this insight to Clara Calvo, “In Defence of Celia: Discourse Analysis and Women’s Discourse in *As You Like It*,” *Essays and Studies* 47 (1994): 91–115, esp. 109.

status as a (reigning) duke's heir, that is, Celia insists on her parity, as well as her intimacy, with her disinherited cousin.

While Celia's response registers both the intensity, or "full weight," of her affection for Rosalind and her anxiety about a possible imbalance in their relationship, it also features a remarkable statement about patriarchal transferability. "If my uncle," she tells Rosalind, "[. . .] had banished thy uncle, the Duke my father, so thou hadst been still with me, I could have taught my love to take thy father for mine" (ll. 7–9). Celia suggests that as cousins, particularly as ones who love each other the way they do, she and Rosalind could (rather chiasmatically) swap uncle for father. She, for her part, could love Rosalind's father as her "own." When Rosalind again fails to understand—"Well, I will forget the condition of *my* estate," she tells her cousin, "to rejoice in *yours*" (ll. 11–12, emphasis added)—Celia once more insists on their interdependence: "You know my father hath no child but I, nor none is like to have. And truly, when he dies, thou shalt be his heir, for what he hath taken away from thy father perforce I will render thee again in affection" (ll. 13–15). Celia identifies herself as her father's heir—"my father hath no child but I"—but she also claims that her inheritance is transferable between her and the chosen object of her "affection," even that it is theirs to share. Celia's love for Rosalind thus functions as a guarantor even more powerful than their consanguinity, a promissory note of security and succession: what her own father "hath taken away" from Rosalind's father "perforce," Celia vows to return in "affection." Rather than simply offering Rosalind affection in *place of* her inheritance, that is, Celia vows to make her an heir: "By mine honor, I will, *and when I break that oath*, let me turn monster" (ll. 15–16, emphasis added). Indeed, Celia follows this vow with another attestation of "sweet" love: "Therefore, my sweet Rose," she says, "my dear Rose, be merry" (l. 17).

In Shakespeare's England, "cousin" could refer to a collateral relative more distant than a sibling, and, as we have seen, to an intimate more generally. Legally, however, "cousin" often referred to "the next of kin."<sup>24</sup> As such, the term played a notable role in early modern inheritance practices (and disputes). When Richard attempts to goad his cousin Bolingbroke into usurping him openly in *Richard II*, he suggests that the crown might be a shared inheritance: "Here, cousin," he tells him, "seize the crown. Here, cousin, / On this side my hand, on that side thine" (4.1.175–76). And in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, Palamon

<sup>24</sup> *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford UP, March 2018), s.v. "cousin, n.," 1b. This is the second definition for "cousin" in the *OED*: "In legal language formerly often applied to the next of kin, or the person to whom one is next of kin, including direct ancestors and descendants more remote than parents and children. (Here taken as = Latin *consanguineus*.)" The first definition is "A collateral relative more distant than a brother or sister; a kinsman or kinswoman, a relative; formerly very frequently applied to a nephew or niece."



reminds his “aunt’s son” Arcite that their blood is “mutual” (3.6.94, 95); that their fortunes are “twined together” (2.2.64); and that they are one another’s “heir” (“I am your heir and you are mine” [l. 83]). “Cousin” thus had economic as well as familial and erotic resonances. Celia’s use of “sweet coz” may also glance at the relationship between “cousin” and “cozen” in order to mitigate or eschew any possible contentiousness in their shared inheritance. As Alan Stewart has pointed out, “cousinage” could refer to “the writ whereby a legal claim for land is made by one claiming to be a cousin to the deceased.”<sup>25</sup> In making her cousin an heir by binding “oath,” Celia thus ensures the continuation of their bond and the security of their family patrimony from fraud or abuse. Early modern inheritance practices did favor blood relatives—including female ones—over marital ones.<sup>26</sup> Intensified by vows of loyalty, and managed through careful recalibrations of the balance of power between them, Celia and Rosalind’s shared inheritance plays as important a role in *As You Like It* as that of the brothers de Boys.<sup>27</sup>

When Celia bids her “sweet Rose” to be merry for the second time, Rosalind seems to capitulate: “From henceforth I will, coz, and devise sports” (1.2.18). Yet the “sports” she devises are erotic: “Let me see,” she says speculatively, “what think you of falling in love?” (ll. 18–19). Celia responds to Rosalind’s question by observing the challenge that heteroerotic or cross-sex desire posed for what Laurie Shannon has called a “homonormative” society: one based on the habituated naturalness and parity of same-sex relationships.<sup>28</sup> “Marry, I

<sup>25</sup> Alan Stewart, “Near Akin’: The Trials of Friendship in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*,” in *Shakespeare’s Late Plays: New Readings*, ed. Jennifer Richards and James Knowles (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1999), 57–71, esp. 63. On the etymological connection between cousin and cozen, see *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford UP, March 2018), s.v. “cousin, n.,” 8a. As Stewart points out, “The ‘root of ‘cozening’ or deceit, is the cozeners’ claim to be his victim’s long-lost kin” (63). He notes that that Arcite and Palamon refer to themselves in kinship terms thirty-eight times in the play (63).

<sup>26</sup> For early modern families’ favoring of consanguineous over affinal inheritance, see R. W. Hoyle, “The Land-Family Bond in England,” *Past and Present* 146 (1995): 151–73. As a widow, Joan Thynne of Longleat chose her daughters over her elder sons to be the executors of her will. Her daughters took “a prominent role, with their mother, in management of their father’s Northamptonshire estate”; see Alison Wall, “Elizabethan Precept and Feminist Practice: The Thynne Family of Longleat,” *History* 75.243 (1990): 23–38, esp. 37. David Cressy discusses cousins in “Kinship and Kin Interaction in Early Modern England,” *Past and Present* 113 (1986): 38–69, esp. 46–47, 51, 52, 66. See also Craig Muldrew, “A Mutual Assent of her Mind? Women, Debt, Litigation and Contract in Early Modern England,” *History Workshop Journal* 55 (2003): 47–71.

<sup>27</sup> “Brother” appears forty-five times in the play, “son” fourteen, “daughter” nineteen, “sister” twelve, and “coz” or “cousin” twenty-three.

<sup>28</sup> Laurie Shannon, “Nature’s Bias: Renaissance Homonormativity and Elizabethan Comic Likeness,” *Modern Philology* 98.2 (2000): 183–210. More recently, Kathryn Schwarz has argued that Shakespeare’s comedies “present marriage as an extreme sexual practice”; see “Comedies End in Marriage,” 284.

prithe, do," she tells Rosalind, "to make sport withal. *But love no man in good earnest*, nor no further in sport neither than with safety of a pure blush thou mayst in honor come off again" (ll. 20–22, emphasis added). When framed within the context of cross-sex desire, "falling in love," as its perilous grammar suggests, carried risks of an entirely different order from the love between cousins "bred together" from the cradle and "dearer than sisters." Given the relationship between female same-sex bonds and resistance to male abuse, moreover, female cousins could play a key role in keeping one another from being "cozened."<sup>29</sup> In *Much Ado about Nothing*, for example, Beatrice, who had been Hero's "bedfellow" for a full year before the night in which she was absent and her cousin "belied," serves precisely this role in defending her cousin from male perfidy (4.1.144–47).<sup>30</sup>

Critics often read Celia's insistence that Rosalind "love no man in good earnest" as a sign of her (not-fully-reciprocated) love for Rosalind, or of her resistance to losing her to a man.<sup>31</sup> Yet in seeking to protect Rosalind from male exploitation, Celia is working in the service of female cousinship and female chastity more broadly, particularly with respect to the bond she shares *with* Rosalind. As critics have argued for some time now, early modern women often made such vows with one another.<sup>32</sup> Like male friendship, chaste bonds between women were exemplary forms of loyalty and integrity. In their refusal of any deference to a sovereign "lord," they not only solidified women's connections with one another but also frequently served as limits on abuse and tyranny.<sup>33</sup> Celia and Rosalind's bond functions in precisely this way throughout the play, enabling them to resist and offer sharp-eyed critical commentary on the unfettered male power effected by a "tyrant Duke" (Frederick) and a "tyrant brother" (Oliver) (1.2.231). Rehailing Rosalind into chastity (so that she might "in honor come off again"), Celia serves both her family's interests and her own, affirming

<sup>29</sup> Laurie Shannon, *Sovereign Amity: Figures of Friendship in Shakespearean Contexts* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2002), passim.

<sup>30</sup> Among other things, Beatrice refuses to be "friends" with Benedict unless he fight her enemy. "Is Claudio thine enemy?" Benedict asks, and she replies, "Is 'a not approved in the height a villain that hath slandered, scorned, dishonored my kinswoman?" (4.1.296–98). And later: "Sweet Hero! She is wronged" (l. 306).

<sup>31</sup> See, for example, Valerie Rohy's essay on the play in *Shakespeareer*. She accepts the narrative of loss: "I was more like Celia, who, after all, likes Rosalind long after her fickle friend starts liking a likely young man." See "Fortune's Turn," in *Shakespeareer*, 55–61, esp. 55.

<sup>32</sup> See Traub, *Renaissance of Lesbianism*, 229–75, esp. 231; and Shannon, *Sovereign Amity*, 45–89.

<sup>33</sup> Shannon, *Sovereign Amity*, 57. Shannon quotes Hermia's great speech in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by way of illustration: "So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord, / Ere I will yield my virgin patent up / Unto his lordship whose unwishèd yoke / My soul consents not to give sovereignty" (1.1.79–82).

the ethically exemplary and politically meaningful nature of avowed bonds between women, particularly those between female cousins.<sup>34</sup>

Thus, while Celia's endowment endeavors to restore balance between the two—to recalibrate, that is, for her cousin's disinheritance—Rosalind's sporting with "falling in love" threatens to throw that balance off again. Structurally, the cousins' discussion about "falling in love"—the first in a long series of debates on women, men, and marriage that dominates the rest of the play—occurs *before* Orlando even enters their field of vision. The relationship between same-sex and cross-sex relationships in the play is thus less supercessionary or naturalized than a concern continually subject to debate and negotiation. The oaths that created complex webs of obligation and kinship between early modern people were also the means by which they navigated threats to those bonds and thus to their place in society. "Fortune," as Celia points out, does not "bestow[]" "her gifts" "equally," especially not, as Rosalind adds, "to women" (ll. 24–25, 27–28). As with establishing parity in marriage, ensuring equal benefits for women in marriage thus required a great deal of work.

The cousins first meet Orlando when they are invited to observe his wrestling match with Charles. While they initially discourage him from fighting, they nonetheless offer him their support when he proceeds. "The little strength that I have," Rosalind tells him, "I would it were with you," and Celia quickly backs her up: "And mine, to eke out hers" (ll. 145–46). During the fight itself, the cousins offer similarly paired statements of support:

ROSALIND Now Hercules be thy speed, young man!  
 CELIA I would I were invisible, to catch the strong fellow by the leg.  
 ROSALIND Oh, excellent young man!  
 CELIA If I had a thunderbolt in mine eye, I can tell who should down.  
 (ll. 157–60)

The cousins respond as sharers in Orlando's interest, rather mytho-heroically "eke[ing] out" one another's desires to strengthen his performance. The formal balance in their commentary on the wrestling match—Susan Carlson rather ingeniously calls it "choric"—reflects their continual recalibration of their

<sup>34</sup> In *Much Ado about Nothing*, Hero claims that she "will do any modest office [. . .] to help [her] cousin to a good husband" (2.1.331–32), and her cousin Beatrice, for her part, revolts when her "cousin is belied." As Karen Robertson has shown, Elizabeth Raleigh's women cousins—many of whom had themselves dealt with contentions over inheritance—provided her primary support as she fought for the inheritance rights of her husband, Sir Walter Raleigh. Robertson argues that the list of names on the back of Lady Raleigh's petitionary letter suggests that women were aware of and could turn to kinship alliances constructed along the female line. For Robertson, this is one of the ways in which the linkages of cousinage overlapped with Bray's category of "the friend"; see "Tracing Women's Connections," 160.

dynamic with one another.<sup>35</sup>

When Orlando wins the match, Celia invites her “Gentle cousin” to join her in congratulating Orlando, telling him that if he keeps his “promises in love” as well as he “exceeded [his] promise” in wrestling, his “mistress should be happy” (ll. 181, 185–87). Rosalind, however, goes further in her accolades, placing a chain around Orlando’s neck. “Wear this for me,” she tells him, “one out of suits with fortune, / *That could give more, but that her hand lacks means*” (ll. 188–89, emphasis added). Citing noble approval for venturous exploits, as well as the conferring of an order or office, Rosalind’s gift indicates that she too sees herself as an heir and as the agent of her own vows. While Celia imagines Orlando’s “promises” to a future “mistress,” Rosalind makes her own. Her gift signifies her oath-making and rights-conferring status and hints at the property rights she might one day be able to bestow on Orlando. Her “hand,” that is, only “lacks means” temporarily. And the woman who has vowed to ensure her those means in the future is standing right by her side.

Immediately after Rosalind gives Orlando her chain, she turns from him to Celia. “Shall we go, coz?” she asks, balancing, in both plot and dialogue, her new bond with Orlando with her extant bond with her cousin (l. 190, emphasis added). This dynamic recurs again almost immediately. After Rosalind calls Orlando back to tell him that he has “wrestled well and overthrown / More than [his] enemies,” Celia this time asks Rosalind, “Will you go, coz?” (ll. 196–97, 198). Rather than a sign of her dawning recognition that Rosalind’s turn to the heteroerotic necessarily entails a turn away from her, Celia’s invitation to her “coz” functions in the same way Rosalind’s does: as an assertion of the same-sex and consanguineous bond in relation to the cross-sex and (potentially) affinal one.<sup>36</sup> As they do throughout the play, moreover, the cousins leave the scene together.

When they are subsequently alone together, Celia and Rosalind frequently call each other “cousin” as they joke about Rosalind’s “child’s father,” and “Hem[ing] . . . away” what Celia calls the “burrs” of Rosalind’s “holiday foolery” (1.3.8, 13, 10). When Rosalind puns on “hem”—“I would try, if I could cry ‘hem’ and have him” (l. 14)—Celia seems to recognize that the tenor of Rosalind’s sporting with “falling in love” has changed. “Come, come,” she says, “wrestle with thy affections” (l. 15). Now speaking in what she calls “good earnest,” she asks

<sup>35</sup> Susan Carlson, “Women in *As You Like It*: Community, Change, and Choice,” *Essays in Literature* 14.2 (1987): 151–69, esp. 160.

<sup>36</sup> Orlando also claims that he has been “overthrown” (l. 202) by Rosalind, indicating men’s similar concern with the balance of power between future marriage partners. Celia refers to the chain again later, describing Orlando to Rosalind as a man with “a chain that you once wore about his neck” (3.2.157).

Rosalind if it's possible that "on such a sudden, you should fall into so strong a liking with old Sir Rowland's youngest son?" (ll. 18–20). Celia's use of the more formal "you" here suggests her disciplinary intentions, as does her pointed reference to Orlando as a "youngest," and thus least financially desirable, son. When Rosalind suggests that a match with Orlando has a certain logic—"my father loved his father dearly"—Celia questions whether the amity between men of one generation necessarily carries over into the next: "Doth it therefore ensue," she asks, "that you should love his son dearly?" (ll. 21, 22).<sup>37</sup> The cousins' carefully navigated parity is thus threatened less by the heteroerotic per se than by the specters of change and economic disparity. Rosalind endeavors to restore the balance between them by enlisting Celia on her side, asking her to "love [Orlando] because" she does (l. 27). (Beatrice and Hero are enjoined to make similar leaps of faith in *Much Ado about Nothing*.) Propertied women and their families considered future marital partners in terms of both what they would bring to the marriage and what they would get out of it. If, as the play makes clear from the outset, what Orlando would get from the marriage belongs to Celia as well as to Rosalind, then bringing Celia's affection into line with her own is crucial not only to Rosalind's happiness but also to her future security. Bred together from the cradle and bound together by oath, Celia and Rosalind work to recalibrate their relationship at the same time as they start to make the latter's future marriage, in Shannon's phrase, "thinkable in parity terms."<sup>38</sup>

## II. "FOR WHITHER THOU GOEST, I WIL GO"

Thus, when Duke Frederick banishes Rosalind as a "traitor[]" (l. 41), we should not be surprised that Celia insists on sharing her status. "If she be a traitor," she tells her father,

Why, so am I. We still have slept together,  
Rose at an instant, learned, played, eat together,  
And wheresoe'er we went, like Juno's swans  
Still we went coupled and inseparable.

(ll. 61–65)

As critics have long noted, Celia's description of her "coupled and inseparable" relationship with Rosalind sounds a lot like the description of a mar-

<sup>37</sup> Bray argues that monuments to the dead expressed "the friendship that linked the living with the dead and provided a model for the friendship that ought to subsist between the living." He continues, "The obligations of friendship were not cancelled by death." See *Friend*, 71, 72.

<sup>38</sup> "The ideological work of much comedy, then, is less to celebrate or to critique marriage and its approach than to find a means to make it plausible or even thinkable in parity terms." See Shannon, "Nature's Bias," 187.

riage; it even uses the language of the marriage ceremony.<sup>39</sup> Mario DiGangi has further pointed out that Celia's allusions to Juno, and to eating and sleeping "together," resonate with the wedding song that closes the play: "Wedding is great Juno's crown, / O blessed bond of board and bed!" (5.4.123–24). Swans, moreover, were associated with Venus, not Juno, and the image of the cousins coupled "like Juno's swans" thus yokes the goddesses of sexuality and marriage into one powerful image of avowed female same-sex love.<sup>40</sup> Yet sharing "bed and board" was also the language of sworn friendship—it too carried a publicly recognized dimension and endeavored, as it does here, to mitigate the instability of fortune. Celia and Rosalind's bond is thus less marriage-like than a form of sworn kinship that carries a similarly potent social legibility and meaning.

With some sense of the shared economy between his daughter and her cousin, Duke Frederick attempts to divide and conquer, telling Celia that Rosalind "robs" her of her "name," and endeavoring to separate them for good (1.3.69). Celia, however, swears that she "cannot live out of [Rosalind's] company," and continues to recalibrate their relationship in the face of this latest blow of fortune: "be not thou more grieved than I am," she commands her cousin (ll. 75, 81). Rosalind's insistence on her singular status, particularly that she alone has been banished, solicits Celia's incensed demurral:

Rosalind lacks, then, the love  
Which teacheth thee that thou and I am one.  
Shall we be sundered? Shall we part, sweet girl?  
No let my father seek another heir.

(ll. 85–88)

Celia's reassertion of her inseparability from her cousin directly cites the marriage ceremony in *The Book of Common Prayer*, which centers on the priest joining the couple's "right hands together" and saying "Those whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."<sup>41</sup> Yet she also invokes one of the risk-navigating reasons for marriage outlined in the ceremony—"the help and comfort that one ought to have with the other, both in prosperity and adversity"—and one of its vows: "to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse for richer, for poorer, in sickness, and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us depart [separate]."<sup>42</sup> Celia's willingness to give up her inheritance for Rosalind—"let my father seek another heir"—simultaneously reminds us of her status *as* heir

<sup>39</sup> See, for example, Traub, *Renaissance of Lesbianism*, 171–72.

<sup>40</sup> DiGangi, *Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama*, 52–53.

<sup>41</sup> "The Form of Solemnization of Matrimony," *The Book of Common Prayer*, ed. John E. Booty (Charlottesville: U of Virginia P, 1976), 293.

<sup>42</sup> *Book of Common Prayer*, 292.

and attests to the thoroughness of her vow to Rosalind: a bond, like marriage, that will endure in “adversity” as well as “prosperity,” “till death us depart.”

Rather than being “sundered,” then, Celia invites Rosalind to “devise with me how we may fly, / Whither to go, and what to bear with us” (ll. 89–90). “[D]o not seek to take your change upon you,” she tells her, “To bear your griefs yourself and leave me out; / For, by this heaven, now at our sorrows pale, / Say what thou canst, I’ll go along with thee” (ll. 91–94). Rosalind’s somewhat stunned response, “Why, whither shall we go?” (l. 95) is another capitulation to Celia’s insistence on the unsundered nature of their spiritually avowed “we.” But it also highlights the scene’s particularly trenchant biblical allusion. Celia’s “Say what thou canst, I’ll go along with thee,” echoes Ruth’s famous words to Naomi in the Book of Ruth: “For whither thou goest, I wil go” (1:16).<sup>43</sup> In this story, after the death of her sons in Moab, the Israelite exile Naomi tells her Moabite daughters-in-law that she is returning home and that they should go their separate ways. One of them, however, demurs: “Intreat me not to leave thee,” Ruth tells Naomi, “nor to departe from thee: for whither thou goest, I wil go: and where thou dwellest, I wil dwel: thy people *shalbe* my people, and thy God my God. Where you dyest, wil I dye, and there wil I be buried, the Lord do so to me & more also, if *oght* but death departe thee & me” (1:16–17).<sup>44</sup> Celia’s vow to Rosalind shares a great deal with Ruth’s vow to Naomi, including a refusal of separation, a vision of familial engrafting (“thy people *shalbe* my people”), and a vow to the death.

For Renaissance commentators, the relationship between Ruth and Naomi symbolized precisely those webs of obligation forged by the multiple forms of ritual kinship that Bray evokes so eloquently in *The Friend*. Thomas Bentley’s *Fift lampe of virginitie* (1582), for example, uses the story of Ruth and Naomi to reject the idea that a new relationship necessarily imperils an extant one: “as though friendship were impaired by the multitude of freends, when rather in troth, it is the more increased, and strengthened by alliance and marriage.”<sup>45</sup> A

<sup>43</sup> Juliet Dusinberre is the only modern editor who notes this allusion.

<sup>44</sup> As Phyllis Tribble put it in 1986, “One female has chosen another female in a world where life depends upon men. There is no more radical decision in all the memories of Israel”; *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 173. See also Rebecca Alpert, “Finding Our Past: A Lesbian Interpretation of the Book of Ruth,” in *Reading Ruth: Contemporary Women Reclaim a Sacred Story*, ed. Judith A. Kates and Gail Twersky Reimer (New York: Ballantine Books, 1994). For an example of near contemporary women who made similar vows, see Rachel Warburton, “‘The Lord hath joined us together, and wo be to them that should part us’: Katharine Evans and Sarah Cheevers as Traveling Friends,” *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, 47.4 (2005): 402–24. As Evans said of Cheevers, “The Lord hath joined us together, and wo be to them that should part us. I said, I rather chuse to dye there with my friend, than to part from her” (404).

<sup>45</sup> *The fift lampe of virginitie conteining sundrie forms of christian praiers and meditations, to be used onlie of and for all sorts and degrees of women* (London, 1582), 41.

contemporary sermon by John Carpenter similarly evokes Ruth and Naomi's relationship as a sign that "the godly are to ioyne together together in loue." Not only did Jesus provide such a pattern for his followers, commanding "his Disciples to loue together, as he had loued them," but also same-sex bonds were the ideal forms of such love: "heere is the loue of Daudid to Ionathas," Carpenter writes, "of Ruth to Naomi, of Paul to Barnabas, of Christ to John."<sup>46</sup> For Carpenter, avowed friendship between women carried the same spiritual and ethical dimensions as that between men, and both were the very basis of Christian fellowship.<sup>47</sup> Vows between two women, then, do not simply cite the marriage ceremony; they provide one of the grounding biblical examples for it. The vow that Ruth—and Celia after her—makes is *itself* a form of ritualized kinship rather than merely an imitation of one. As Bray notes, "a 'wed' in Middle English was a pledge or a covenant made before witnesses human and divine"—a key term of the binding oaths of premodern society, and not reducible to marriage.<sup>48</sup>

The play's engagement with the Book of Ruth extends far beyond its famously resonant same-sex vow. When Rosalind asks Celia "whither shall we go?" Celia responds: "To seek my uncle in the Forest of Arden" (1.3.95,96). In the Book of Ruth, Naomi and Ruth set off on a similar uncle-seeking enterprise in the fields of Israel. Both pairs of women also take measures to safeguard their chastity during their journeys. Celia and Rosalind disguise themselves so they can "pass along / And never stir assailants" (ll. 102–3), and

<sup>46</sup> John Carpenter, *Remember Lots wife Two godly and fruitfull sermons verie conuenient for this our time* (London, 1588), sig. E8v, Fr.

<sup>47</sup> The vows exchanged between Naomi and Ruth were also frequently used in marriage ceremonies to underscore the covenantal nature of marriage. To this day, LGBTQ Christians cite them as a sign of the biblical approbation of same-sex relationships. The website [wouldjesusdiscriminate](#) notes that precisely "the same Hebrew word [*dabaq*, or 'cleave'] that is used in Genesis 2:24 to describe how Adam felt about Eve (and how spouses are supposed to feel toward each other) is used in Ruth 1:14 to describe how Ruth felt about Naomi." ("Therefore shal man leave his father and his mother, and shal cleave to his wife, and they shalbe one flesh" [Genesis 2:24]; "Ruth clave unto [Naomi]" [Book of Ruth 1:14]). The authors continue, "The Bible is clear. Here we have two women who made vows, lived together for life, loved each other deeply, adopted each other's extended families as their own, and relied on each other for sustenance—as do many lesbian women today. Instead of condemning these relationships, the Bible celebrates them, giving them their own book in Scripture." The [jesusinlove blogspot](#) similarly points out that Ruth's famous vows to Naomi are often used in weddings, both heterosexual as well as same-sex. The scholar Peter Hawkins notes that "the text has become a standard choice for same-sex unions and commitment ceremonies, as well as a biblical model for human love that flourishes outside the framework of patriarchy. In this light, the book of Ruth is seen (like the Song of Songs) as celebrating a deep 'unconventional' love that stands apart from the reproductive goals of heterosexual marriage." See "Ruth amid the Gentiles," in *Scrolls of Love: Ruth and the Song of Songs*, ed. Lesleigh Cushing Stahlberg and Peter S. Hawkins (New York: Fordham UP 2006), 75–86, esp. 82.

<sup>48</sup> Bray, *Friend*, 29.



Naomi is careful to send Ruth to work in the fields with other “maidens” (2:8).<sup>49</sup> Even Celia’s chosen name, “Aliena,” shares an affinity with Ruth’s status as a “stranger” among the Israelites. Naomi ultimately arranges a marriage for Ruth in Israel, engrafting her daughter-in-law to her “affinitie” through Ruth’s vows to Naomi’s kinsman Boaz, a form of quasi-levirate marriage.<sup>50</sup> “If,” as Edward L. Greenstein argues, “making up Naomi’s loss is indeed the story’s chief concern,” then the Book of Ruth highlights the benefits that can accrue to society through the collaboration of women.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, Ellen F. Davis sees Ruth and Naomi’s relationship as the exemplification of *hesed*, a kind of personal devotion that “binds covenant partners in mutual devotion and the practical actions proceeding from that devotion.”<sup>52</sup> *Hesed*, as another critic puts it, “defeats legalism.”<sup>53</sup>

It is thus not surprising that Ruth and Naomi’s cooperation in the face of “male-oriented” and male-dominated social structures is precisely the force that builds up the true house of Israel.<sup>54</sup> Everyone in Bethlehem considers the child that results from Ruth and Boaz’s union to be Naomi’s: “Naomi toke the

<sup>49</sup> Ludwig Lavater glosses this detail as a response to the specter of rape: “NAOMIE had rather her daughter in-law should stay at home: but because necessitie droue her to runne into the fieldes, shée commaundeth her to ioynе her selfe in companie with mayds not with men.” See *The book of Ruth expounded in twenty eight sermons, by Levves Lauaterus of Tygurine* (London, 1586), fol. 88r.

<sup>50</sup> On the terms Naomi uses for Ruth related to levirate marriage (the practice of marrying a widow to her dead husband’s brother [or kin]) and more, see Nehama Aschenasy, “The Book of Ruth as Comedy: Classical and Modern Perspectives,” in *Scrolls of Love*, 31–44, esp. 40. For those who see the relations between Naomi and Ruth as more fraught with tension, see Danna Nolan Fewell and David Miller Gunn, *Compromising Redemption: Relating Characters in the Book of Ruth* (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990). Fewell and Gunn suggest that Naomi’s silence in response to Ruth’s vow (Book of Ruth 1:18) is a sign of her anxiety about a Moabite menacing her future. See also Jennifer L. Koosed, *Gleaning Ruth: A Biblical Heroine and Her Afterlives* (Columbia: U of South Carolina P, 2011). Koosed notes the ways in which Ruth’s relationship with Naomi is marked by ambiguity, tension, and play. In her reading, the two women engage in a “verbal sparring match” (63) and “wrestl[e] with one another” (62).

<sup>51</sup> Edward L. Greenstein, “Reading Strategies and the Story of Ruth,” in *Women in the Hebrew Bible: A Reader*, ed. Alice Bach (New York: Routledge, 1999), 216.

<sup>52</sup> Ellen F. Davis, “Beginning with Ruth,” in *Scrolls of Love*, 9–19, 11. Katharine Sakenfeld explains that *hesed* is “always requested and carried out within the heart of some publicly identifiable relationship.” Quoted in Laurel Bollinger, “Models for Female Loyalty: The Biblical Ruth in Jeanette Winterson’s *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*,” *Tulsa Studies in Women’s Literature*, 13.2 (1994): 363–80, esp. 370. Its best-known expression is between David and Jonathan.

<sup>53</sup> André Lacocque, “Subverting the Biblical World: Sociology and Politics in the Book of Ruth,” in *Scrolls of Love*, 20–30, esp. 27.

<sup>54</sup> On “male-oriented social structures,” see Arie Troost, “Elisabeth and Mary—Naomi and Ruth: Gender-Response Criticism in Luke 1–2,” in *A Feminist Companion to the Hebrew Bible in the New Testament*, ed. Athalya Brenner (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 159–96, esp. 192.

childe, and layed it in her lap, and became nource unto it. And *the women* her neighbours gave it a name, saying. There is a childe borne to Naomi, and called the name thereof Obed: the same was the father of Ishai, the father of David" (4:16–17).<sup>55</sup> Bound by same-sex as well as marital vows, Ruth and Naomi ensure not only the continuation (and deeper material security) of their relationship with one another but also of the future of Israel, and, for Christians after them, of the Christian faith as well. Celia and Rosalind's bond functions similarly in the familial and dynastic world of *As You Like It*; they too share what Arie Troost describes as Ruth and Naomi's "narrative reciprocity" and, as we will see at the end of the play, they too make use of quasi-levirate marriage.<sup>56</sup>

Early moderns also saw Ruth and Naomi's experience in the fields of Israel as a parable of fortune's turn. A contemporary sermon focuses on "the change of the estate of those women &c. namely how God had made them rich again, whom he had throwne down into great pouertie."<sup>57</sup> Cross-dressing as *Aliena* and *Ganymede*, Celia and Rosalind experience a similar change of fortune in the forest of Arden. The courtier *Amiens* describes the forest as a place where one can translate "the stubbornness of fortune" into something else, whether into the homosocial life of Duke Senior's "co-mates and brothers in exile" (2.1.19, 1), or, as we see shortly, into women's co-ownership of property. The anticourt sentiment rife in the forest highlights the distinctions between the remade social worlds in Arden and those at court, where "Most friendship is feigning," and most "benefits"—the Renaissance language of reciprocal obligation—"forgot" (2.7.181, 186). Indeed, while Celia and Rosalind are making their way in Arden, Duke Frederick is planning to "seize" Oliver's "house and lands" for himself (3.1.10, 17).

<sup>55</sup> As Troost puts it, in the Book of Ruth 4:14 "Naomi and Ruth emerge as a single mother." See "Elisabeth and Mary," 194.

<sup>56</sup> Troost uses the terms "narratological 'merging,'" "narrative reciprocity," and "narrative fusion." See "Elisabeth and Mary," 176, 178, 179. He cites Alfred Resch's argument that Ruth is a primary intertext for Luke 1–2, in which Elizabeth and Mary share a similar coparenting intimacy. Both are family histories about the house of David, from which the Messiah went forth (191). In "Ruth amid the Gentiles," Peter Hawkins similarly points out that "David's great-grandmother made him a descendant of Gentiles as well as of the Chosen People. This fact did not escape Christian notice. At the very beginning of the Gospel of Matthew, and thus of the New Testament itself, Ruth makes her sole appearance in Christian Scripture as one of the Hebrew matriarchs in Jesus' family tree" (76). Hawkins additionally observes that "John Chrystosom also treats Ruth as a patron of those who are children of Abraham not after the flesh but according to the spirit" (79).

<sup>57</sup> *The book of Ruth expounded in twenty eight sermons*, fol. 3v. "[O]ftentimes their afflictions are chaunged into a notable estate: yea, euen in this life" (fol. 4v). Aschkenasy sees the Book of Ruth as a comedy of sorts, featuring people in conflict with their circumstances, who, through deception of the patriarch, keep their family alive and effect a "reversal of fortune." See "The Book of Ruth as Comedy," 32, 34.

Unlike Naomi and Ruth, however, who initially must glean barley that reapers have left behind, Celia and Rosalind come to their new home out of fortune, but, nonetheless, with “jewels” and “wealth together” (1.3.123). In short order, they give the shepherd Corin “gold” to buy “the cottage, pasture, and the flock” from his churlish master, and set up a household in the forest (2.4.90, 82). As Will Fisher has argued, when Rosalind/Ganymede commands Corin to pay for the cottage “of us,” her formulation indicates not only that the two women purchase the land with their own funds, but also that they have formed an economic unit.<sup>58</sup> In many ways, Celia and Rosalind’s house holding in Arden is an instantiation of the joint property ownership and shared house holding to which they allude and for which they imagine a future throughout the play. Other characters also see them as joint owners of their property. Corin, for example, identifies Ganymede as “my new mistress’s brother” (3.2.70), and Oliver later asks Aliena if she is “The owner of the house I did inquire for,” to which she responds, as Fisher points out, “we are” (4.3.87–88, emphasis added).<sup>59</sup>

The play also alludes to women’s property rights during an exchange between Ganymede and Orlando when the latter arrives late to court Ganymede, who has agreed to play the part of Orlando’s missing beloved Rosalind. “Rosalind” tells Orlando that they would rather be wooed by a snail, “for though he comes slowly, he carries his house on his head—a better jointure, I think, than you make a woman” (4.1.39–40). By highlighting the importance of jointure, the set of property rights given to a woman as part of a marital contract, “Rosalind” reminds Orlando that marriage is a contract in which *both* partners have property rights. (The exchange also resonates with Celia’s earlier crack about Orlando’s status as “the youngest son” of Sir Rowland de Boys, and with Ganymede’s joke about him having “a younger brother’s revenue”—that is, not very much—in his “beard” [3.2.312].) Property rights, in other words, are very much on the cousins’ minds.

<sup>58</sup> Will Fisher, “Home Alone: The Place of Women’s Homoerotic Desire in Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*,” in *Feminisms and Early Modern Texts: Essays for Phyllis Rackin*, ed. Rebecca Ann Bach and Gwynne Kennedy (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna UP, 2010), 99–118, esp. 106. The First Folio consistently refers to Rosalind and Celia, rather than to Ganymede and Aliena, in both speech indications and stage directions. For clarity’s sake, I will refer to Rosalind as Ganymede in Arden, and as “Rosalind” when playing Ganymede playing Rosalind. As Ganymede is consistently presented as a gender-ambiguous “fair youth,” I will also use “they” pronouns in order to keep the gender play alive. While I don’t have room to discuss it fully here, Ganymede’s “fair youth” is consistently presented as gender ambiguous, as well as erotically pleasing to both sexes. In addition to describing him as “fair,” (4.3.6), characters also use the terms “pretty” (Jaques, 4.1.1) and “Sweet” (Phoebe, 3.5.64). On first meeting Ganymede and Aliena, Oliver addresses them rather indiscriminately as “fair ones” (4.3.73). Later, he quotes someone else’s description of Ganymede as “fair / Of female favor” (ll. 83–84).

<sup>59</sup> See Fisher, “Home Alone,” 107.

Women's jointure rights in the period were often established through the active intervention of kin—particularly female kin.<sup>60</sup> If Rosalind is “loving a man in earnest,” which includes the potential of sharing what Celia calls “our wealth” (1.3.123, emphasis added), then it makes sense for the cousins to consider the economic imbalance between Orlando and Rosalind. Indeed, far beyond the explicit exchanges on the topic between the love- and woman-hating Ganymede and the Rosalind-seeking Orlando, the specter of broken or inadequately assured vows haunts the forest of Arden. The verses that Aliena reads aloud on the trees refer to “violated vows / Twixt the souls of friend and friend” (3.2.114–15); Jaques asks Orlando if he has “conned” “goldsmiths’ wives” “out of rings” (1.232); and Ganymede refers to violated vows in their very first exchange with Orlando as “Rosalind.” Time “trots hard,” “Rosalind” tells him, “with a young maid between the contract of her marriage and the day it is solemnized” (ll. 264–65). In addition to its invocation of erotic impatience, their comment is a reminder that betrothal is a perilous process, and oaths are only as good as those who make and ensure them. When, at the end of this extended flirtation between “Rosalind” and Orlando, Ganymede says, “Come, sister, will you go?” (l. 352), we should not be surprised that Aliena has been there the whole time.

### III. “A GIRL GOES BEFORE A PRIEST”

During the scene in which “Rosalind” “marries” Orlando in the forest, they enact the dynamic I have been describing: balancing one form of avowed kinship with another. When “Rosalind” asks Aliena to effect the marriage—“Come, sister, you shall be the priest and marry us.—Give me your hand, Orlando.—What do you say, sister?” (4.1.92–94)—the triangulation is substantive rather than pyrrhic. (There is a similarly triangulated wedding in *The Merchant of Venice*, in which Portia asks Antonio to [re]place her ring on Bas-

<sup>60</sup> Historians have focused on the wide range of economic resources provided for, as well as those created and shared by, married and unmarried early modern women. See Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (New York: Routledge, 1993); Froide, *Never Married*; O’Hara, *Courtship and Constraint*; O’Hara, “Ruled by my friends”; and Anastasia B. Crosswaite, “Women and Land: Aristocratic Women’s Ownership of Property in Early Modern England,” *New York University Law Review* 77 (2002): 1119–56. To take a particularly exciting example, the financial diary of Joyce Jefferies (1638–49) shows that she inherited legacies from her father, brother, stepbrother, and cousin; that she loaned money at interest; and that she played an active role in the social and financial circles of the West Midlands. She was also a benefactor for many women. Among other things, she gave her cousin and companion Eliza Acton a dowry of eight hundred pounds. See Robert Tittler, “Joyce Jefferies, Spinster, Financial Diary (1638–49),” in *Reading Early Modern Women: An Anthology of Texts in Manuscript and Print, 1550–1700*, ed. Helen Ostovich and Elizabeth Sauer (New York: Routledge, 2004), 265–71, esp. 270n13.

sanio's finger.<sup>61</sup>) When "Rosalind" pauses in the middle of the marriage ceremony they are conducting *per verba de praesenti*—"but I do take thee, Orlando, for my husband"—to say "There's a girl goes before the priest" (ll. 104–5), they draw attention to their preemption of the marital rite. (The only representative of the Church in the play is the appropriately named "Sir Oliver Mar-text.") In the church marriage ceremony, the priest speaks first and the woman follows. In contrast, "Rosalind" highlights the woman's agency ("Give me your hand, Orlando") and, by going "before the priest," her primacy. Suggesting that the *sponsalia per verba de praesenti* (increasingly frowned upon by a church seeking control over the solemnization, and monetization, of marriage) comes first, "Rosalind" asserts that it is a woman and her friends who make a marriage.<sup>62</sup>

After "Rosalind" tests Orlando's marital worthiness in this same scene and the cousins are once again alone, Celia accuses Rosalind of having "misused" her sex in her "love prate" (l. 155). Like her earlier advice to love no man "in good earnest," Celia's indictment of "Rosalind's" use of misogynist rhetoric is often read as a sign of her stronger identification with her sex and of her fear of losing Rosalind. But critics do not remark on Rosalind's response, a rather superlative invocation of their kinship: "*Oh, coz, coz, coz, my pretty little coz,*" she cries, "that thou didst know how many fathom deep I am in love!" (ll. 158–59, emphasis added). Rosalind's resumption of the joyous and affectionate nickname of the play's earlier scenes reminds the audience of her pre-Ganymede self, when she and Celia were cousins who shared bed and board and loved each other better than they loved anyone else. But her exclamation also places her newfound love for Orlando in the context of her long-term love for Celia. Rosalind does not replace Celia here—exchanging a woman and a "coz" for a man and husband—nor does she shift her loyalties from Celia to Orlando. Rather, she countenances a new bond with an extant one, consanguinity and avowed kinship with marriage, same-sex with cross-sex love.

For many critics who argue for the supercessionary and dominant nature of heterosexuality in Shakespeare's comedies, the speed with which Aliena proceeds to fall in love with Oliver is a case in point. (Oliver arrives in Arden somewhat *maritus ex machina*.) As Orlando says to his brother, "Is't possible that on so little acquaintance you should like her? That but seeing, you should love her? And loving, woo? And, wooing, she should grant?" (5.2.1–3). Ganymede describes the courtship to Orlando with similar syntactical economy: "For your brother and my sister no sooner met but they looked; no sooner looked but they loved; no sooner loved but they sighed" (ll. 25–27). The suddenness (and inappropriate-

<sup>61</sup> When resecuring her marriage to Bassanio, Portia actively involves Antonio. "Then you shall be his surety," she tells him, "give him this [ring] / And bid him keep it better than the other." Antonio complies: "Here, Lord Bassanio, swear to keep this ring" (5.1.254–56).

<sup>62</sup> On controversy about church marriage, see O'Hara, *Courtship and Constraint*, passim.

ness) of the match so discomfited some readers that they changed it altogether. George Sand, for example, marries Celia to Jaques in her adaptation of the play.<sup>63</sup>

Other critics, however, have worked hard to naturalize it. In his introduction to the Oxford edition of the play, for example, Alan Brissenden argues that Oliver's conversion "allows him to fall in love with Celia and to be deserving of her love."<sup>64</sup> A "good pair of actors," he continues, "can create an entirely believable and serious love situation" between them. Still others see the marriage as ideologically motivated. As DiGangi puts it, Rosalind's "unbelievably hyperbolic account of Celia's attraction to Oliver" highlights "the play's need to match her with a marriageable partner."<sup>65</sup> Both of these readings presume the primacy and supercessionary power of marriage. Yet the balanced clauses in Orlando's and Ganymede's descriptions of Aliena and Oliver's courtship reflect the play's ongoing concern with creating and ensuring balance between vowing pairs, formalizing the straits through which such a balance is accomplished. Oliver's insistence that his brother "say with me, 'I love Aliena'" (l. 6), and Orlando's that his brother "Go you and prepare Aliena; for look you, here comes my Rosalind" (ll. 11–12), suggest that familial entrenchment and kinship ties are as important for them as they are for the cousins. (Rosalind, remember, asks Celia to love Orlando because she does.) Indeed the language of kinship infuses the rest of the play. "God save you, brother," Ganymede/"Rosalind" tells Oliver immediately after the weddings are planned, and he responds: "And you, fair sister" (ll. 13–14). If, as Stewart points out, the humanist *amicitia* story features men who resolve their conflict by marrying sisters, *As You Like It* takes a similar tack for women; in marrying brothers, Celia and Rosalind effect an outcome, not unlike that in the Book of Ruth, that ensures their continued kinship and the integrity and security of their inheritance.

#### IV. UNEDITING MARRIAGE

When Ganymede prepares to execute the play's concluding marriages, they behave much as they do in the "rehearsal": as a contracting agent. Ganymede commands patience from those gathered around "whiles our compact is urged" (5.4.5), and works hard to ensure that that marital contract endows the wife *with*, not simply *as*, property. When Ganymede asks Duke Senior if he will bestow his daughter Rosalind on Orlando, the Duke answers "That would I,

<sup>63</sup> Introduction to *As You Like It*, ed. Alan Brissenden (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993), 18.

<sup>64</sup> Brissenden, introduction to *As You Like It*, 24.

<sup>65</sup> DiGangi, *Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama*, 58. On playwrights who draw attention to the "amount of work" they and their characters perform in securing the marriage plot, see Stephen Guy-Bray, *Against Reproduction: Where Renaissance Texts Come From* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2009), 46.

had I kingdoms to give with her" (l. 8)—an ambiguous statement that suggests both that he would marry her to Orlando even if he had to give away his kingdoms with her, and that he wishes ("would I"! he had kingdoms to give. Orlando, in turn, claims he would marry Rosalind even if he were "of all kingdoms king" (l. 10). Both men speak in the language of dowry *and* jointure and in terms of balanced sovereignty: each marital partner comes with imagined kingdoms. As is so often the case in the play, this exchange, like the relationship it imagines, is one of formal as well as conceptual balance.

When Ganymede orchestrates the various marriages, moreover, they promise "to make all this matter *even*" (l. 18, emphasis added), vowing to balance the economic, social, and legal "matter" of marriage in an "even," or equitable, manner. (To make "a matter even" meant to create a state of equilibrium, to leave no balance or debt on either side, to be impartial or equal to all.<sup>66</sup>) In other words, Ganymede continues to enact the work necessary to make marriage "thinkable in parity terms." After this vow (and another reference to making things "even"), the First Folio tells us that Ganymede and Aliena exit the stage together: "*Exit Ros. and Celia*" (figure 1; page 206, left column). Even at this moment of marital promise, the play assures us that Celia and Rosalind are still "coupled and inseparable."

In the final scene of the play, usually evoked as the superfluous illustration of the truism that Shakespeare's comedies end in marriage, the First Folio indicates that Hymen enters with "*Rosalind, and Celia*" (figure 1; page 206, right column). As is the case throughout the play, the cousins act together as "friends" to make and ensure oaths, including those of marriage. Hymen, moreover, employs the same language of evenness that Ganymede uses. "Then is there mirth in heaven," he says, "When earthly things *made even* / Atone together" (ll. 90–92, emphasis added). The famous wedding song that follows reads thus: "Wedding is great Juno's crown, / O *blessèd bond of board and bed!* / 'Tis Hymen peoples every town" (ll. 123–25, emphasis added). As the play makes clear from its outset, Celia and Rosalind have shared "board and bed" since their "cradles," and the concept accompanies them throughout the play. While the claim that "Hymen peoples every town" certainly refers to reproduction, it also highlights the nondyadic nature of marriage. When we learn that a magically repentant Duke Frederick has returned the crown to Duke Senior (ll. 145–47), we might remember the latter's statement about wanting to have kingdoms to give with his daughter. Thus, when Duke Senior presents his "land itself at large, a potent dukedom" (l. 151) as a wedding present to Orlando, it does not herald Rosalind and Celia's dispossession. Rather, it reminds us that the cousins have had that dukedom in their sights all along.

<sup>66</sup> OED Online (Oxford: Oxford UP, March 2018), s.v., "even, adj. 1 and n. 2," 9, 10.

As Jeffrey Masten pointed out years ago, scholarly editions of *As You Like It* are particularly interventionist on behalf of heterosexuality.<sup>67</sup> Only one of the editions I examined for this essay, for example, maintains the “his hand in his” that Hymen uses in the First Folio—the only contemporary edition of the play to describe the “joining” of Ganymede and Orlando in the wedding scene (Hymen invites the Duke to “join his hand with his / Whose heart within his bosom is”).<sup>68</sup> Editors also habitually fix Hymen’s addresses to the “eight that must take hands” in the marriage group to specific pairs. “You and you are heart in heart” (l. 114), for example, is often editorialized, as in the Bedford, to refer “[*To Oliver and Celia*]” (sd), or, in the Arden edition, “[*to Rosalind and Orlando*]” (l. 130 sd).<sup>69</sup> The First Folio, however, does no such thing (figure 1; page 206, right column). Each ambiguous “you and you” instead invites interpretive effort—the work, that is, of making each marriage thinkable and “even.”

A similarly interventionist editorial practice also frames Jaques’s valedictory addresses to the marriage party. The Bedford indicates (as do the Arden and Oxford editions) that he addresses the line “You to your land and love and great allies” (l. 171) “[*to Oliver*]” (sd), and the Norton “[*to Oliver and Celia*]” (l. 180 sd). Yet, once again, the First Folio specifies no addressee (figure 1; page 207, right column). Nothing in the play, moreover, suggests that the couple most clearly “heart in heart” is Oliver and Celia, nor, for that matter, that they are the couple most embedded in “land and love and great allies.” Indeed earlier in the same act, the repentant and grateful Oliver vowed that he would “estate” his “father’s house and all the revenue that was old Sir Rowland’s” to his brother (5.2.8). Why, for the sake of argument, might not both lines, “You and you are heart in heart” and “You to your land and love and great allies,” be addressed to Celia and *Rosalind*? Their hearts are certainly intertwined, and their shared “land and love and great allies” publicly recognized, evoked, and managed throughout the play. “A pair of good actors,” to

<sup>67</sup> Jeffrey Masten, “Textual Deviance: Ganymede’s Hand in *As You Like It*,” in *Field Work: Sites in Literary and Cultural Study*, ed. Marjorie Garber, Rebecca L. Walkowitz, and Paul B. Franklin (New York: Routledge, 1996), 153–63.

<sup>68</sup> In her edition in *The Complete Pelican Shakespeare*, Fran Dolan includes the following note: “Editors routinely emend this to ‘her hand.’ Yet *his* suggests that Rosalind’s masculine identity as Ganymede lingers here. Orlando is joined to her, but also to him” (5.4.112n). See *As You Like It*, in *The Complete Pelican Shakespeare*, gen. ed. Stephen Orgel and A. R. Braunmuller (New York: Penguin, 2002). Dusinberre acknowledges Masten’s argument but recurs to the claim that “‘his’ may be a common misreading of a manuscript ‘hir’” (339n112 and 246n142). All the editions I consulted for this essay also preface Hymen’s speech with interpolated stage directions claiming Rosalind and Celia are no longer disguised. See, for example, the Bedford: “[*Rosalind and Celia are no longer disguised.*]” (5.4.89 sd).

<sup>69</sup> Both the Bedford and Oxford (5.4.127 sd) claim that the line refers to Oliver and Celia. Agnes Latham does not editorialize the line in her edition (New York: Routledge, 1989).



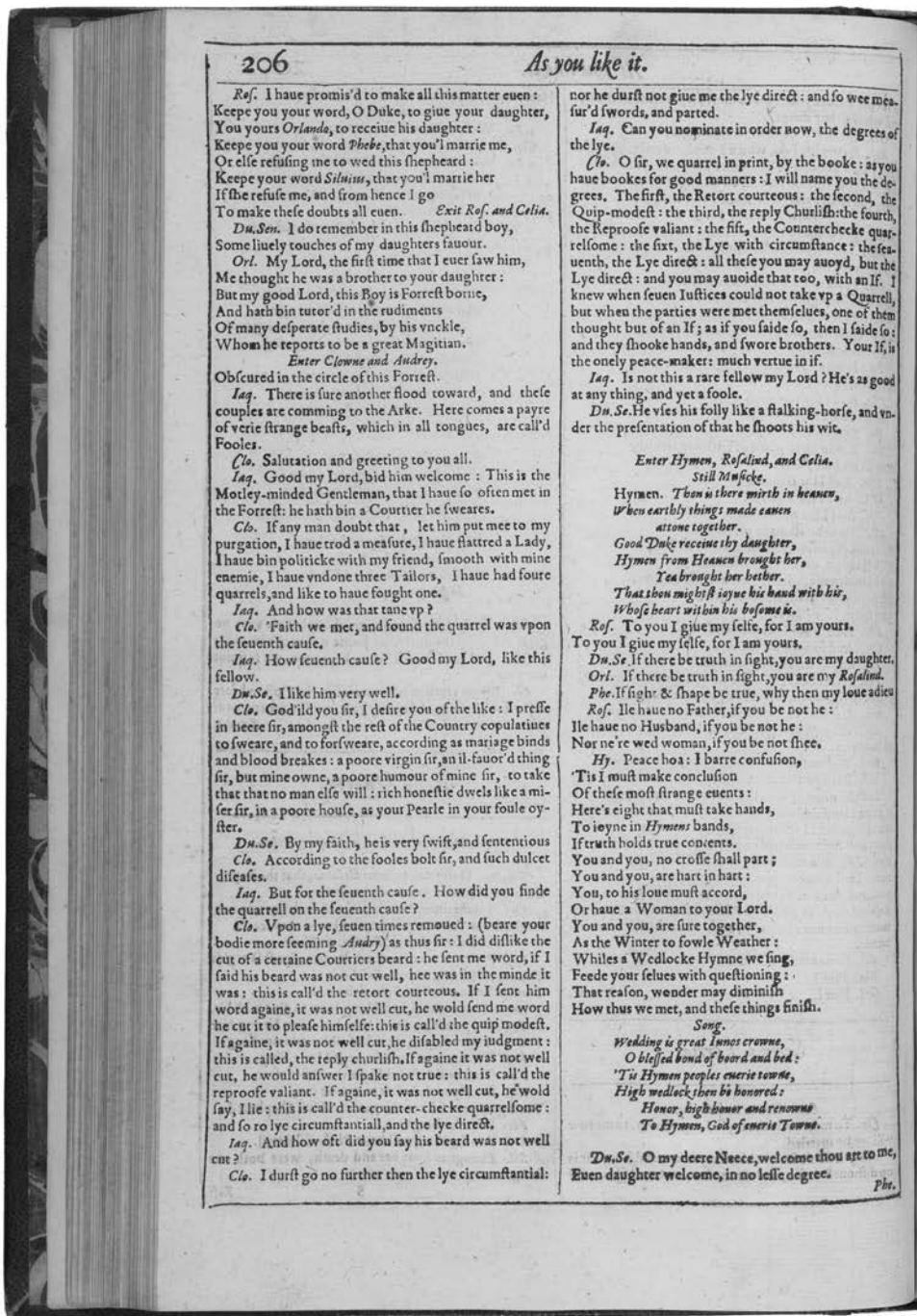


Figure 1. Pages 206 and 207 of *As You Like It* from Mr. William Shakespeares comedies, histories, & tragedies (London, 1623), STC 22273, fol.1, no. 68. Folger Shakespeare Library Digital Image File: [33097](https://www.folger.edu/digital-image-file/33097). Used by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

*As you like it.*

207

*Pho.* I wil not eate my word, now thou art mine,  
Thy faith, my fancie to thee doth combine.

*Enter Second Brother.*

*2. Bro.* Let me haue audience for a word or two:  
I am the second sonne of old *Sir Rowland*,  
That bring these tidings to this faire assembly.  
*Duke Frederick* hearing how that euerie day  
Men of great worth reorted to this Forrest,  
Addrest a mightie power, which were on foote  
In his owne conduct, purposely to take  
His brother heere, and put him to the sword:  
And to the skirts of this wilde Wood he came;  
Where, meeting with an old Religious man,  
After some question with him, was converted  
Both from his enterprize, and from the world:  
His crowne bequeathing to his banish'd Brother,  
And all their Lands restor'd to him againe.  
That were with him exil'd. This to be true,  
I do engage my life.

*Du. Se.* Welcome yong man:  
Thou offerst fairely to thy brothers wedding:  
To one his lands with-held, and to the other  
A land it selfe at large, a potent Dukedome.  
First, in this Forrest, let vs do those ends  
That heere vtter well begun, and wel begot:  
And after, euerie of this happie number  
Shal share the good of our returned fortune,  
According to the measure of their states.  
Meane time, forget this new-falne dignitie,  
And fall into our Rusticke Reuelrie:  
Play Musicke, and you Brides and Bride-groomes all,  
With measure heap'd in ioy, to'th Measures fall.

*Iag.* Sir, by your patience: if I heard you rightly,  
The Duke hath put on a Religious life,  
And throwne into neglect the pompous Court.

*2. Bri.* He hath,

*Iag.* To him will I: out of these conuertites,  
There is much matter to be heard, and learn'd:  
you to your former Honor, I bequeath  
your patience, and your vertue, well deserues it,  
you to a loue, that your true faith doth merit:  
you to your land, and loue, and great allies:  
you to a long, and well-deserued bed:  
And you to wrangling, for thy louing voyage  
Is but for two moneths victual'd: So to your pleasures,  
I am for other, then for dancing meazures.

*Du. Se.* Stay, *Iagues*, stay.  
*Iag.* To see no pastime, I: what you would haue,  
He stay to know, at your abandon'd cause.

*Du. Se.* Proceed, proceed: wee'l begin these rights,  
As we do trust, they'l end in true delights.

*Ref.* It is not the fashion to see the Ladie the Epilogue:  
but it is no more vnhandsome, then to see the  
Lord the Prologue. If it be true, that good wine needs  
no bush, 'tis true, that a good play needs no Epilogue.  
Yet to good wine they do vse good bushes: and good  
playes proue the better by the helpe of good Epilogues.  
What a case am I in then, that am neither a good Epilogue,  
nor cannot insinuate with you in the behalfe of a  
good play. I am not furnish'd like a Begger, therefore  
to begge will not become mee. My way is to coniuere  
you, and hee begin with the Women. I charge you (O  
women) for the loue you beare to men, to like as much  
of this Play, as please you: And I charge you (O men)  
for the loue you beare to women (as I perceiue by your  
simpling, some of you hates them) that betwene you,  
and the women, the play may please. If I were a Woman,  
I would kisse as many of you as had beards that  
pleas'd me, complexions that lik'd me, and breaths that  
I desir'd not: And I am sure, as many as haue good  
beards, or good faces, or sweet breaths, will for my kind  
offer, when I make curtsie, bid me farewell.

FINIS.

S 2



repurpose Brissenden's claim about Oliver and Celia, could certainly make both lines "entirely believable and serious."

There is abundant evidence that early modern women's relationships with one another, much like those between men, were enmeshed in complex webs of avowed kinship. The poet Katherine Phillips endeavored to marry her most intimate and beloved friend to a man close to her in order to prevent that friend from moving to Ireland.<sup>70</sup> Constance Fowler encouraged her brother to marry a woman she described to him as her "constant lover," arguing that only their marriage could unite her heart, currently "divided betwixt" the two of them, into "one."<sup>71</sup> Looking at the ways in which marriage was "ruled by friends" does not disregard companionate marriage; in many ways it explains why its stakes were so high.<sup>72</sup> As Kathryn Schwarz has recently argued, marriage is a system of interdependence that "does not divide by two."<sup>73</sup> Rather than an "overwhelmingly" male world, the early modern household actually provided ample opportunities for multiple forms of avowed kinship, including between women.<sup>74</sup> Women shared "bed and board" in much the same way men did—including with their cousins. The moneylender Joyce Jefferies, for example, lived with her cousin as her longtime companion, and Lady Anne Clifford recorded her cousin Frances Bouchier's visit to her bed in 1603 as "the first time I ever loved her so well."<sup>75</sup> (One is invited to think that it was not the last; Clifford built a funeral monument to Bouchier after her death.) As we saw earlier, "cousin" was not only a kinship term, but also one particularly endowed with affective, and even erotic, meanings—an enhancement of intimacy beyond the more capacious "friend," condensed in the potent single syllable "coz."

In some ways, my argument about "the place of a cousin" in *As You Like It* is a normalizing one. Rather than lying in what Heather Love has called "the

<sup>70</sup> Harriette Andreadis, "Re-Configuring Early Modern Friendship: Katherine Philips and Homoerotic Desire," *SEL* 46.3 (2006): 523–42, esp. 531. See also Hutson's "The Body of the Friend."

<sup>71</sup> Fowler's letters are cited in *Women's Worlds in Seventeenth Century England: A Sourcebook*, ed. Patricia Crawford and Laura Gowing (New York: Routledge, 2000), 236–38.

<sup>72</sup> O'Hara "Ruled by my friends."

<sup>73</sup> Schwarz, "Comedies End in Marriage," 279.

<sup>74</sup> Bray, *Friend*, 157.

<sup>75</sup> On Jefferies, see *Reading Early Modern Women*, 265. Clifford writes, "my cousin Frances got the key of my chamber and lay with me which was the first time I loved her so very well." See *The Diary of Lady Anne Clifford, 1616–1619: A Critical Edition*, ed. Katherine O. Acheson (New York: Garland, 1995), 55. See also Susan Frye's note on Clifford's account of finishing "the long cushion of Irish stitch which my Coz. Cecily Nevil began when she went with me to the Bath," in "Sewing Connections: Elizabeth Tudor, Mary Stuart, Elizabeth Talbot, and Seventeenth-Century Anonymous Needleworkers," in *Maids and Mistresses, Cousins and Queens*, 165–82, esp. 175–76.

poorly lit corners of the social,” or what Madhavi Menon calls “the shadows of the nominal,” the cousin’s place in the world of the play is both public and celebrated.<sup>76</sup> Celia’s gift of the “body of the friend” to her cousin countenances Rosalind’s place in that world, just as Rosalind’s does hers. Their bond illuminates the ethical, social, and political utility of women’s same-sex relations in the early modern imagination. Late moderns’ countenancing of this aspect of the play is another matter. In his 1988 biography of Peggy Ashcroft, for example, the actor and critic Michael Billington argues that the “crucial test” of any Rosalind is whether the audience believes that “she is smitten by Orlando.”<sup>77</sup> “I have seen Rosalinds lately,” he writes, “who look as if they would much rather have a good near with Celia about the works of Betty Friedan or Kate Millett than waste their time in the arduous business of wooing.” Billington’s use of the excellent noun “near,” with its connotations of intimacy, proximity, and relatedness, gives a nice sense of the category confusion Rosalind and Celia’s relationship raises for some critics—and the possibilities it offers to others.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>76</sup> See Heather Love, “Sister Insider,” review of *Between Women* by Sharon Marcus, *Novel* 41.1 (2007): 158–61, esp. 161; Madhavi Menon, *Unhistorical Shakespeare: Queer Theory in Shakespearean Literature and Film* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 20. Menon argues for desire as relational, contingent, mobile, non-end-oriented, and unpinnable to “already constituted communities” or relations (22, *passim*). On constitutive, pervasive, and persistent identity categories, see Traub, “The New Unhistoricism in Queer Studies,” *PMLA* 128 (2013): 21–39, 33.

<sup>77</sup> Cited in Brissenden, introduction to *As You Like It*, 72.

<sup>78</sup> For recent discussions of the homoerotics of all-male performances of the play, see James C. Bulman, “Queering the Audience: All-Male Casts in Recent Productions of Shakespeare,” in *A Companion to Shakespeare and Performance*, ed. Barbara Hodgdon and W. B. Worthen (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 564–86, esp. 567–74.