HETEROTOPIA AND EARLY MODERN FRIENDSHIP

WITHIN SHAKESPEARE'S *TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA*

by

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ABSTRACT

Critics and scholars alike have often overlooked the role of the forest within

Shakespeare's *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* in reinforcing the play's focus on homosocial

bonds. Viewing this setting according to Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia, though,

establishes the forest as a transformative space which rivals the nature of Shakespeare's latter

sylvan settings in complexity. In *Two Gents*' forest scenes, the protagonists' actions and social

statures are realigned through the representation, inversion, and contestation of the spatial and

social relationships presented earlier in the play. Although Valentine and Proteus begin the play

as equals, by the time they enter the forest Valentine has been banished and lost his social

standing (although he still acts like a gentlemen), while Proteus is only a gentleman in name.

The forest acts as a space where the social hierarchy can flip, giving Valentine the power to bar

Proteus from their friendship, just as he was banished from the Duke's court, and then to forgive

Proteus, foreshadowing his own reinstatement into the Duke's court. The protagonists' social

relationship is defined by their spatial one, or, in other words, how their friendship hinges on

equality, since they are one soul in two bodies. The forest, as a heterotopic space, allows the

protagonists to regain equal stature, and thus, reinforces the play's emphasis on homosocial

bonds.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to everyone who helped me and guided me in preparing this manuscript. In particular, I would like to thank my mom for always believing in me, even when I didn't, and my dad, for keeping me sane in times of stress.

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I.   Introduction

"All that was mine in Silvia I give thee" – *Two Gentlemen of Verona* 5.4.83

This line, which Valentine speaks to Proteus in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*'s[1] last act,

is perhaps the play's most controversial line, and is certainly the line that has attracted the most

critical attention. The statement highlights the play's main conflict: homosocial versus

heterosocial bonds, or, in simpler form, friendship versus love. *Two Gents* follows the actions of

Valentine and Proteus, two young friends, through the trials of love and world travel. Problems

arise when Proteus, who courts Julia at the play's opening, begins pursuing Valentine's love,

Silvia – an act some critics view as a display of mimetic desire (Girard 70). After his pursuit of

Silvia fails, though, Proteus uses force to achieve his end. Just when Proteus approaches the

young gentlewoman with the intention of raping her, Valentine appears and saves his beloved.

Following this heroic action, Valentine rebukes Proteus for his treachery against friendship, but

not for his attempted rape. Once Proteus displays remorse, however, Valentine apparently offers

the very woman he has just rescued to her assailant, an offer met with fainting from Julia and

continuous silence from Silvia, the play's two main female characters (5.4.25-170). Critics, on

the other hand, have proven rather outspoken and opinionated about the entire scene.

Scholars have debated the meaning of this apparent offer since Alexander Pope first

found Valentine's actions "very odd" and not satisfactorily explained (Carroll 110; Johnson

255n; Pope 226n). The early critics, who generally read the line as a literal offer of his beloved to

Proteus, view the scene as inherently flawed, and as possible proof that Shakespeare did not

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[1] Throughout the essay, I will refer to this play in the shortened form of *Two Gents*. *As You Like It* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will be shortened to *AYL* and *MND* , respectively.

write the play. For example, Thomas Hanmer, an eighteenth-century Shakespearean critic, asserts that "this passage…is one great proof that the main parts of this play did not proceed from Shakespear" because both Valentine's and Silvia's reactions are "out of character" (Johnson 255n). Some critics, both early and modern, claim that Valentine does not actually give Silvia to Proteus, but instead bestows his love – the same love he bears for Silvia – on Proteus (Bond xxxvii; Hunt 19). R. Warwick Bond, editor of the first Arden edition, quotes the words of a Sunday Shakespeare Society member, who thinks Valentine's words mean nothing more than "I give you my love as frankly and unreservedly as I gave it to Silvia: you shall have as much interest in my heart as she" (xxxvii). This interpretation, though -- that Valentine bestows his love equally on both Proteus and Silvia (thus making them equal) -- emerges from a modern perspective of heterosocial relations, where men and women are generally regarded as equals (or at least, as having the capacity to be equal) within a given relationship, as opposed to early modern ideas of male-female relations. In the past half-century, most scholars have come to view Valentine's actions according to Elizabethan friendship norms. The Norton editors suggest that the play's "disturbing ending may not be due to Shakespeare's relative inexperience as a playwright," but instead may result from the play's subject matter, "from Shakespeare's ambitious attempt to probe the relationship between two kinds of human bonds: friendship between men and romantic love between a man and a woman" (Greenblatt et al 104). Following this same idea, the Arden editor, William Carroll, places the play's conclusion within an Elizabethan discourse of male friendship, claiming "the controversial ending of *Two Gentlemen* presses the social demands of male friendship to their absurd limits" (3). Both editions, Norton and Arden, identify the offering scene's source within another tale of friendship: Boccaccio's story of Titus and Gisippus, a tale later found in Sir Thomas Elyot's *Book of the Governor*

(Carroll 18-19; Greenblatt et al. 104). This story relates how Titus becomes lovesick for Gisippus' beloved, sick to the point of dying. To save his friend, Gisippus offers Titus the woman in question (Boccaccio 161-65), just as Valentine offers Silvia to the repentant Proteus. Although Jorge de Montemayor's *Diana Enamorada* has been tagged as a source for Proteus and Julia's relationship since at least the early 1700s, the story of Titus and Gisippus did not emerge as a source until much later, when friendship became a critical focus in *Two Gent*'s studies.

While many critics have acknowledged that the play's conclusion focuses on the norms of friendship, few, in any, have examined the forest's role in producing that particular ending. As in other of Shakespeare's plays, such as *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *As You Like It*, the forest acts as a place where the play's central conflicts can be resolved. The protagonists' social statures and actions are uneven and unsynchronized, respectively, until the play's concluding scenes. Within the forest, though, the social hierarchies of the play's initial settings invert; in *Two Gents'* woods, those banished hold the highest power and act the most like gentlemen while the courtly figures retain authority only in name, or act unlike the gentlemen they are. The forest's ability to invert social and spatial relationships establishes it as a heterotopia, a space which, according to Michel Foucault, is "a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted" (24). Although Foucault generally applies this concept more abstractly, such as when he defines heterotopias of crisis and deviation[2], this concept can also be applied in a more concrete sense, as Foucault demonstrates through his mirror example (24-25). A mirror reflects the viewer's actual image, while also inverting that image, and contesting the viewer's

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[2] These types of heterotopias served as places where ideas or behaviors that were deviant from the accepted social norm could be carried out, such as the deflowering of a woman on her honeymoon or the onset of madness (where the actual place of deflowering and the psychiatric hospital, respectively, serve as heterotopias)

sense of reality through displaying a realistic image in a "virtual" space[3] (24). The inversion here is literal; the image actually flips left to right. Although the forest in *Two Gents* can be seen as a heterotopia of deviation, I mainly apply this concrete sense when using Foucault's theory to understand how the forest functions within *Two Gents*. The accepted social order of the play's first two settings, Milan and Verona, becomes literally inverted, or flipped, with the lowest-ranking characters occupying the highest positions and vice versa. Through this inversion, the play's original social hierarchy is both reflected and contested. Within the sylvan setting, characters such as Proteus, Turio, Eglamour, and Valentine reveal their true natures to other characters, natures that are either hidden under false pretenses or buried under accusations and banishment. By the play's end, this inversion leads to Valentine's reinstatement into society and the re-transference of Proteus' love onto the proper female figure. The protagonists exit the play as two equal gentlemen. Therefore, Shakespeare's reversal of social hierarchies within *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*'s forest realigns the male protagonists' actions and social standings, and thus reinforces the play's overarching focus on homosocial bonds.

This essay examines the forest's role as a heterotopic space within *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and is divided into six sections, including this introduction. The second section presents the play's critical and textual history, beginning with Francis Meres' 1598 list of Shakespeare's comedies and the First Folio, and then progressing to the commentary of eighteenth-century editors, such as Rowe, Pope, Theobald, Johnson, and Steevens, and Romantic and Victorian critics, including Coleridge, Keats, Lambs, Knight, and Hazlitt. This part concludes with an examination of current criticism and the offering scene's textual history. Section three provides a literary history of the forest and introduces Foucault's theory of

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[3] "Virtual" in this sense does not fit exactly with the word's current denotation, concerning online activity. Here, the word mainly represents the space on the other side of the mirror, the world we can see but cannot access (because it does not actually exist).

heterotopia. Throughout this part, Shakespeare's two most famous forests, *As You Like It*'s Arden and the Athenian forest of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, are used to illustrate how Shakespeare's forests function and how Foucault's concept might be applied to the early modern sylvan setting. In the fourth section, I apply the theory of heterotopia to *Two Gents*, demonstrating how the forest between Milan and Verona acts as a space where social relationships are simultaneously represented, inverted and contested. Once the characters enter the forest, the social hierarchy flips, placing the banished outlaws and their leader in control, while stripping the Duke and his entourage of their power. The fifth section discusses Elizabethan friendship theory, and how homosocial bonds function within the play, which includes examining the way Proteus' and Valentine's actions mirror each other throughout the story. The sixth, and final, section illustrates how *Two Gent*'s forest, as a heterotopic space, allows for the realignment of the protagonists' actions and thus, the reinforcement of the play's homosocial bonds.

II.   Critical and Textual History

Disguised women, banished gentlemen, allusions to Robin Hood, sylvan soliloquies, and forests – most renaissance scholars would identify these as elements of a Shakespearean play, specifically, *As You Like It* (*AYL*). That play presents the adventures of a disguised Rosalind and Celia[4] within Arden forest, where they encounter a fleeing Orlando and the banished Duke's court. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona,* though, also contains all of these specified elements, even though it is often overlooked. The first mention of the play appears in Francis Meres' 1598 list of Shakespeare's comedies (Carroll 1), although most critics believe the play was composed much earlier, anywhere from 1591-94[5]. When the First Folio appeared in 1623, *Two Gents* was grouped with Shakespeare's other comedies. The traditional comic plot follows the two main protagonists through trials of love and friendship, and this action begins in Verona, at the two friends' parting. Valentine prepares to leave the city, to experience the world, while Proteus wishes to remain in Verona, since he is in love with Julia. After Valentine departs, Proteus, under his father's orders, follows his friend to Milan, where he discovers that Valentine has fallen in love with the Duke of Milan's daughter, Silvia. In short time, Proteus, who has fallen for Silvia himself, learns of Valentine's intention to steal away with her and betrays his friend's intentions to the Duke, who promptly banishes the young Valentine. With Valentine relegated to the forest, Proteus attempts to woo Silvia, unaware that his old love, Julia, has followed him to Milan

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[4] Celia is only in disguise here, but Rosalind's situation is actually more complicated than just simply being in disguise. For the Duke and his entourage, she is passing for most of the play, while for Celia, she is in drag (Drouin 40, 46-9). I have used the term "disguised," though, because it is the only term that describes both women.

[5] The Norton Critical edition claims that the text "may have been written as early as 1590-91" (Greenblatt et al 109). Early critics dated it later; for example, Malone asserts the play was composed in 1595 (105). The play must have been completed before 1598, though, since it appears on Francis Mere's list of Shakespeare's comedies.

disguised as a page. One by one, the characters move to the forest – Silvia pursuing Valentine, Proteus and the Duke pursuing Silvia, and Julia pursuing Proteus. There, in the sylvan setting, the play's action concludes, shortly after the critical, and often controversial, scene in which Proteus attempts to rape Silvia and is then promptly forgiven by Valentine. In the end, the Duke reinstates Valentine into his court, and the two protagonists form rightful couples with their female counterparts – Proteus with Julia and Valentine with Silvia (*Two Gents*).

Despite these intriguing elements – disguised women, banished gentlemen, allusions to Robin Hood, and so on – the same elements that made *AYL* appealing during the Elizabethan period, *Two Gents* did not share the later play's popularity. Although John Heminge and Henrie Condell list *Two Gents* as the second play in the First Folio, this position does not necessarily indicate the play's popularity, but instead "may only reflect the fact that [*Two Gents*] was one of the plays prepared by the scrivener Ralph Crane, four of which are grouped together at the beginning of the Folio" (Carroll 1). The play, while known in Shakespeare's era, is listed in Samuel Johnson's edition as one "of the nineteen genuine plays" not printed during Shakespeare's lifetime, and therefore did not appear in print circulation until the 1623 First Folio (Johnson and Steevens 272). In addition, *Two Gents* was performed few, in any, times in the first 180 years after its composition (Carroll 84), and no known copies existed outside the Folios and subsequent Shakespearean collections until Robert Walker's 1734 printing.

Critical commentary on the play during this period is equally sparse, and mainly appears in full editions of Shakespeare's works. In 1709, Nicholas Rowe takes issue with how the characters act, commenting that "Silvia and the rest" do not behave "like Princes, Noblemen, or the Sons and Daughters of such" (Rowe 7.274, 275). In his *The Works of Mr. William Shakespear*, published a century after the First Folio and about fifteen years after Rowe's edition,

Alexander Pope claims that *Two Gents* has a less figurative style than most of Shakespeare's work, and that many scenes are "compos'd of the lowest and most trifling conceits" (Johnson and Steevens 122-26; Pope 141-43). Pope had printed his collection in response to Rowe's edition, and Pope's edition was met with a similar response from other critics. A few years after Pope's edition appeared, Lewis Theobald published his own version of Shakespeare's works, *Shakespeare Restored,* with the alternate title: *A Specimen of the Many Errors, As Well Committed, as Unamended, by Mr. Pope In his Late Edition of this Poet*. Theobald's comments from this collection, along with those of Pope and other critics, can all be found in Samuel Johnson and George Steevens' 1778 edition: *The plays of William Shakespeare.* This edition reveals that while some critics, like Pope, were reserved in their commentary on *Two Gents*, others could be downright scathing. For example, Thomas Hanmer doubts whether Shakespeare "had any other hand in this play than enlivening it with some speeches and lines thrown in here and there," while Theobald claims the play "is one of Shakespeare's worst," and John Upton states that "this play must be sent packing and seek for its parent elsewhere" (Johnson and Steevens 122). Johnson himself is no less critical, although he takes a more reserved stance when expressing that criticism. In examining *Two Gents*' characters and spoken lines, he concludes the play's lack of textual corruption stems from the fact that it has seldom been performed, and thus, has been "less exposed to the hazards of transcription" (123). At the play's end, Johnson lists the text's main incongruities, conceding that even Shakespeare "might sometimes sink below his highest flights" (216). As these critical comments demonstrate, by the eighteenth century's close most critics had determined that, even if the play did belong to Shakespeare, *Two Gents* did not deserve the demarcation of an "elite" Shakespearean text.

Although the nineteenth century introduced more copies of the text into English society, through both individual editions and Shakespearean collections, the play did not impress the Romantics or Victorians any more than it did the eighteenth-century critics. Coleridge and Keats show little interest in the play (Carroll 112); other scholars took great interest in fixing the play, as seen in Charles and Mary Lamb's *Tales of Shakespeare*, which first appeared in 1807. Their adaptation of the story removes the attempted rape scene altogether, in an attempt to remove the "play's rough edges and inconsistencies" (Carroll 113). The Lambs, though, were not the only ones struggling to make the play acceptable for the contemporary audience. Some editors even took on previous critics firsthand. In one of the most popular nineteenth-century editions of Shakespeare's collections, *The Works of William Shakespeare: Containing His Plays and Poems* (1854), Charles Knight refers to both Pope and Johnson within his introductory remarks to the play, and then contests their judgments about the play, such as the simplicity of its plot and characters, by examining how Shakespeare pairs the main characters: Valentine and Proteus, Julia and Silvia, Launce and Speed (2). William Hazlitt, one of the play's chief defenders, chose to respond to previous criticism through assessments of the certain dramatic issues, such as characterization and dialogue. In his 1817 *Characters of Shakespeare's Play*, for instance, Hazlitt devotes three entire pages to *Two Gents* and Pope's inconsistent remarks about the play's style (Carroll 112-3), claiming the play contains "passages of high poetical spirit...which are undoubtedly Shakespear's" (265) and that the scene with Julia and Lucetta "is a beautiful piece of poetry" (267). Hazlitt completes his assessment of the play, and more specifically, the scene with Julia and Lucetta, through quoting Milton's praise of Shakespeare:

> If Shakespear indeed had written only this and other passages in the Two Gentlemen of Verona, he would *almost* have deserved Milton's praise of him --
>> 'And sweetest Shakespear, Fancy's child,
>> Warbles his native wood-notes wild.'

But as it is, he deserves rather more praise than this (268, italics his)

While Hazlitt's three full pages of critical remarks reveal a confidence in Shakespeare as the play's author, it also indicates the play's relative dearth of critical attention. Hazlitt devotes at least six pages each for most of the other plays, with *King Lear* and *Othello* receiving the most attention, with 24 and 18 pages, respectively, although several plays, including *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, received the same amount of critical attention as *Two Gents*.

Hazlitt, although one of the earliest, was not the only critic to assess the play outside of a complete collection of Shakespeare's works, and the nineteenth-century brought the "first independent critical assessments of the play" (Schlueter xii). These assessments not only included articles such as *Notes and Queries*' 1852[6] "Passages in 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona" and D.J. Snider's "*Two Gentlemen of Verona*" (1876), but also commentary located within scholarly editions of the text, including John Hunter's *Shakespeare's Comedy of The Two Gentlemen of Verona with Notes Critical and Explanatory* (1873) and William Rolfe's *Comedy of the Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1882), along with others. These works often addressed previous criticism, especially that of Pope, Theobald, and Johnson, and then went further, examining the play's dramatic appeal (or lack thereof) and correcting textual changes made the century before. In his critical edition of the text, *Comedy of the Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1882), for example, Rolfe addresses Hanmer's and Upton's claims that Shakespeare could not have written *Two Gents* by asserting the play's "want of dramatic skill" stems from a lack of experience, not from negligence or different authorship (24). Rolfe then goes on to claim that "the *Two Gentlemen of Verona,* whatever rank of merit may be assigned to it by critics, will

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[6] From 1817 to the late nineteenth century, Hazlitt's text (along with those of his predecessors) was the authoritative critical commentary on the play. Individual assessments of the play did not begin appearing until the second half of the nineteenth century, with *Notes and Queries*' 1852 article (written by "L.") being one of the earliest.

always be read and studied with deeper interest than it can probably excite as a mere literary performance, because it exhibits" Shakespeare as a young artist (25), a comment highlighting not only the common view that earlier works are inferior to latter ones, but also the play's relatively scant production history. Although the play was almost 300 years old when Rolfe provided this commentary, the first recorded performance did not take place until 1762, over a century and a half after composition, when Benjamin Victor staged an adaptation of the play in London (Carroll 84). Throughout the late 1700s, and into the nineteenth and even twentieth centuries, most staged productions of the play contained "substantial alterations" (85), and few, if any, nineteenth-century critics saw the play acted in any manner close to its original form. While many nineteenth-century critics pointed out the misconceptions of the critics before them, their own dramatists continued "corrupting" the text throughout the era, through both alterations and adaptations passed off as the original.

The introduction of editions such as the Norton and Arden series have attempted to restore and, in some cases, celebrate the original text. The last half-century of *Two Gent*'s criticism has moved away from the centralized focus on the play's effectiveness and Shakespeare's apparent youth into more individualized studies of genre, characterization, setting, commerce, source texts, paleography, Renaissance culture, mimetic service, friendship theory, and hetero- and homo- sexual/social bonds. Today, critics generally accept the attempted rape scene as written – although they often attach an asterisk to it, seeking to excuse the scene's awkwardness as a botched product of Shakespeare's youth -- and attribute Valentine's actions to Elizabethan norms of friendship, which are prevalent throughout the play (Greenblatt et al. 103-9; Carroll 1-130).

Textual changes, though, continued to appear into the mid-twentieth century, and no scene in the play has been more adapted or altered than its conclusion, specifically the scene where Valentine offers his beloved to Proteus. Throughout *Two Gent*'s literary and production history, the attempted rape and its aftermath have fostered more critical attention and sparked more controversy than any other scene or aspect of the play. As William Carroll states in the Arden edition, Valentine's offer to give Silvia to Proteus "is widely considered an embarrassment in *Two Gentlemen* and, many feel, ought to be negotiated away in some manner"(95). Pope, the first known critic to focus on the offer (110), finds the scene "very odd", although the eighteenth-century editor and poet conceded that Shakespeare "probably followed [the sources] just as he found them" (Johnson & Steevens 255; Pope 205). Steevens, after positing a situation in which Valentine's actions might be justified and then finding that situation implausible, "subscribe[s]" to his predecessors' opinions (Malone 183; Johnson & Steevens 212). Other scholars, such as Sir William Blackstone and Malone, debate the advantages of altering the scene to make Valentine's actions more plausible, while many directors have actually omitted his offer altogether (Malone 183). As the Norton edition points out, "it became common to cut Valentine's offer to give Silvia to his friend" during the eighteenth century. The lines were missing in the first recorded performance of the play – Victor's 1762 adaptation staged at Drury Lane – and this tradition "largely held until William Charles Macready, the famous actor and producer of Shakespeare's plays, reintroduced the lines in 1841" (Greenblatt et al 103). Omissions and partial omissions of the lines, though, still occurred through the mid-twentieth century; Denis Carey's 1952 production omits the offer, and while Peter Hall's 1960 production includes it, the line where Valentine actually makes the offer "was spoken so that it was hardly noticed" (Brown 132; Carroll 93; Greenblatt et al. 103). Over the last four decades,

the line has been included within most productions, although directors have found creative ways to make the offer more palatable to modern audiences, including threatened suicides, sarcasm, ruses, and pantomime (Carroll 93-4).

My objective within this essay is not to disprove all the critics' objections and raise *Two Gents* to *Hamlet*'s or *King Lear*'s exalted status within Shakespearean studies. Such an attempt would fail, mainly because the play warrants most of the criticism it has received. The dialogue and orchestration of speakers is not as complex as that in later plays by Shakespeare. Dialogue only takes place between two characters at a time, with remaining characters falling silent. In addition, various plot inconsistencies abound, especially regarding the setting. Verona, Milan, Mantua, Padua, the forest, and the emperor's court are all mentioned as settings for the play, and yet, the characters mainly travel between Verona and Milan, and never appear at the emperor's court (Carroll 2; Greenblatt et al 103). None of these issues will disappear when examining the forest's role, but exploring *Two Gents'* sylvan setting should provide a better sense of how male friendship functions within the text, which in turn may help explain some of the play's more disturbing aspects, such as Valentine's offer and Silvia's silence at the play's end.

III.   The Forest's Literary History and Foucault's Heterotopia

Elizabethan literary forests and their transformative nature can be traced to several foreign influences, including the medieval French *chansons* and the Italian work, *Orlando Innamarato*. Although aspects of nature, including forests, have been featured in even the oldest literary works, especially pastoral works focusing on rustic settings and shepherds (Abrams 240-41;Greenblatt et al 1615), most critics trace the forests found in the works of Shakespeare and his contemporaries to the French Ardennes recorded in several medieval *chansons de geste* (Forsyth 373; Holmes 74-5). As noted by V. L. Forsyth in his essay, "Shakespeare's Italian Forest of Arden," few scholars will disagree that "the ultimate origin of the literary Forest of Arden is medieval French epics about Charlemagne and his knights" (374). For example, the forest appears twice in the *Chanson de Roland*, one of the most well-known *chansons*, as the location of one of Charlemagne's palaces. These Old French "songs," which often related romantic legends of French historical figures and heroic deeds, and thus emphasized chivalry, valor, and other aspects of knighthood (Dusinberre 48; Sinclair 28), first brought the forest -- and more specifically, the French Ardennes -- into the literary sphere.

As You Like It's Forest of Arden, Shakespeare's most well-known forest, may be an Anglicized version of the French Ardennes found in Shakespeare's source text, Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde*. Some critics tie Shakespeare's forest to the English Forest of Arden, but while the playwright wrote for an English audience, he sets *As You Like It* in France, not England (Greenblatt et al. 1616-7). The editors of the Norton purposefully use "Ardenne" over "Arden," convinced that Shakespeare "uses a French setting" (Greenblatt et al. 1616), while Juliet

Dusinberre, editor of the Arden Edition, states that "Shakespeare's play embraces the literary and chivalric resonances of the Ardennes of France" (48). Whether or not Shakespeare pulled this setting from Lodge's *Rosalynde*, the use of the French forest still alludes to its English counterpart, and thus allows for an overlapping of familiar and unfamiliar elements. Shakespeare incorporates several distinct concepts, including primogeniture and the legend of Robin Hood, into his Arden which would have been easily identified by an early modern English audience. These familiar elements, though, are all contained within a distanced and mythologized "other" location: the French Ardennes (Greenblatt 1616-17). By filling his French forest with familiar Anglican elements, Shakespeare establishes a contrast between the familiar and the unfamiliar, a contrast that allows the audience to see ordered social relationships play out in an alternate setting, a setting containing different rules and orders than their cities or local townships. This contrast, which is often combined with magic or divine intervention, turns the forest into a transformative space.

Through forced interaction with the unfamiliar, most of *AYL*'s characters change in some way. Arden forest is filled with lions, snakes, and general hardships that Duke Senior and his courtiers do not normally encounter within the city. Banished from his court, Duke Senior becomes a Robin Hood figure, complete with a "band of loyal followers" (Greenblatt et al 1615). While traveling with Old Adam, who falls sick from hunger, Orlando, unaccustomed to dealing with such matters himself, turns violent in order to gain access to the Duke's food stores (2.6.1-10; 2.7.88-132). After being banished from Duke Frederick's court herself, Rosalind chooses to become Ganymede, while Celia disguises herself as Aliena, physical transformations both made necessary by the dangers of traveling as women through the forest (Greenblatt et al. 1616). Rosalind's passing allows her to move through the forest freely, and even grants her access to

conversations and reactions she would normally not be privy to as a woman (Drouin 40).

Unfamiliarity with the forest even produces change within the play's two main "villainous"

characters, Duke Frederick and Oliver, with the former returning his brother's lands after

entering the forest and encountering "an old religious man" (5.4.143-53), and the latter forgiving

his own brother after encountering one of Arden's fierce beasts (4.3.97-119).

While this sylvan setting may emerge from the French epics, the actual transformative

nature of this space hails from another source: Matteo Maria Boiardo's *Orlando Innamarato*, an

Italian work composed in the latter half of the 15th century. Although this text was "heavily

influenced by the French *chansons de geste*," Forsyth claims Boiardo "first created the magical,

mysterious Forest of Arden" (374). Boiardo's forest contains two "magical" rivers: one that

makes people fall in love, and another that has the reverse effect. Boiardo's characters chase each

other around the sylvan setting -- not unlike those of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

-- and the only explanation for their actions is that they have drunk from the rivers. The rivers'

waters transform the characters, and the forest is the setting where this transformation takes place

(374). Boiardo's forest, therefore, differs from those of the earlier French *chansons* because the

forests in those texts do not act as a transformative space. As Forsyth argues, the Arden of the

French epics "is never associated with love affairs or mistaken identities" (374), two elements

very much associated with the forests portrayed by early modern dramatists, and by Shakespeare

in particular. Boiardo's Italian text arrived in England through Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando*

Furioso, which not only provides a summary of Boiardo's story and mentions Arden by name,

but also continues the story using Boiardo's magical rivers. This latter text proved "popular with

English readers in Shakespeare's time" and "existed in more than one English translation" (374).

Therefore, the basis for Shakespeare's Arden and his other sylvan settings arrived in England as a French setting hidden within an Italian story.

Although the idea of the forest as a literary and transformative space can be traced to the medieval French *chansons de geste* and the Italian *Orlando Innamarato*, respectively, early modern forests, specifically English ones, often contained their own transformative powers. As Jeffrey Theis observes in his *Writing the Forest in Early Modern England*, "early modern forests were not solely places of escape or temporary refuge; instead, they were ambiguous, contentious sites of change," specifically, sites where people could redefine their identities (39). These sites were especially prevalent in England, where the lower classes, prompted by overpopulation and a lack of resources in urban areas, migrated to both forests and private woods during the Elizabethan era (49). Through this movement, "migrants, both fictional and real, [found] a kind of theatrical space to try out new roles and resist the controlling power of others" (52). The forests and woods provided these people with new work and new homes, but also with the opportunity to redefine their identities.

Not all these sylvan retreats were considered equal, though. The term "forest" in early modern England specified "land reserved for the royal hunt," and thus, was not interchangeable with the term "woods" (11). As shown by John Manwood's 1592 treatise on forest law, the crown attempted to impose penalties for laymen hunting in royal forests. Forest officers, such as rangers, foresters, and woodwards, were used to enforce these penalties, which ranged from petty fines to imprisonment and in some cases, even death (8-11). In reality, though, the crown had difficulty maintaining "the complex system of forest officers and judges" that it had established, especially considering much of the area governed by forest law did not belong to the monarch (Theis 12). Sylvan migrants often created their own communities within these areas,

communities that proved difficult to govern due to the inhabitants' independence and

"antiauthoritarian" nature (14). As Theis notes, "forests were removed from the authority figures

of church and state," which "fostered a class of individuals quickly stirred to disorder" (14). Even

though England's legally established forests date to the Norman conquest, "royal power over the

forests fluctuated during the medieval period … [and] by the sixteenth century forest

administration [had become] less effective" (11-12). This lack of authoritative control allowed

forest migrants -- or "squatters," as Theis calls them -- to undertake opportunities not offered to

them in urban areas, such as becoming self-sufficient and assuming new identities, which made

the forest "a site of personal and collective transformation" (40). In his works, Shakespeare takes

full advantage of this sylvan setting's capacity for mutability, especially regarding character

reformation and plot resolution.

The forest appears as a setting in at least six of Shakespeare's works, including *A

Midsummer Night's Dream (MND), As You Like It (AYL), Titus Andronicus, The Two Gentlemen

of Verona, The Merry Wives of Windsor,* and *Cymbeline.* Most scholars view Shakespeare's

forests according to the theory of the "green world" advanced by Northrop Frye in his 1957

Anatomy of Criticism. According to Frye, in plays such as *MND* and *AYL*, the action "begins in a

world represented as a normal world, moves into the green world, goes into a metamorphosis

there in which the comic resolution is achieved, and returns to the normal world" (182). He

applies this concept directly to *MND*, *AYL*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, claiming that "in

all these comedies there is the same rhythmic movement from normal world to green world and

back again" (182). For instance, *MND's* action opens in Athens, where the main characters –

Demetrius, Helena, Hermia, and Lysander – all belong to Theseus' court. Because of the duke's

attempts to uphold Athenian law, life inside the city proves difficult for the young protagonists;

both Lysander and Demetrius vie for Hermia's affections, Hermia loves Lysander against her father's wishes, and Helena is left without a suitor. One by one, the protagonists flee to the forest outside the city, a forest controlled by fairies and magic. There, these four young lovers fall victim, either directly (Lysander and Demetrius) or indirectly (Hermia and Helena), to the fairy king's love potion. After enduring the ensuing chaos the potion causes, these protagonists return to Athens as proper couples, and order is restored to the play once again.

The characters of *AYL* also flee to the woods, although safety motivates them more than love. Duke Senior, Rosalind, Celia, and Touchstone all seek refuge in the woods from Duke Frederick's corrupt court, and Orlando flees from his brother, Oliver. The characters enter a "song-filled green world," where they "hunt deer, tend sheep, and converse endlessly about love, exile, and the relative merits of court and country" (Greenblatt et al. 1616). At first glance, the Forest of Arden seems distinctly less magical than its Athenian counterpart within *MND*. There are no fairies, no love potions, and no ass's heads, although Hymen, the god of marriage, does appear late in the play. In this respect, *AYL* reads much like a traditional pastoral work, "in which the rustic world of forest and field offers an alternative to and a sanctuary from the urban or courtly milieu to which it is contrasted" (Greenblatt et al. 1615). Arden forest offers the protagonists a refuge from Duke Frederick's corrupt court. *AYL*'s pastoral setting does not work against Frye's theory, though, or make the play's forest less transformative than that of *MND*. Rosalind and Celia become Ganymede and Aliena, Orlando falls prey to love, and at the play's end, the dukedom is restored to Duke Senior. While *AYL* poses problems regarding Frye's defined progression, especially since some characters remain in the woods, the action still progresses from a normal world into a "green world," where the main characters undergo a

"metamorphosis," either through love, action, or appearance, and then returns to an established

order at the play's end.

MND and AYL provide apparent examples of the "green world," but Frye also applies

his theory directly to Two Gents, asserting that

> The hero Valentine becomes captain of a band of outlaws in a forest, and all the other
> characters are gathered into this forest and become converted...The forest in this play is
> the embryonic form of the fairy world of A Midsummer Night's Dream, the Forest of
> Arden in As You Like It, Windsor Forest in The Merry Wives, and the pastoral world of
> the mythical sea-coasted Bohemia in The Winter's Tale (182).

While Two Gents is generally regarded as Shakespeare's first dramatic work, it is unjust for Frye

to assume that the play's forest is any less complex than those of the plays that follow merely

because the play is an early work. In fact, within Two Gents' sylvan setting, Shakespeare

establishes a complicated system of mirroring and echoing between the two protagonists, which,

when coupled with the inversion of the social hierarchy, suggests a meticulously structured forest

setting. Valentine and Proteus do not just enter the forest and become transformed; their actions

within the sylvan sphere follow a distinct pattern of repetitions, a pattern by which choices made

earlier in the play are often counteracted or reversed, such as Valentine's banishment, or Proteus'

original decision to stay in Verona (which actually initiates the breakdown of the protagonists'

friendship) . The forest, then, is more than just a space where transformation takes place; it is a

space that stands in direct contrast with the play's two "normal" settings -- Milan and Verona. I

would like to propose, therefore, that Shakespeare's forests -- specifically that of Two Gents,

although the concept can apply to other sylvan settings as well -- function as heterotopias, to use

a Foucauldian concept.

In his essay, "Of Other Spaces," composed in 1967, but not published until after his death[7], Foucault explores the relationship between real, physical sites and alternative sites that contradict the real ones in some way. He describes two distinct contradictory sites: utopias and heterotopias. A utopia, in accordance with Thomas More's coinage[8], is a perfect place that cannot exist in reality (24). In contrast, Foucault defines a heterotopia as a real place, a "kind of effectively enacted utopia in which real sites, all the other real sites…are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted" (24). In other words, these spaces become places of "deferral," places that either unsettle spatial and social relationships or present "alternative representations" of those relationships (Hetherington 8). As Kevin Hetherington points out in his work, *The Badlands of Modernity*, where he closely examines Foucault's heterotopias in relation to modern spaces, Foucault pulled the term "heterotopia" from anatomy, where it is used "to refer to parts of the body that are either out of place, missing, extra, or, like tumours, alien" (42). These parts are all identified as parts of the body, and yet are also "other." Heterotopias, therefore, simultaneously represent otherness and sameness. They are the same as the real sites surrounding them in that they represent the social and spatial relations of those sites, and yet other in the way they contest and invert those relations. In his essay, Foucault demonstrates this principle with the mirror example:

> The mirror functions as a heterotopia in this respect: it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it, and absolutely unreal, since in order to be perceived it has to pass through this virtual point which is over there (24).

[7] The essay started as a lecture given by Foucault in March 1967. Shortly before his death, Foucault released the manuscript to the public, where it was published later that year in a French journal under the title "Des Espaces Autres" (Note by the editors of *Diacritics*, included in Jay Miskowiec's English Translation. See Foucault 22n)

[8] The word "Utopia" is formed from the combining two Greek words: eu-topia (good place) and ou-topia (no place) (Hetherington viii). Foucault uses this definition when he claims that utopias "present society itself in a perfected form" (24). He also adds a second definition, though, which appears pertinent considering heterotopias' ability to invert the social relations of a given site (while acting as an "effectively enacted utopia): "society turned upside down" (24).

The mirror reflects and inverts the viewer's image, which in turn contests the viewer's sense of reality by displaying a realistic and yet virtual image.

Foucault's ideas about these spaces stem from his interest in space, cultural geography, and prison culture; and indeed, he points to carceral institutions, such as prisons, psychiatric hospitals, and even boarding schools as forms of heterotopia (Hetherington 41-42; Foucault 24). These spaces fit into two specific types of heterotopia which Foucault identifies within his essay: those of crisis and those of deviation. Heterotopias of crisis are "privileged or sacred or forbidden places, reserved for individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis"(Foucault 24). The nineteenth century boarding school, therefore, acts as such a place by serving as a space where adolescent boys underwent puberty and all the trials associated with such a change. Another example Foucault provides is the "honeymoon trip," where the hotel room or train where "deflowering" took place acted as a heterotopia for the young bride (24). Within these spaces, identities are often redefined or transformed in some way. Adolescent boys change into young men, while the young bride loses her virginity. Heterotopias of deviation vary from those of crisis only in degree; they are those spaces "in which individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed" (25). Prisons, psychiatric hospitals, rest homes, and even retirement homes in some cases, serve as heterotopias of deviation in that they remove "deviant" individuals from society. A third type of heterotopia Foucault defines, although he does not give it a name, is that of the movie theater or the stage (25). These spaces represent real life through films and staged productions, and yet often contest and unsettle the audience's conceptions of reality, either through escape or through "juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces" (Foucault 25). The audience sees various settings form on the stage and screen, while remaining aware that those

settings only exist in virtual space. This same principle applies to Shakespeare's audience watching plays at the Globe, Curtain, Rose, and James Burbage's Theatre – the theatre where Lord Chamberlain's Men possibly performed *Two Gents* in the early 1590s. The early modern English stage often represented, and challenged, Elizabethan culture. Theatregoers could enjoy depictions of familiar relationships and problems, while escaping their own lives, if only for a few hours (Gurr 80).

While the stage acts as a heterotopic space for Elizabethan theatregoers, Shakespeare's forests act as heterotopias for both the characters within the plays and the audiences watching those plays. When Lysander and the others enter the Athenian forest, Elizabethan playgoers would see the same, probably bare, stage that provided the opening scenes in Athens, and yet, due to the characters' actions and dialogue, would be forced to imagine a world contrary to the initial setting. Laurel Moffatt explores this idea in her article, "The Woods as Heterotopia in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*," by examining how *MND*'s characters use the word "dream" throughout the play. She points out that the protagonists and rude mechanicals refer to their sylvan adventures as a "dream" (185), a distorted version of reality that leads to the play's resolution. When Puck, the fairy king's mischievous helper, "appl[ies] the term 'dream' not just to the events in the woods, but to the play as a whole," his application "suggest[s] that the audience may interpret the play in the same way the lovers" interpret their experience in the woods -- as a dream (186). When the play ends, therefore, an Elizabethan theatregoer might have "woken up" and seen, if only momentarily, the play's ability to represent and yet contest the spatial and social relationships of their own lives (186). In *MND*, for instance, the action takes place in and around Athens, a distinct "other" location, and yet still contains a similar patriarchal social hierarchy to that of Elizabethan England. That hierarchy is contested, though, by the

lovers' attempts to escape Egeus' wishes and Theseus' authoritarian edicts within the woods. Even after order has been restored at the play's end, Egeus' will that his daughter marry Demetrius instead of Lysander is still "overborn," although admittedly by a higher-ranking patriarchal figure, Theseus (4.1.176). The play, then, raises questions about the way father and daughter relationships should function, questions largely left for the audience to answer, since neither Egeus nor Hermia actually makes the final decision. Shakespeare's plays, therefore, and the vehicle over which those plays were presented – the stage -- provide an additional heterotopic layer to the playwright's forests.

The forest can also act as a heterotopia for Shakespeare's characters. In his essay, Foucault identifies retirement homes as places that serve as heterotopias of both deviation and crisis, since "old age is a crisis" but "in our society ... idleness is a sort of deviation" (25). The potential "idleness" of old age, coupled with medical problems such as dementia and Alzheimer's disease, makes the retirement home patient "deviant" in regard to the social norm. Like Foucault's retirement home, Shakespeare's forests often act as heterotopias of both deviation and crisis for the characters. In *MND*, the realm of the fairy king, Oberon, and the fairy queen, Titania, serves as a heterotopia of both, where the chaos which results from the protagonists' young love and the love potion can play out far from the law and order of Theseus' court. Like the Athenian forest of *MND*, *AYL's* Arden forest acts as a heterotopia of deviation, since those who act against Duke Frederick's new court, such as Orlando and Rosalind, often find themselves banished to Arden. This forest also functions as a heterotopia of crisis, though -- as a place where identities are redefined, like the adolescent boy or the bride of Foucault's boarding school and honeymoon trip. At the play's beginning, the social order has been sabotaged. Duke Frederick has usurped his older brother's realm, while the "good" characters flee to the woods,

and set up their own society there, a society that poses a direct contrast to Duke Frederick's new court. As the editors of the Norton Edition point out, "in Ardenne, there is … room for courtship games, for brotherly kindness, and for music" (Greenblatt et al 1616), not to mention a less-than-subtle inversion of gender roles. Shakespeare paints a more idyllic picture within *AYL*'s forest than the real-life early modern forests discussed by Theis, but this forest also acts as a space where identities can be redefined, especially for Rosalind/Ganymede. Arden forest, as a heterotopic space, creates an "effectively enacted utopia" (Foucault 24). Duke Senior and his followers live in an idyllic world, a world full of songs and hunting. The old court shifts to the forest, and mirrors the new court, while inverting the corruption and treachery surrounding that new court. Duke Frederick banishes people; Duke Senior provides them shelter and sustenance. Duke Frederick and Oliver plot to kill their foes; Duke Senior welcomes the threatening Orlando to his table (*AYL* 2.7.85-103). Whenever treachery enters the forest, it is nullified and corrected. Orlando succumbs to love, and both Oliver and Duke Frederick reconcile with their brothers. At the play's end, almost all the characters have been transformed in some way.

IV. Heterotopia in *Two Gents*

Like *MND* and *AYL, Two Gents*' forest also functions as a heterotopia of both deviation

and crisis. When Valentine's behavior within Milan goes against the Duke's will, the young

protagonist is relegated to the forest, just like the other outlaws before him. His banishment also

propels him into a state of crisis, since he has been stripped of everything that defines him -- title,

possessions, home, and Silvia. To understand how the forest functions within Shakespeare's text*,*

though, it is necessary to examine the forest according to a more concrete[9] adaptation of

heterotopia, such as Foucault's mirror example, where the physical image is actually inverted.

Two Gents' forest follows this example, since Shakespeare not only establishes a literal inversion

of the social hierarchy, but that inversion also directly reflects and contests the social order

established within the cities. When the characters enter *Two Gents*' sylvan setting, those who

hold power in the city, such as the Duke and his noblemen, are stripped of that power, while

those without power, such as the banished Valentine, rise higher than they ever did within the

city's social sphere.

At first, Valentine's banishment appears to pose problems regarding this inversion, since

the modern definition of banishment implies the removal of an individual from society

altogether. Banishment within the early modern period, though, was not necessarily construed in

those terms. As B.J. and Mary Sokol point out in their *Shakespeare's Legal Language*, Queen

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[9] In labeling the mirror example as more "concrete" that the honeymoon trip or prison examples, I am mainly
examining how that space functions as a heterotopia (not the space itself). Foucault actually demonstrates how the
mirror fits each of the criteria for a heterotopia (how it reflects, inverts, and contests), while the heterotopias of
deviation and crisis are left more abstract. In examining *Two Gents*' forest according to this definition, then, I am
examining how the social hierarchy actually flips within the forest, and how the resulting social hiearchy reflects
and contests the relationships present within Milan and Verona.

Elizabeth "is said to have complained about the number of outlaws sitting as members of parliament" (246). Banishment, as a form of social punishment, was more "concerned with relocating the subject to what [was] seen as his/her rightful place" (Kingsley-Smith 12), to a place which fit subject's deviant actions, than with removing the individual from society.

When banishing Valentine, therefore, the Duke attempts to relocate the young protagonist to a humbler social position, a position appropriate for a man who would steal away with a nobleman's daughter. The first three lines of the Duke's speech after discovering Valentine's intentions indicate an eminent fall in social stature:

> Why, Phaeton, for thou art Merops' son,
> Wilt thou aspire to guide the heavenly car,
> And with thy daring folly burn the world? (3.1.153-5).

Phaeton, who appears in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, drove his chariot too close to the sun and then crashed to the earth after catching the chariot on fire. The Duke's argument is clear; Valentine, like Phaeton, has aspired above his social station. The Duke, as Silvia's father, has the right to choose whom his daughter will marry, a concept demonstrated in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, where Baptista attempts to control whom and when Kate and Bianca marry (Korda 62). Valentine, though, conspires to run away with Silvia and thus attempts to usurp the Duke's power, an act which would cause considerable chaos within Milan through violating social decorum. The remainder of the Duke's speech indicates just how far Valentine has fallen through his attempt to "reach stars because they shine on [him]" (3.1.156); his noble title is replaced by others such as "base intruder" and "overweening slave" (3.1.157). These descriptions place Valentine at the bottom of the social hierarchy, a position reinforced by the protagonist's loss of property. According to Jane Kingsley-Smith, author of *Shakespeare's Drama of Exile*, banishment, also known as outlawry, "was a form of punishment depriving the

offender of his goods and land," and was thus concerned with reducing the offender to penury

(9). Valentine's destitution after banishment becomes apparent when he first encounters the

outlaws and he responds to their demand for all his possessions:

> Then know that I have little wealth to lose.
> A man I am crossed with adversity;
> My riches are these poor habiliments,
> Of which if you should here disfurnish me,
> You take the sum and substance that I have (4.1.11-15).

When Valentine flees Milan after being banished, he carries no possessions other his "poor

habiliments," his clothing. The possibility of the outlaws "disfurnish[ing]" Valentine of his

clothes over money or jewels demonstrates just how far the young protagonist has fallen in social

status. He has been stripped of everything that symbolizes his gentle birth – title, land, and

possessions – and relegated to a humble position far below the one he held in Milan.

Shortly after entering *Two Gents'* forest, though, Valentine finds himself atop a three-

tiered sylvan hierarchy, which consists of himself, the outlaws, and the Duke's entourage. In his

first meeting with the outlaws, they grant him their allegiance and bestow several titles on him,

including "commander," "king," and "captain of [them] all" (4.1.64-6). He accepts the leadership

position they propose, and immediately begins to give orders, stating he will only be their leader

"provided that [they] do no outrages on silly women or poor passengers" (4.1.70-1). When the

outlaws appear with Silvia in the next act, they have not failed to follow this order, since she

appears unharmed and they attempt to deliver her to their captain, who "bears an honorable

mind" and "will not use a woman lawlessly" (5.3.13-4). The outlaws' submission to Valentine's

orders surfaces again in the play's final scene. After the two protagonists have reconciled, the

outlaws appear ecstatic over their capture of the Duke. The moment Valentine tells them to

"forbear," though, they release their captive and fall silent until the play's end (5.4.120). The

outlaws have captured the Duke, a "prize," and yet one word from Valentine ends their celebration (5.4.119).

Valentine's correlation with Robin Hood strengthens his leadership position. In the early modern period, Robin Hood stood as the principal symbol of "chivalric brigandage" (Snider 201), and therefore presented an "idyllic view of outcast society" (Kingsley-Smith 106). Although few early modern gentlemen fled to the forest to become like Robin Hood, outlaw bands often took on former members of the gentry class as their leaders, since "leaders of gentle birth were much esteemed" (Sokol 246). In *Two Gents*, Valentine's adoption by and promotion to leader of the outlaws reflects this social reality, since they only offer him command of their band after he reveals his gentlemanly nature. When they first encounter Valentine, they label him "a proper man" and claim that they will "hear him" (4.1.9-10). While questioning him, they discover that he not only knows "tongues" and has traveled the world (4.1.33-5), both traits of a learned gentleman, but has also slain a man "manfully in fight, without false vantage or base treachery" (4.1.28-9). Although Valentine lies about his "crime," presumably to make himself appear more threatening, this lie does not negate the reasons the outlaws adopt him as their leader. After hearing that Valentine has traveled the world like a true gentleman, the third outlaw swears, "By the bare scalp of Robin Hood's fat friar, this fellow were a king for our wild faction" (4.1.36-7). Although the Outlaws never overtly compare Valentine to Robin Hood, even this reference would bring the two into conjunction within the early modern viewer's imagination. Both men are banished noblemen (according to medieval folklore, Robin Hood was a banished Earl) who love upper-class women (Hilton 198-9), and both men carry out their leadership positions in an honorable manner. Robin Hood has historically been portrayed as a protector of women and the less fortunate (Burke 121-2), hence the adage that he "robs from the rich and

gives to the poor." Valentine's order that the outlaws "do no outrages on silly women and poor passengers" (4.1.70-1), therefore, further supports the protagonist's role as Robin Hood. Unlike his friend Proteus, Valentine does not try to take advantage of Silvia within the forest, and he releases the Duke immediately from the outlaws' bondage. Every action Valentine takes within the forest, especially those regarding the Duke and Silvia, reaffirms his gentlemanly nature and thus his role as the outlaws' leader.

The Duke and the rest of the nobility in Milan compose the third and final class that can be found within *Two Gents*' forest. While this group holds the highest authority within Milan, they are stripped of that authority once they enter the play's sylvan setting. Sir Eglamour, Silvia's companion, must flee to escape the outlaws, while Silvia falls captive to them. After Silvia reappears with Proteus, Valentine quickly quells any physical power that his friend tries to exert over her, and in the final scene, he refutes Turio's claim to her. All these characters, whether through psychological or physical means, fall subject to Valentine and his men within the forest. The most apparent loss of authority, though, can be seen in the Duke. Shakespeare does not specify whether or not the forest Valentine and his outlaws inhabit lies within the Duke's domain, but even if it does, the Duke, like the rest of his entourage, loses all power after entering the forest. As soon as he leaves the city, his economic, political, and even physical power is usurped by the outlaws' brute physical force. They take the Duke captive, and as their leader, Valentine could have him killed. He cannot free himself or order Valentine's men to forbear their actions. He becomes a "prize" (5.4.119), an object the outlaws can dispose of as they please. Any illusion of authority the Duke has when entering the forest, therefore, is shattered once he falls victim to Valentine's crew.

Since social position is generally denoted by power (that is, those at the top of the social hierarchy hold more power, whether economic, political, or physical, over those below them), the Duke's and his entourage's lack of power within the forest relegates them to the lowest social position. The forest, therefore, contains a three-tiered hierarchy – Valentine, the outlaws, and the Milan nobility – which represents an inverted hierarchy from that of Milan and Verona. Within the city settings, a Duke holds the highest power, with the nobility immediately below, and the serving class at the very bottom. When Valentine is banished from Milan, he falls to the lowest possible social position, a position without title or possessions, a position designed to impoverish him and deprive him of power. When the characters enter the heterotopic space of the forest, though, this social hierarchy is inverted, placing Valentine at the top and the Duke and his gentry at the bottom.

To make this inversion work, Shakespeare removes the serving class from the play's forest scenes. While Milan and Verona are filed with lower-class characters, such as Speed, Lucetta, Pantino, and Lance, the majority of these characters disappear once the play's action shifts to the forest. Speed enters the forest with Valentine, but disappears during the play's final scenes. The only other character that could possibly be considered lower class is Sebastian, though Julia's passing could function much like Viola's, who most critics still consider upper class despite serving Orsino. This absence of lower class characters allows for a smoother inversion of the normal social hierarchy, the social hierarchy present within the city settings, which usually includes one dominant ruling figure, a small upper class, and a large lower class. Shakespeare fills the forest with a large upper class, a small outlaw class, and Valentine, the elected "king" of the Sylvan underworld. When the social hierarchy flips, therefore, the upper

class – including the Duke – inhabits the large bottom level, while the outlaws and their leader control the forest.

The forest's social hierarchy, therefore, reflects the three-tiered social hierarchy of the city settings, and this reflection is strengthened by the strong correlation found between the Duke and Valentine. In the sylvan sphere, Valentine adopts an equivalent authoritarian position to the Duke's position in Milan. Therefore, Valentine's reaction to Proteus' attempted rape of Silvia echoes the Duke's reaction to Valentine and Silvia's escape plot. Valentine refers to Proteus as a "Ruffian," "Treacherous man," and friend of "ill fashion" (5.4.60-63), whereas the Duke uses terms such as "Phaëton," "base intruder," and "overweening slave" to describe Valentine (3.1.152-57). Each man's rebukes demonstrate what has prompted his anger. The Duke uses allusions to Roman mythological figures to highlight Valentine's usurpation of his authority, whereas Valentine concentrates his own rebukes on Proteus' betrayal. During the play's final scene, Valentine restores some of the Duke's authority through informing his men that "It is my lord the Duke" and addressing the Duke as "my grace" (5.4.121-2). After both men deny Turio's right to Silvia, all the other characters fall silent, leaving the Duke and Valentine as the only characters who speak throughout the play's conclusion. This pairing of the two men at the end signifies the correlation between their positions of power in Milan and the forest.

The strongest indicator of this correlation, though, is Silvia's silence. At her father's court, Silvia joins in witty banter with Valentine, Turio, and even Proteus after he first arrives in Milan. Her speech during these scenes displays not only wit and elegance, but also an ability to wield language to achieve her ends. When Valentine writes her a letter, she commands him to write another, and if that letter pleases him, "to take it for [his] labour" (2.1.123), which prompts Speed's remark that she "woos" Valentine "by a figure" (2.1.126). Her ability to turn Valentine's

attempt to please her back on him demonstrates her confidence and power. In the introduction to the Arden edition of the play, Carroll claims that "in Silvia, Shakespeare created a formidable woman character, more intelligent than any of the men who desire her" (44). She demonstrates this intelligence through wordplay, through taking Valentine's words and making them her own, to be repeated back to him. In effect, she woos thru manipulating language toward her own ends, a manipulation that Valentine almost fails to grasp. She outwits him through her speech, and he struggles to keep up. After the Duke banishes Valentine, Silvia still displays this wit and power through her admonishments of Proteus. She upbraids him and exposes his false intentions, making comments such as "Think'st thou I am so shallow, so conceitless, to be seduced by thy flattery" (4.2.93-4) and "I despise thee for thy wrongful suit, and by and by intend to chide myself even for this time I spend in talking to thee" (4.2.99-101). Her comments show she sees through his flattery and thus, tries to stop his attempts at wooing her. When Proteus tells her Valentine is dead, she responds that "in [Valentine's] grave...[her] love is buried" (4.2.110-11). When he tries to turn this phrasing back on her, asking her to "let [him] rake it from the earth" (4.2.112), she immediately chides him, saying "Go to thy lady's grave and call hers thence"(4.2.113). By manipulating Proteus' language, she is able to counter every attempt he makes to woo her. She continues this discourse into the forest scenes, telling Proteus she would have preferred to have "been seized by a hungry lion" and "been a breakfast to the beast rather than have false Proteus" save her (5.4.33-35). She does not fall silent until the attempted rape, when Valentine approaches to rescue her.

While Silvia displays no reservations about speaking to Valentine earlier in the play, when he steps forward and saves her during the final scene, she falls mute. Critics have attempted to explain the sudden silence of this "formidable woman character" by invoking

everything from textual corruption (Dowden 68-9) to female empowerment (Hillman 88) and, conversely, female subjugation (Friedman 213). I would argue, though, that Silvia's silence is not really about Silvia at all. The young gentlewoman's abrupt silence upon Valentine's appearance reflects her response to her father's appearance earlier in the play. When the Duke approaches in the middle of Turio, Valentine, and Silvia's banter, his daughter remarks "No more, gentlemen, no more. Here comes my father" (2.4.45), and then she remains silent until the Duke's exit 40 lines later. She never speaks in her father's presence while on-stage, and no evidence appears in the text for whether she actually speaks to the Duke when she meets him off-stage or not. Even though a servant appears while she entertains Valentine and Proteus in order to inform her that her father wishes to speak with her, prompting her to go see him, she goes off-stage to meet with him. When the social hierarchy becomes inverted within the heterotopic space of the forest, authority shifts from the Duke to Valentine, and Silvia's fall into silence reflects this shift. When the outlaw king appears and rescues his love from Proteus, Silvia falls silent, just as she does when the Duke appears earlier. Whereas in Milan she teases Valentine relentlessly, here she becomes as quiet as the forest her name implies. While the attempted rape serves as the impetus for her speechlessness, Valentine's appearance and continued presence throughout the play's conclusion corresponds directly with her silence. By choosing to make Silvia mute during the play's final scenes, Shakespeare[10] creates parallel positions for the Duke and Valentine. Valentine's presence, like her father's entrance earlier in the play, triggers Silvia's continued silence, and thus demonstrates the shift in authority from the Duke to Valentine.

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[10] While I hesitate to establish Shakespeare's authorial intent, Silvia's lack of knowledge regarding Valentine's position in the forest suggests she does not actively choose to go silent just because the wood's supreme authority has appeared. Her silence, on top of possibly making a point about attempted rape, appears to be a stylistic decision made at the authorial level to demonstrate a correlation between the Duke and Valentine.

While the social sphere is inverted once the characters enter the forest and this inversion is reflected in the Duke's and Valentine's correlating power positions, *Two Gents'* heterotopic forest also contests the social relations of the city by revealing the characters' true natures and placing those characters in social positions according to those natures. When the courtly gentlemen enter the forest, their actions fail to reflect the titles they hold. Turio, who relentlessly pursues Silvia throughout most of the play, retracts his claims to her after minor confrontation. When the outlaws bring the Duke's entourage to Valentine, Turio identifies Silvia and claims her as his (5.4.123). After Valentine promptly refutes Turio's claim, the unwanted suitor immediately retracts his statement, stating he "care[s] not for her" and "claim[s] her not" (5.4.130-133). This action prompts the Duke to label Turio "base and degenerate" for making "such means for [Silvia]" and then "leav[ing] her on such slight conditions" (5.4.134-36). Turio abandons Silvia the moment pursuing her becomes challenging or dangerous, a rather dishonorable act considering he leaves her to the mercy of the outlaws and their leader. Like Turio, Eglamour also abandons the Duke's daughter to the outlaws. When Silvia requests Eglamour's escort out of Milan, she describes him as "Valiant, wise, remorseful, well accomplished" and "a gentlemen" (4.3.11-13). Yet when Silvia first appears in the forest, she appears alone. When the first outlaw enquires where her companion has gone, the third outlaw replies that "Being nimble-footed, he hath outrun us" (5.3.6-7). Eglamour does not just lose Silvia to an overpowering group of outlaws – he actually runs away and leaves her behind. Once Eglamour enters the forest, therefore, he abandons both Silvia and his pre-supposed honorable nature.

Proteus, like Turio and Eglamour, discards all vestiges of honorable nature when he enters the forest. While he also performs dishonorable actions in Milan – such as arranging

Valentine's banishment and deceiving the Duke – he hides those actions under an honorable exterior. Although Julia and Silvia both recognize his schemes, he gives the Duke, Turio, and Valentine no reason to mistrust him. When disclosing Valentine's plans to the Duke, Proteus claims he acts for "duty's sake" (3.1.17), choosing to cross a friend rather than cause the Duke sorrow. The protagonist also dupes Turio, gives away Julia's ring, and attempts to steal his friend's betrothed – all without arousing suspicion. After Valentine's banishment, Proteus even offers his friend comfort and counsel. He tells Valentine to "cease to lament for that [he] canst not help" and then promises to deliver his friend's love letters (3.1.239-49). He does not drop these "honorable" pretenses until he finds himself in the forest, away from Milan's social constraints and the Duke's laws. When he fails to win Silvia's affection through flattery and a supposed rescue, he resorts to brute force, exclaiming:

> If the gentle spirit of moving words
> Can no way change you to a milder form,
> I'll woo you like a soldier, at arms' end,
> And love you 'gainst the nature of love – force ye (5.4.55-58).

In less than four lines, Proteus moves from a "gentle spirit" to "force," from honorable pretense to uncivil acts. The forest's transformative space allows Proteus to act without inhibition, and thus exhibit his true dishonorable nature.

All three of these gentlemen, though, fall subservient to the banished Valentine once they enter the forest. Valentine, who must flee from Milan for plotting to run away with Silvia (although, admittedly, an act prompted by love instead of avarice or lust), displays his true honorable nature upon entering the forest. When the outlaws offer him a position as their leader, he takes it on the condition that they do not harm "women and poor passengers" (4.1.70-1). Valentine's honorable nature then spills over into the outlaws' own behavior, since they respond

to their leader's order by claiming they "detest such vile base practices" (4.1.72), a claim

substantiated by their respectful treatment of Silvia later in the play.[11]

Valentine's order to his men, though, comprises only one aspect of his honorable nature.

Although he has been stripped of his title, he still retains all the honorable qualities that an early

modern gentleman was supposed to possess, qualities derived from medieval chivalry.

"Chivalrous" in this sense emerges from twelfth-century French chivalric romances, which

"[stressed] the…ideals of courage, loyalty, honor, mercifulness to an opponent," and fighting

"for the damsel's sake" (Abrams and Harpham 44-45). The young protagonist displays all of

these qualities as he thwarts Proteus' rape attempt, releases the Duke from the outlaws, and

defends his claim to Silvia. Throughout most of the forest scenes, therefore, Valentine is a

gentleman in everything but name, while Proteus is a gentleman only in name.

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[11] Although Proteus claims he has saved Silvia "from him that would have forced [her] honour and [her] love" when he appears with Silvia after "rescuing" her from the outlaws (5.4.21-22), his penchant for betrayal and false pretenses throughout the play undermines his reliability on this matter (especially considering his ulterior motive of trying to win her affections). In contrast, the outlaws treat Silvia with nothing but respect, and even refer to her by the formal "you."

V.   "One Soule in Two Bodies"
Early Modern Friendship within *Two Gents*

Proteus' and Valentine's inequality in both social and moral stature reflects the breakdown of the protagonists' friendship. Many critics trace the norms of early modern friendship to Michel de Montaigne's essay "On Friendship," which provides one of the most thorough philosophical discussions of male friendship within the Elizabethan era, although these beliefs also feature within the works of several other early modern authors, including Erasmus, Spenser, Bacon, and Shakespeare. Within his text, Montaigne expresses friendship in terms of his relationship with La Boétie, a well-known French philosopher. When describing this friendship as "perfect amity" (7), Montaigne contrasts it against other, "lesser" relationships, including not only "common friendships" (7), but also relationships between two brothers, a father and child (2-3), and a man and a woman (3-4). Friendship, through its depiction as "one soule in two bodies" (6), was "not merely the finest form of love" but also "the finest thing in life altogether, answering the deepest longings of the soul and providing the noblest of human capacities" (Pangle 2). This relationship "bound men together at the highest level of their humanity" (Screech 22). For Montaigne, therefore, friendship represented the most perfect relationship that early modern men could form.

Montaigne's ideas about friendship, and those of medieval authors before him, can be traced to two main classical sources, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and Cicero's *Laelius de amicitia*. Aristotle's text was translated into Latin multiple times during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Hyatte 16, 26), and both Aristotle's and Cicero's texts would have been familiar to medieval and renaissance audiences. Aristotle composed his text as a response to another well-

known classical philosopher, Plato. In the fifth century BC, within Plato's *Lysis*, Socrates

proposed that utility forms the basis of all friendships (Pangle 20). In response to this idea,

Aristotle defines three types of friendship within his *Ethics*: those of utility, those of pleasure,

and those of the good (1156a-b; Pangle 39-45). Friendships of utility are established on need and

benefit; they function through the exchange of goods, services, or ideas, and thus, often work

like marketplace scenarios. In essence, each participant uses the other for some sort of gain.

Since the degree and period of usefulness for each person "varies at various times," though, these

friendships often prove unstable (1156-a; Pangle 40). In the second type, friendships of pleasure,

the participants enjoy sharing each other's company. While Aristotle claims these relationships

fit much closer with the ideals of perfect friendship than those of utility, he also maintains that

friendships of pleasure are ephemeral, since they are mainly founded on emotion and impulse

(1156b; Pangle 40-41). These first two types are often labeled "lesser" or "imperfect"

friendships, since they are based on utility and pleasure instead of virtue and equality. Aristotle

posits that these "lesser" relationships appear at certain points in the male life cycle. Young men,

"who live by their emotions and whose desires change rapidly," often form friendships of

pleasure, while friendships of utility are reserved for "old, crabbed men," as Aristotle frequently

refers to them, who are more focused on gain than anything else (1158a; Pangle 40).

In contrast to these two "imperfect" relationships, Aristotle views friendships of the good

as perfect friendships, which can occur anytime during a mature man's life, and can last years or

even decades. Although these relationships often resemble friendships of pleasure, they are more

grounded on virtue and equality than their lesser counterpart (1156b). As Lorraine Pangle asserts

in her text, *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship*, "we should perhaps view friendships of

pleasure and utility as including all of those formed for the sake of pleasures and benefits, high

and low, and virtuous friendships as fundamentally different" (43). In these perfect attachments, each man values the other's character over possessions, abilities, and appearance (1156b; Pangle 43-44). While Aristotle's focus on virtue makes the friendship of the good seem universally achievable for all men, social status still plays a large role in the philosopher's work. Aristotle addresses his *Ethics* "to the mature men who are the pillars of the community," not to the masses, since he believes those mature, higher ranking members of society have the best opportunity for forming perfect, lasting friendships (1158b; Pangle 41-42). Within classical Greek thought, the words "virtue" and "nobility" were almost interchangeable, and ever since this period, the terms have held a strong correlation with each other, even when that correlation does not seem justified (Nelson 43). Although the philosopher cautions against the corruption of extreme wealth, he does not even consider the lower classes capable of maintaining this type of friendship, asserting that manual laborers "cannot practise the pursuits in which goodness is exercised" (qtd. in Nelson 43). Without goodness, virtue does not exist. Aristotle, therefore, reserves the friendship of the good for the Greek nobility.

This allocation of perfect friendship to the higher social classes points to another important aspect of the Aristotelian relationship: equality. A man's nobility indicated that he had both wealth and virtue, and the higher the rank he held within the social hierarchy, the more wealth and virtue he was assumed to have. Both Plato and Aristotle agree that rulers should be more virtuous than their subjects, although this did not always transfer into everyday practice (Nelson 44). For a friendship of the good to function properly, the participants must hold the same amount of esteem and goodwill for each other; they must value each other on equal terms (Hyatte 17; Pangle 152). In discussing Aristotle's philosophy regarding this matter, Pangle asserts that equality "in every mature friendship points to the fact that serious human beings seek

above all not souls that will be devoted to them but souls that are akin and at least potentially equal" (198). Rulers, therefore, cannot maintain a perfect friendship with their subjects, nor can teachers with their pupils, or husbands with their wives (1158b). Each person must establish friendships within their own social and moral realm, where virtuous men are drawn to other virtuous men (since non-virtuous men could not maintain such a relationship). According to Aristotle, therefore, perfect friendship can only occur between partners of equal social and moral rank (Pangle 23).

Aristotle takes this equality further, though, by establishing the friend as "another self," a title Pangle finds paradoxical. The philosopher did not invent this idea; According to Reginald Hyatte, author of *The Arts of Friendship: The Idealization of Friendship in Medieval and Early Renaissance Literature*, the concept was actually first presented by Pythagoras, who "maintain[ed] that friends have all goods in common and that philia is equality" (8). In general, "philia" translates as "friendship", although the term can encompass other affectionate relationships, such those within families and communities at large (Belfiore 6). In his *Ethics*, Aristotle adapts Pythagoras' idea to his perfect friendship, claiming that not only are people drawn to others like themselves, but that "even the happiest and most self-sufficient of men" need friends so that they can experience life in a two-fold manner -- through both their own experiences and through sharing those experiences with a friend (Pangle 153). As Pangle argues, "Our lives seem fuller and richer and more extensive and significant when we care about and live with -- and so, in a sense, live through -- our friends" (153). While the various terms Aristotle uses to describe these types of friends -- "another self," "other self," "second self" -- may appear paradoxical at first, since "self" implies uniqueness and "another," "other," and "second," all imply duplication, these phrases actually fit the relationship. A perfect friend, according to the

classical philosopher, acts as an extension of the self, existing outside of and yet, reflecting the self (152).

Cicero adapts Aristotle's views of friendship into his own work, *Laelius de amicitia* (or, *Laelius on Friendship*), which, along with the *Ethics*, "was one of the most widely read classical works on amicitia perfecta" in medieval Europe (Hyatte 26), and provided the main source for Montaigne's *De L'amitié* (Pangle 105). In Cicero's text, Laelius, a respected Roman leader, describes his friendship with a higher ranking and younger Roman general, Scipio (Pangle 105-8). Through Laelius' dialogue, Cicero retains the Aristotelian ideas that perfect friendship is rooted in virtue and that virtuous men are drawn to other virtuous men (Pangle 106). The threat of inequality, though, seeps into this relationship. Laelius and Scipio not only have a difference in age, but also occupy two different levels of the social hierarchy. In perfect friendships, equality "is really crucial," and thus, Laelius "will want to understand his friendship as fundamentally equal" (Pangle 108). Cicero, therefore, presents a new, counterbalancing equality, where the virtue or nobility of a participant in one sphere balances with that of his friend in another sphere. With this type of equality, Laelius' age, and by extension, wisdom, should make him equal with younger Scipio, who stands above him socially, although how well this relationship works is debatable, especially since Cicero never actually states that Scipio respected his lower-ranking friend (Pangle 109).

Both Aristotle and Cicero's texts present perfect friendships as non-sexual male-oriented relationships. Aristotle scorns eros, or erotic love, whether it be between a man and a woman or two men, viewing this type of love as "based on only emotion and impulse and pleasures of the senses" (Pangle 41), and thus, inferior to the non-sexual nature of perfect friendship. Aristotle groups erotic love under friendships of pleasure, identifying that type of love as both fleeting and

sensual (1156b). While Aristotle does not dismiss the idea that friendship can occur between a husband and a wife, he does claim that this sort of friendship cannot be perfect, since men and women's virtues have different natures, and men hold the superior role within the household (1158b; Hyatte 18-19). According to classical thought, emotion had a stronger hold over women than men, and made them more prone to weeping and irrational thought. Men, on the other hand, were governed by reason, and therefore better able to take charge of a household, city, or nation (Pangle 90, 93). This view of women, as irrational, emotional creatures, lead to the early modern idea that women could not even maintain friendships among themselves. In his essay, Montagine claims that "the ordinary sufficiency of women cannot answer this conference and communication the nurse of this sacred bond" (4), a claim further supporting the idea of perfect friendship as a male-oriented relationship.

These friendship motifs appear within several medieval works, including those of Chaucer and Boccaccio. Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato* not only explores the ill-fated relationship of Troilus and Cressida, but also presents the complex friendship of Troilus and Pandarus. Pandarus actually drives Troilus into the love affair with Cressida, a relationship that eventually leads to the Trojan prince's downfall. This friendship follows the Aristotelian model, since both men are young and noble, although it falls short of perfect friendship, since for Troilus the relationship functions as one of utility, while for Pandarus it functions as one of pleasure. In other words, instead of valuing each other equally, each one has different goals for the relationship. While Pandarus seeks to please Troilus, the young Trojan prince views Pandarus as a means to win Cressida. This difference in function, along with their uneven social status (Troilus, as a prince, is higher ranked than Pandarus, a nobleman), classifies their friendship as imperfect according to the Aristotelian model. Chaucer presents his own version of the story in *Troilus and Criseyde*. In

his epic poem, though, Chaucer presents a more Ciceronian version of friendship, since he makes Pandarus the older uncle of Criseyde. This change adds age disparity to the tale on top of a difference in social rank. Heightening the two men's inequality, though, actually makes the friendship more equal overall. The wisdom of the older Pandarus offsets the Trojan prince's noble rank, just as Laelius' age is supposed to counterbalance his lower social rank to Scipio in Cicero's text. Most early modern authors, including Shakespeare, follow the example of their classical predecessors and portray the friend as an "alter idem," "a second self," and an "alter ego" (Caroll 7; Ostovich and Sauer 187). For instance, in a letter to Beatus Rhenanus in 1521, Erasmus tells his friend "to be in truth my second self" (219). Another example appears when Margeurite de Navarre refers to the Duke's friend, the Gentleman, in Novella 12 of her *Heptaméron,* as the Duke's "second self" (Schachter 165). This concept also appears in the fourth book of Spencer's *Faerie Queene*, Kyd's *Soliman and Perseda*, Lodge's *Euphues Shadow*, and Massinger's *A Very Woman*, to name a few (Smith 179-181).

Shakespeare incorporates this idea of the "second self" into *Two Gents*. After Proteus' attempted rape, Valentine describes the betrayal as "one's right hand /...perjured to the bosom" (5.4.67-8). Through this description, Valentine reveals that he perceives Proteus' actions not as the betrayal of a friend, but as the worst kind of self-betrayal. The *right* hand perjures the bosom, the heart's home. Since "right" defines something straight, or "not crooked," perjury by this particular hand represents ultimate betrayal (OED). The last person Valentine would ever suspect, Proteus, has transgressed against friendship's bonds and Valentine's love[12]. This image of self-betrayal provides one major insight into the protagonists' relationship: Valentine considers his and Proteus' friendship more important than his relationship with anyone else in the

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[12] While this love could be interpreted two different ways (either as Silvia or as Valentine's love for Proteus/the friendship), Proteus betrays both when he attempts to rape Silvia.

play, including Silvia. During the attempted rape's climatic aftermath, Valentine focuses solely on Proteus' actions; he does not acknowledge Silvia until 23 lines into the confrontation, and then she appears solely as an object, a "gift" for Proteus. Valentine's focus on Proteus and his failure to acknowledge Silvia goes against his earlier claims that Silvia is his "self" (3.1.172). He spends the greater part of his banishment lamenting his and Silvia's separation, yet when they are reunited, he either ignores her or treats her as an object. Proteus is the one described as Valentine's "right hand," not Silvia, and of the two, Proteus is the only one Valentine addresses throughout the play's final scenes. At the play's end, Valentine again describes the two protagonists as one body, telling Proteus they shall have "one feast, one house, one mutual happiness" (5.4.171). Thus, the two male protagonists exit the play as one united body.

Although *Two Gents'* two protagonists are not united until the play's end, Shakespeare makes the focus on friendship apparent from the very beginning. The play opens with Valentine and Proteus, two young gentlemen. As indicated by the play's title, both are from Verona, and so share a similar background, a fact supported by Valentine's reference to the opening setting as "home" for both himself and Proteus (1.1.7; 1.1.62). Both are also still subject to their fathers' wills, as demonstrated through Valentine's statement: "My father at the road expects my coming, there to see me shipped" (1.1.53-4), and Proteus' confrontation with his own father, when Antonio arranges for his son to follow Valentine to Milan (1.3.66-7). As the play progresses, the young gentlemen follow similar paths. Both travel, both fall in love with a gentlewoman, and both become separated from their initial loves against their will. The play's main conflict, though, arises from the fact that the two men perform these actions at different times. From the play's beginning, the protagonists' actions are unsynchronized. Berry Weller, in his article, "Identity and Representation in Shakespeare," describes the protagonists' actions as "filled with

echoes and syncopated repetitions" (350). Valentine and Proteus alternately mirror each other, performing the same actions at different times. After the play opens, Valentine travels to Milan, while Proteus tries to woo Julia. When Proteus follows Valentine, he discovers his friend has fallen for Silvia. Proteus soon becomes enamored by the Duke's daughter himself, which leads to Valentine's banishment and journeying outside the city. While Proteus tries to entertain Silvia in the city, Valentine attempts to build a society within the "Sylvan" forest, from which Silvia's name draws (Godshalk 179; Hunt 180). By the time Proteus follows Silvia into the forest, the two protagonists are unequal in both social and moral stature.

Heterotopia and Friendship in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*

Valentine's and Proteus' inequality, in both their statures and their actions, only becomes

resolved after the characters enter the heterotopic space of the forest. This space allows for the

inversion, reflection, and contestation of the city social order, and thus allows for the reversal of

the protagonists' inequality that had been established within the play's first two settings. In

Verona, Proteus throws the protagonists' actions out of sync when he chooses to remain with

Julia instead of following the traditional early modern gentleman's path of worldly education, the

path chosen by Valentine. This imbalance only increases after the characters arrive in Milan,

where Proteus' devious actions eventually lead to Valentine's banishment. By the time Proteus

attempts to rape Silvia, his lowest point in the play, the two protagonists have become unequal in

every quality necessary for an Aristotelian perfect friendship – moral stature, social stature, and

actions.

As discussed earlier, critics provide many interpretations of the attempted rape scene and

its aftermath, most of them negative. In his article, "And love you 'gainst the nature of love':

Ovid, rape, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona,*" William Carroll characterizes the scene as

"much-maligned," claiming that "for two centuries, at least, critics, audiences, directors, and

actors have been trying to understand, rationalize, or simply evade this moment" (49). While

many early critics, such as Pope and Hamner, find the ending distasteful or attribute it to

Shakespeare's inexperience, Greenblatt defines the final scenes according to the play's social

relationships:

The excellence of much of the play…suggests that its disturbing ending may not be due to Shakespeare's relative inexperience as a playwright; rather, it may stem from the subject matter of the play itself – that is, from Shakespeare's ambitious attempt to probe the relationship between two kinds of human bonds: friendship between men and romantic love between a man and a woman (104).

According to Greenblatt, then, the play's "disturbing ending" results from the playwright trying to reconcile friendship with romantic love, a conflict which appears throughout the entire work. While this may be true, the degree to which this ending is "disturbing," even for a modern audience, may depend on how well the audience understands its positioning within the play's theme of mirrored actions, and how those actions play out within the forest. The two protagonists mirror each other throughout the entire play, and this scene proves to be no exception. As Greenblatt points out, "Proteus's name echoes that of the sea god who could change shape at will and who was thus often associated with a fickle nature" (105). Proteus, true to his name, displays a quick-changing disposition throughout the play; upon arriving in Milan, he immediately abandons Julia for Silvia, and soon turns against Valentine as well. In the "offering" scene, then, Valentine adopts this quick-changing nature. The speed with which Valentine changes his mind from rebuke to forgiveness to giving mirrors Proteus' own fickle nature, just as the two gentlemen have mirrored each other throughout the play. Valentine's actions, therefore, can be read not as a blatant disregard for Silvia but as a reflection of his friendship with Proteus, a reflection of being "one soule in two bodies" (Montaigne 6).

Many critics, including Carroll, have attempted to reconcile this scene with the rest of the play by examining gift theory, which extends to the exchange of women as possessions ("Ovid" 61; Scott 19). In his 1949 *Elementary Structures of Kinship*, Claude Lévi-Strauss, building off the work of Marcel Mauss before him (Cheng 126), asserts that "the exchange of women between men and groups of men provides the basis of social organization" (Rose 27). According

to Lévi-Strauss, in primitive societies the exchange of women originally served as a way to prevent incest, an act that has continued and strengthened male kinship over time (Lévi-Strauss 44-5). In other words, in this type of exchange "the woman is deemed as a conduit of a relationship, rather than a partner to it" (Cheng 126). This theory has often been applied to early modern concepts of marriage and betrothal. As Karen Newman points out in her article "Portia's Ring: Unruly Women and Structures of Exchange in *The Merchant of Venice*," "the traffic in women" during the early modern period " paradoxically promotes and secures homosocial relations between men" (268). In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, therefore, Silvia becomes a "gift," an object used, along with Valentine's forgiveness, to re-strengthen the homosocial bonds between the two protagonists after Proteus' betrayal.

Valentine's forgiveness and "gift," though, do much more than just represent the strength of the protagonists' friendship or serve as an appropriated plot device[13] intended to force Julia's revelation of herself as Proteus' page. This moment in the play, made possible through the inverted social order, actually marks the beginning of the protagonists' return to equality, and thus to friendship. When the banished Valentine enters the heterotopic space of the forest, he takes on an authoritative role similar to the one the Duke holds in Milan, and thus his relationship with Proteus in the forest conversely mirrors his relationship with the Duke in the city. When Valentine discovers Proteus' betrayal, he not only rebukes Proteus (just as the Duke rebuked him for attempting to steal away with Silvia), but also breaks off their friendship, claiming he will "count the world a stranger for thy sake" (5.4.70). Proteus, therefore, finds himself estranged from his friend, just as Valentine is estranged from the Duke's court. Their fates mirror each other, and this mirroring allows for the restoration of the protagonists' equality.

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[13] It is widely believed that Shakespeare appropriates the "offering scene" from Boccaccio's story of Titus and Gisippus (Greenblatt et al. 104).

When Valentine forgives and reinstates Proteus into the friendship, he foreshadows his own forgiveness and reinstatement into the Duke's society.

Valentine "offer" of Silvia provides a similar instance of foreshadowing, which eventually helps move the protagonists closer to equality. The Duke, as Silvia's father, has the right to bestow her on whomever he wishes. In offering Silvia to Proteus, therefore, Valentine takes over a social duty normally reserved for her father. Just as forgiving Proteus foreshadows his own forgiveness by the Duke, Valentine offering of Silvia to Proteus foreshadows the Duke's official offering of Silvia's hand to Valentine at the play's end. In both cases, the guilty protagonist is first rebuked by the higher authority, then estranged, forgiven, reinstated, and finally offered the Duke's daughter, in that order (3.1.150-69; 5.4.62-83, 138-45). The only difference lies in whether the given protagonist chooses to accept the offer. With Valentine's gift of Silvia, Shakespeare constructs the offer so that Proteus cannot accept it. The moment Valentine tells Proteus "All that was mine in Silvia I give thee" (5.4.83), the disguised Julia faints, drawing Proteus' immediate attention. Proteus is the first one to speak after his page swoons, telling the others to "Look to the boy" (5.4.84), and the offer is soon forgotten after Julia reveals herself.

Julia's revelation indicates another way Valentine's offer leads to the protagonists' return to equality. Once Julia slips from passing into drag for the two protagonists and Silvia, Proteus reverts to his original love, which in turn leaves Silvia free for Valentine. The play's end mirrors the opening scene, where Valentine and Proteus enter together as equals, except that instead of pursuing different courses, the protagonists now follow the same path. At the play's end, both men are equal in not only social and moral stature, as they were at the beginning, but also in behavior. Valentine and Proteus each exit the play paired with his respective gentlewoman, a

pairing that symbolizes the realignment of the protagonists' actions have been realigned. Instead of alternatively mirroring each other, Valentine and Proteus now exit the play in a concurrent fashion. As the protagonists' leave the forest, Valentine tells Proteus "our day of marriage shall be yours" (5.4.170). The two gentlemen plan not only to wed their respective gentlewomen but to share the "day of marriage," and presumably the rest of their lives. These heterosexual marriages allow the protagonists to avoid reverting to the play's opening conflict, and thus strengthen the play's emphasis on homosocial bonds. In other words, the two protagonists strengthen their friendship through their marriages to Julia and Silvia, through the "folding of marriage into the context of male friendship" (Masten 273). These unions at the play's end indicate the two friends' equality, and no where does the image of "one soule in two bodies" (Montaigne 6), become clearer than in Valentine's final lines of the play, where he proclaims that he and Proteus shall have "one feast, one house, one mutual happiness" (5.4.171). At this point, Julia still bears her male garb, while Silvia, the only apparent female character on the stage, has fallen silent. The play may end with marriage, but the events of the final scene indicate that the play's true focus is not on those heterosocial unions, but on the protagonists' friendship.

This homosocial unity found at the play's end, though, cannot be achieved without first undoing Proteus and Julia's ring ceremony. Before Proteus leaves Verona, he and Julia undergo a sort of wedding ceremony, where they exchange rings and "seal the bargain with a holy kiss" (2.2.5-7). Their union so early within the text highlights the breakdown of the protagonists' equality; instead of strengthening that equality, Proteus' focus on Julia pushes him further away from Valentine. At the beginning of the play, Valentine chooses to pursue the traditional course for a young Elizabethan gentleman, which involved forming himself "by encountering the world of action rather than becoming *shapeless* through *idleness*" (Carroll 137n; italics his).

Elizabethan gentlemen could fall in love, but only at the appointed time -- namely, after they had formed themselves through worldly experience. As his name implies, Proteus becomes "shapeless" through focusing on love over encountering the "world of action" -- by concentrating on the womanly "other" over refining himself and his relationship with his "second" self, Valentine. He neglects his studies, lies to his father, loses time, and forgets about everyone but Julia (1.1.63-69). When describing his love, Proteus claims she has "metamorphosed" him (1.1.66), and states "I leave myself, my friends and all, for love" (1.1.65). In this statement, the young protagonist lists "friends and all" as a definition of himself[14]. "Friends," though, is the only identified measurement Proteus uses to define himself. He allocates all other possible criteria for defining the self -- family, country, religion -- to "all." By abandoning Valentine, therefore, Proteus loses himself -- and vice versa. Through abandoning himself for a womanly "other," Proteus disrupts the synchronization of the protagonists' actions. To realign those actions and re-establish the protagonists' equality, therefore, the ring ceremony must be undone, subordinating Proteus' relationship with Julia to his friendship with Valentine and allowing all the couples to be properly united at the play's end.

This reversal of the ring ceremony occurs by returning each ring to its original owner. After leaving Verona, Julia retains the ring Proteus gave her until the play's final scene, while her beloved returns her ring when trying to court Silvia. Not realizing that his page is actually the passing Julia, Proteus gives her the ring, telling her, "Go presently, and take this ring with thee, Deliver it to Madam Silvia. She loved me well delivered it to me" (4.4. 69-71). The last line of his instructions indicates that he does not give his page a new ring, but actually returns Julia's own ring to her. During the final scene, while still passing as the page, Julia reveals that she

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[14] "Myself," "friends," and "all" could also read as items in a list, but even then, friends are only secondary to the self, and Proteus fails to define anything other than these two main criteria.

never delivered the ring to Silvia. When Proteus asks her "Where is *that* ring, boy" (5.4.89, italics mine), she responds by giving him a ring (5.4.90). The ring she gives him, though, is not the one he intended for Silvia, but the ring he originally gave Julia in Verona (5.4.92-6), which leads Julia to reveal her true identity (5.4.98-9). Whether or not Julia mistakes the rings on purpose, Proteus still "receives the *ring* he gave at 2.2.6 SD and so the exchange of rings is reversed, symbolically undoing the initial act of betrothal, but in a way that leads to revelation, forgiveness, and restoration" (Carroll 278n, italics his). The reversal of the ring ceremony allows for the reinstatement of the traditional Elizabethan gentleman's course, a course Proteus violated at the play's beginning when he chose to pursue love before forming himself through worldly travel and experience.

This reversal is followed by the joining of hands, which first appears to be another union between Julia and Proteus. This gesture, though, actually signifies a handfast ceremony, which "joined two men in mutual friendship; its chief visual symbol was two joined hands" (Masten 276). Several points within the text support this interpretation, including Valentine's reference to "two such friends" and Julia's male garb. Since men and women could not obtain perfect Aristotelian friendship, Valentine's words suggest a male-male ritual. Julia's disguise contributes to this image, since even though she is no longer passing to Valentine, Proteus, and Silvia at this point in the play, the audience would still see two male figures on-stage performing this ritual. While Jeffrey Masten claims that "Valentine brings Proteus and Julia ceremonially together after the moment of her discovery" (276), this scene can also be read with Valentine and Proteus as the handfast ceremony's chief participants. One line of Valentine's in particular indicates this interpretation: " 'Twere pity two such friends should be long foes" (5.4.117). The term "friend" not only indicates a male-male ceremony, but also suggests a ritual between equals. Even within

her male garb, Julia does not stand as Proteus' equal, since pages occupy a lower rank on the social hierarchy than gentlemen, even if she is still considered upper class within her serving role. While Valentine's rank has not yet been restored by the Duke, the young protagonist retains gentlemanly qualities throughout the forest scenes, and his forgiveness of Proteus has already foreshadowed his own reinstatement into society. No other character within this scene fits as Proteus' equal more than Valentine. In addition, Valentine's reference to Julia as Proteus' foe does not fit with *Two Gents*' plot or themes, since throughout the entire play she acts as his beloved or his subordinate, not his rival. Valentine, though, does fulfill the role of Proteus' foe earlier in the play, when they both compete for Silvia's affections. Although Valentine does not become aware of Proteus' interest in Silvia until the attempted rape scene, Proteus has seen Valentine as a rival from his first encounter with the Duke's daughter. When he finds himself alone, the young protagonist proclaims his affection for Silvia, musing "Methinks my zeal to Valentine is cold, and that I love him not as I was wont" (2.4.200-1). The moment Proteus falls for Valentine's betrothed, the protagonists' friendship turns into a rivalry.

The handfast ceremony, though, ends that rivalry by reaffirming the protagonists' friendship. Whether Proteus completes the ritual with Julia or Valentine, both acts reinforce the play's focus on homosocial bonds. Uniting with Julia restores Valentine's and Proteus' equality by giving both men a beloved and allowing them to celebrate their nuptials together. A union with Valentine yields the same result, since both men end the play coupled with his respective gentlewomen, but also provides a stronger emphasis on homosocial bonds, since the handfast ceremony is first and foremost a "friendship-ritual" (Masten 276). Through this interpretation of the handfast ceremony, Proteus is able to reestablish himself via his original definition of selfhood -- "friends and all" -- before entering the marriage contract.

The handfast ceremony emphasizes the male protagonists' newly-regained social equality. This equality is essential to an Elizabethan understanding of friendship, which asserts that perfect friendship can only occur between males of equal social and moral standing. The protagonists only achieve this equality, though, after entering the heterotopic space of the forest. Before entering the forest, Proteus holds certain power as a nobleman and can hide behind honorable pretenses. Valentine, on the other hand, is stripped of his title and must either flee the city or risk death. The forest, as a heterotopia, though, inverts, contests, and reflects this social order established within the city, placing Valentine in a position of power and subjecting both Proteus and the Duke to Valentine's will. Through this position, Valentine foreshadows his own restoration into the Duke's court and reception of Silvia, which restores him to equal standing with Proteus at the play's end. The structure of *Two Gents*' forest, therefore, is considerably more complicated than Frye and other earlier critics have suggested. While this fact does not negate the problematic nature of the attempted rape and "offering" scene, reading that scene in the context of both heterotopia and early modern friendship theory does give new weight to Valentine's actions, by emphasizing his adoption of the Duke's authoritative role and by demonstrating how that role allows for the realignment of the protagonists' social statures and actions. The play concludes by focusing the two friends' role as "one soul in two bodies" (Montaigne 6). Valentine tells Proteus they shall enjoy "One feast, one house, one mutual happiness" (5.4.171), a statement of pure homosocial unity.

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