As If: Essays in As You Like It

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Notes to the Text

As originally commissioned, the citations in these essays would have been suggestive rather than precise: “George Bernard Shaw said” rather than “George Bernard Shaw said… (in Shaw on Shakespeare, New York: Applause Books, 1989, 27).” There were to be no footnotes or endnotes. When I took the essays to the Dead Letter Office, I was tempted to keep the citations conversational. I admire the offhandedness of Montaigne, who, like most early modern writers, scarcely cites what he uses, and Barthes’s casual erudition in A Lover’s Discourse, where he coyly gestures towards his sources by their initials or a single title word in the margins. But in the end I decided to include fuller citations, in part because I owe so much to these works I’ve read and in part because I didn’t entirely like the feeling of insiderdom that the use of allusion suggested. My compromise was not to mark the references in the essays themselves, and to tuck citations in the back of the book, where a reader can find them if he or she wants, but can also read without being interrupted by them (although I suspect academic readers feel the pull of footnotes more deeply than most others). The notes below respond to cue words in the essays, as in an early modern theatrical part, which gave each actor only a few words from the preceding speech. For those less performatively inclined, page numbers are also included.
Richard Knowles’s *Variorum* edition was an indispensable treasury, especially for earlier criticism.

**FOREWORD • Trying**

x “the ambiguous genre”: “je n’ai produit que des essais, genre ambigu où l’écriture le dispute à l’analyse,” Barthes, *Leçon*, 7.

xi the phrase appears only once in the text of his *Essais*: in the “Apologie pour Raimond Sebond,” essay 2.12, p. 527 in the Villey-Saulnier edition.

xi when he notes that he bears it: Montaigne writes ambiguously, “Cette fantasie est plus seurement conceve par interrogation: Que sçay-je? comme je la porte à la devise d’un balance; “This notion [of doubt] is much more surely grasped by a question, What do I know? which I bear in the device of a balance.” But *porte*, or “bear,” could mean to carry the device physically or simply to display it.

xi Later, annotating his own copy: on page 220 of the so-called Bordeaux copy of the *Essais*, into which Montaigne wrote his additions, second thoughts, and changes of direction. I say the medal recedes into language, but it may never actually have emerged from it: while the story of the medal is regularly repeated — it is a very good one — there seems to be no firm evidence that the medal was ever actual rather than literal, or literary. The device is mentioned by Pascal, and an image of a medal with the motto *QUE SÇAY IE* and the image of a balance is printed in some seventeenth-century editions of the *Essais*. But it seems to have been conflated with another medal made for Montaigne in 1576, which still exists; that one has the Greek motto *epekhō*, “I withhold,” which Montaigne renders as *Je ne bouge*, “I do not move,” a few pages before he asks *Que sçay-je?* See Demonet’s discussion of “Jeton” in *Dictionnaire Montaigne*.


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INTRODUCTION • As You Like It

15 Epigraph: “I should be disposed to choose As You Like It”: Bradley, Oxford Lectures on Poetry (1909), 354.
15 “the most ideal of any of this author’s plays”: Hazlitt, Characters of Shakespeare’s Plays (1817), 305.
15 “Who ever failed, or could fail, as Rosalind?”: Shaw, Shaw on Shakespeare: An Anthology of Bernard Shaw’s Writings on the Plays and Productions of Shakespeare, 29.
15 “many academic critics since the 1970s … don’t like it”: Smith, Phenomenal Shakespeare, 5.
16 “the philosopher of the play”: Van Doren, Shakespeare, 159.
16 “the sights and sounds of As You Like It”: Smith, Phenomenal Shakespeare, 5.
18 “As You Like It seems written purely to please”: Brook, Introduction to As You Like It: Décor and Costumes by Salvador Dalí, 6.

1 • What happens in As You Like It?

19 “what takes place is not so essential as what is said”: Schlegel, A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature, 2: 172–73.

2 • What is the play about?

29 Winnicott distinguished two ways people can think about alternative realities: in the chapters “Dreaming, Fantasizing, and Living: A Case-History” and “Playing: A Theoretical Statement” from Playing and Reality.
30 “a common beholding place”: The word theater, adopted from Latin, which borrowed it from Greek, first appears
in English in a Wycliffite Bible of 1384, where the unfamiliar word is glossed as a “comune biholdiyng place” (s.v. “theatre” in the electronic Middle English Dictionary, Regents of the University of Michigan, http://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med/). Similar explanations of the word appear in Wynkyn de Worde’s Ortus Vocabulorum (1500), Thomas Elyot’s Dictionary (1538), John Baret’s Alveary (1573), Thomas Cooper’s Thesaurus (1584), John Rider’s Bibliotheca Scholastica (1589), and Claude Hollyband’s Dictionary of French and English (1593). In Chaucer’s Knight’s Tale, “circle” and “entry” appear as variants of the word theater in some manuscripts, suggesting that the word was unfamiliar to the copyists (s.v. “theatre,” MED). The human is most fully human in the freedom of its play: in Letter XV of Schiller’s Letters on the Aesthetic Education of the Human. Huizinga wrote a study of play called Homo Ludens (1938); Piaget discusses child’s play in Play, Dreams and Imitation in Childhood (1945).

3 • What’s in a name?

“Rosalind is also a feigned name”: from E.K.’s notes on the poem “Januarye” in Spenser’s Shepherd’s Calendar.
“execrable and horrible sinnes”: more of E.K.’s notes on “Januarye.”
“the most illicitly carnal of all the divine amours is translated into the most positively sanctioned”: Barkan, Transuming Passion: Ganymede and the Erotics of Humanism, 24.

36 Where did “Orlando” come from?: Ascoli, “Wrestling with Orlando,” explores the derivation from Ariosto’s knightly hero.
4 • What happens when Rosalind dresses as a boy?

40 even the title...“places ‘like’ as a barrier between ‘you’ and ‘it’”: Watson, Back to Nature: The Green and the Real in the Late Renaissance, 77.

40 “‘Like’ implicates you in it”: Smith, Phenomenal Shakespeare, 3.

43 the layers of Rosalind’s disguises and roles: Jean Howard’s article “Crossdressing, the Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England” discusses the many varieties and significations of crossdressing in early modern London.

5 • Where is Arden?

45 “a Shakespearean myth”: Dusinberre, Introduction to As You Like It, 50, 51.

46 “The ‘If’ that Shakespeare ventures”: Stauffer, Shakespeare’s World of Images: The Development of His Moral Ideas, 79.


47 the “saturnalian pattern” of inversion: “The Saturnalian Pattern” is Barber’s first chapter. The following quotations from Barber are taken, in order, from Shakespeare’s Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and Its Relation to Social Custom, 6, 7, and 9.


48 “Terentian and Plautine”: Barber, Shakespeare’s Festive Comedy, 1.


49 “red and white”: Frye, “Argument,” 70.

namely the Blue World: see, for instance, Mentz, “Shakespeare’s Beach House.”

Why do we hear about what Jaques said to a deer?

an argument from lack of imagination: I wish I could recall where I first heard this sparkling criticism.

“strategic anthropomorphism”: Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, 120.

What does Jaques telling us about Touchstone telling time tell us about them?


“Hamlet avant la lettre”: this quotation and the previous one are from Brandes, *William Shakespeare: A Critical Study*, 260, 263.


What is pastoral?

what concerns the lives of shepherds: Alpers’s claim is ultimately far more involved than this, but this capacious and simple recognition lies at its core. Alpers, *What is Pastoral?*, 22.

a “clash between different modes of feeling”: Empson, *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, 114.

“the real world is abstract and the unreal concrete”: Iser, *The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology*, 45.

“you can say everything about complex people”: Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral*, 137.
68  “nothing either good or bad”: these lines appear only in the Folio, *Hamlet*, 2.2.247–48.

9 • What does Jaques mean when he says, “All the world’s a stage”?

70  Hamlet’s advice to the players: *Hamlet*, 3.2.20–24, punctuated here as in the Folio. The editors of the edition I cite capitalize the nouns, which makes it look to modern readers as if Hamlet is allegorizing them. Maybe—but maybe not, and there seems no particular reason to think he is.

71  This is probably wrong: as Tiffany Stern carefully argues in her article on it, “Was Totus Mundus Agit Histrionem ever the Motto of the Globe Theatre?”

71  Hamlet’s later promise to remember his father: from the second Quarto, this time.

72  As Francis Bacon put it, “in this theater . . .”: *De Augmentis* 7.1; V: 8, VII: 718.

72  Jaques is elaborating on the conclusion of Touchstone: Barber, *Shakespeare’s Festive Comedy*, 256.

10 • Why does Touchstone say the truest poetry is the most faining? Or is it “feigning”?

79  “one of the reasons that Shakespeare is a great writer”: Donnelan’s interview with Peter Holland, “Directing Shakespeare’s Comedies: In Conversation with Peter Holland,” 162.

81  William Empson calls the pun “common”: Empson, *Some Versions of Pastoral*, 137.

81  “With faining voice”: I follow the earliest version here, Quarto 1. Later quartos and the folio editions have “feigning” and “faining.” With comical confidence, later editors have reversed these to read “faining” and “feigning.”
11 • What happens when Ganymede dresses as a girl?

83 eighty examples of crossdressing: listed in the appendix to Shapiro's *Gender in Play on the Shakespearean Stage.*
84 “a nest of boys able to ravish a man”: in *Father Hubbard’s Tales*, 173.
86 “an attempt at eroticism free from the limitations of the body”: Kott, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, 273.
87 “ambivalence”: Rackin, “Androgyny, Mimesis, and the Marriage of the Boy Heroine,” 37, but ambivalent figures are the topic of the entire paper.
87 Rosalind and Orlando are referred to with a male pronoun: Orgel, *Impersonations*, 32–33; Masten, “Textual Deviance,” 155–56, notices this moment as well, and uses it to think about the importance of holding off on rationalizing Shakespeare’s texts.
87 Shakespeare is more reluctant than most: Rackin, “Androgyny,” 37.
87 Rosalind alone … freely chooses her disguise: Garber, “The Education of Orlando,” elaborated in the chapter on *As You Like It* in *Shakespeare After All*.

12 • What is love?

92 “There is only one thing sillier than being in love”: Van Doren, *Shakespeare*, 134.
94 “The peculiar magic of Shakespeare’s comedies”: Greenblatt, Shakespeare’s Freedom, 3.

13 • What is the virtue in “if”?

98 “‘If’ may be a ‘peacemaker,’ but ‘like’ is a gesture of conquest”: Watson, Back to Nature, 100.

98 Rosalind’s invisibility follows from Orlando’s preoccupation with notions about love: Garber, “The Education of Orlando.”

14 • What happens in the epilogue?

104 “One would have thought such a thing impossible”: Smith, Phenomenal Shakespeare, 4.

105 “More critics have fallen in love with Rosalind than with any other of Shakespeare’s heroines”: Harbage, Shakespeare: A Reader’s Guide, 241.

105 “The popularity of Rosalind is due to three main causes”: Shaw, Shaw on Shakespeare, 27.

105 “She wants to have the last word as a boy”: Dusinberre, Introduction to As You Like It, 25.

15 • The end?

107 Epigraph: “Shakespeare & the dream”: quoted in Culture and Value, 83, from Wittgenstein’s 1949 notebooks.

108 not a poet but a creator of language: Wittgenstein, Culture and Value, 84. In German, Wittgenstein’s words are even more suggestive and elusive: not a Dichter, by traditional (although incorrect) derivation one who condenses and intensifies — thickens — language, but a Schöpfer, one who makes it.