"Even in the midst of laughing there is sorrow": Melancholy in Shakespearean Comedy

Jean-François Bernard

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ABSTRACT

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Early Modern England developed an unprecedented fascination with melancholy as the ailment effectively populated both its scientific and literary discourses. Although several writers touched upon the subject, Shakespeare's depictions of melancholy, seldom found in the source material he relied on, stand as an outstanding foray into a vast and complex notion. In negotiating a place for it within the dramatic structures he explores –whether tragic or comical-- Shakespeare both borrows from the medical knowledge of the Renaissance and innovates upon it.

This thesis will examine the presence and significance of melancholy in Shakespearean comedy. By considering its treatment in four plays --*The Comedy of Errors*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*--, I hope to chart its progression as it shifts from an undesired and foreign concept to a suitable social affect. By reading them chronologically, my aim is to highlight how Shakespeare, in his treatment of melancholy, takes advantage of the ailment's broad definitions to develop it in accordance with the various concerns he explores.

Several issues will be considered in relation to Shakespeare's use of melancholy in comedic settings. Notions of identity, gender and theatricality are crucial to his development of the humour. Moreover, his association of melancholy with the merchant life proves both prevalent and insightful. Lastly, his exploration of the intricate connections between mirth and melancholy further highlights the humour's remarkable progression throughout Shakespearean comedy.

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Introduction

I write of melancholy by being busy to avoid melancholy –Robert Burton[1]

The world has become sad because a puppet was once melancholic –Oscar Wilde on *Hamlet*[2]

Although melancholy has been part of medical discourses since Classical times, Early Modern England developed an unprecedented fascination with it. As one of the four bodily humours defined by Galean, melancholy was believed to be one of the main substances of the human body which "controlled the whole existence and behavior of mankind and, accordingly, to the manner in which they were combined, determined the character of the individual" (Klibansky et al., 3). Its primary attributes were believed to be coldness and dryness, and the humour was associated with an overwhelming sense of sorrow (Babb, 9). Moreover, despite the fact that humoural theory, in the Renaissance, was "on its way to obsolescence" (Hefferman, 30), the concept of melancholy was still prevalent, effectively populating both scientific and literary discourses. Michael Schoenfeldt, in *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England*, observes how "Galenic medical theory gave poets the tools necessary to diagnose human motive and the therapies required to alter it" (20). "The Renaissance cult of melancholy", he writes, "marked by a plethora of books defining, diagnosing and curing the phenomenon, attests to the widespread search for physiological explanations and treatments for an extensively psychological phenomenon" (75). Schoenfeldt argues that melancholy reflected the opposition of body and mind as well as the struggles early modern authors encountered in creating a precise, psychological definition for it while attempting to wrestle it away from

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[1] Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* New York: New York Review Books, 2001, p.20.
[2] Oscar Wilde, "The Decay of Lying", *De Profundis and Other Writings* London: Penguin Books, 1986, 55-88, p. 75.

its strictly physical characteristics. In the process, melancholy came to encompass several ailments and conditions, and its depictions ranged from harmful to beneficial.

Timothy Bright's *A Treatise on Melancholy* (1586) and Robert Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1620) are two of the most widely known Renaissance texts dealing explicitly with the humour. Both authors undertake the challenge of effectively mapping out the condition as extensively as possible. In doing so, they consider melancholy's origins, possible causes, the extent of its effects as well as its putative cures. Bright sets out to explore how "this humour afflicted the minde" (33) through what he indentifies as "a varietie of passion, both according to the diversities of place where it fetteh ... as also through the diverse kindes, as naturall or unnaturall" (101). Moreover, he links the humour to religious concerns, listing "fault" (25) as one of the humour's chief causes aside from nutrition. As Hefferman explains, "from the onset, Bright makes it clear, in epistle, that the treatise is both a medical and theological work" (23). For him, melancholy results mainly from a sinful demeanor. While this does not necessarily hinder his analysis, it certainly narrows his depiction of melancholy. Despite its implications for human behavior, Bright's exploration of melancholy remains highly theologized.

Burton also attempts to provide a profile of melancholy and all of its related concerns. Unlike Bright, he advocates the humour's normalcy by situating it as an integral part of human behavior. "Melancholy", he writes, "is the character of mortality ... even in the midst of laughing there is sorrow ... 'tis most absurd and ridiculous for any mortal man to look for a perpetual tenor of happiness in life" (144). As Hefferman argues, "Burton's vast encyclopedic account would not only synthesize major classical, medieval and Renaissance writing on the subject ... but formulate a succinct definition

that still holds up" (32). The style in which Burton writes *The Anatomy*, however, renders his definition of melancholy somewhat problematic. Mark Breitenberg claims that "the failure of the form to structure knowledge adequately is inseparable from the text's most significant preoccupation –the consequences of our inability to bound and control the passions, imagination, desires and madness" (46). Effectively, the endless additions and tangents which populate Burton's work highlight its wide-ranging scope. In some sense, one is struck with the impression that Burton's claim of how "the tower of Babel never yielded such confusion of tongues, as the chaos of melancholy doth variety of symptoms" (397) might actually apply to his own work. In all, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* proves an insightful and interesting foray into the intricate workings of a vast and often nebulous topic, but it nevertheless remains first and foremost a literary work. Burton's use of a fictional narrator --Democritus Junior-- emphasizes this last point. At times, it seems that Burton relies on melancholy as a catalytic agent to launch into broader discussions of heteroclite subjects, whether religious, romantic or even supernatural. Overall, both Bright and Burton stand as cornerstones in the vast tapestry of early modern melancholic explorations. The limitations of their discourses merely speak to the humour's extensive sphere of action and intangible quality.

As was the case with its scientific discourse, the literature of the Renaissance overflows with allusions, depictions and caricatures of melancholy, most notably in its dramatic texts. The majority of these portrayals, however, do not transcend the realm of generic or farcical renditions. Lawrence Babb, in *The Elizabethan Malady*, traces the humor's inclusion and development within Early Modern literature. "The Melancholic characters of the period", he writes, "tend to fall into types". (72). Babb identifies four

major categories of melancholic figures in Renaissance drama, which he labels as "malcontents": political, travelling, cynical, and scholarly (75), and adds a fifth, sub-category known as the "love melancholic" (134). Several dramatists incorporated such portrayals in their work as a way to either heighten or validate the concerns they dealt with.

The humor was obviously popular in tragedies, as its association with sorrow complemented the genre's conventions. Plays such as Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (c.1589) or Cyril Tourneur's *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1607), allude to it on numerous occasions. Kyd's work has often been identified as a possible source for Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (Bevington, Appendix 44) and its inclusion of melancholy renders the claim all the more probable. *The Spanish Tragedy* unfolds around "the image of melancholy" (I, iii. 12), "whose baleful humours", Hieronimo declares, "if you but uphold, / It will induct you to despair and death" (III, xi, 17-18). The play's somber atmosphere is maintained partially through its reliance on melancholy. Likewise, the protagonist of Tourneur's *The Revenger's Tragedy*, Vindice, is said to be "a man in whom much melancholy dwells" (IV, i. 61). Once again, the humour reinforces feelings of grief and spite, which dominate the play. Overall, although these portrayals rarely exceed the humour's stereotypical traits, melancholy proves a valuable accessory to the period's tragedies. Amongst them, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1601) stands as the quintessential examination of tragic melancholy. The play is undoubtedly the most widely-known literary treatment of the humour and brilliantly sumps up all of its tragic possibilities.

Melancholy surfaces in early modern comedic works as well. Here, farcical portrayals render it a successful source of ridicule. Ben Jonson's satires, for instance, condemn excessive humoural affects, melancholic or otherwise. Gail Paster perceives them as "a critique of social performative uses of the humors in order to flaunt eccentricity or license unwarranted aggressivity in oneself and others" (24). Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour* (1598) targets melancholy, amongst other humors, as a social nuisance and presents Stephen, a character who identifies himself as "mightily given to melancholy" (III, i. 75). As Jonson's comedy develops, Stephen is mocked by several other characters and comes across as a target of the play's humour rather than one of its agents. Through him, Jonson establishes a critique of excessive melancholy and advocates the need for a more balanced social behavior since, as Justice Clement claims toward the end of the play, "horns i' the mind are worse than o' the head" (V, i. 273). When he writes *Every Man Out of his Humour* (1599), Jonson pushes the exercise further and has several characters either claiming to be melancholics or vehemently denying it. Once again, however, melancholy is a part of Jonson's satire rather than its focal point.

Conversely, John Lyly's plays regularly evoke melancholic longings. Works such as *Endymion* (1591) or *Gallathea* (1592) rely on it heavily in their exploration of love and romantic concerns. In *Endymion*, the titular character's infatuation with Cynthia has rendered him profoundly melancholic (Babb, 60). As was the case in Jonson's works, Lyly seemingly makes a case against the humor. Early on, Eumenides declares to Endymion that "Melancholy blood must be purged which draweth you to / A dotage no less miserable than monstrous" (I, i. 29-30). Endymion himself comes to rail against the " Passions of love, the sad melancholy moods of perplexed / Minds [and] the not-to-be

expressed torments of / Racked thoughts" (II, i. 10-12). For Lyly, melancholy is implicitly linked to romantic endeavors. His development of it, as Babb explains, appears "to have influenced his contemporaries and successors" (73). Amongst those, Shakespeare's use of melancholy, which Babb describes as "not altogether typical" (170), proves both insightful and interesting as he draws on the humour in several of his works. Indeed, the term "melancholy" is found in nearly all of his plays, many of which include complex and detailed characterizations of it. Effectively, Shakespeare seems to have a foot in both camps, as his consideration for the humor both borrows heavily from pre-established notions on the matter as well as innovates upon them. The sheer volume of medical theories and discourses circulating during the Renaissance certainly allows him to do so. Moreover, the apparent relationship between comedy and the world of medicine proves a potent one, which Shakespeare and his contemporaries draw upon throughout their writing careers. The comic genre thus offers a stage where ailments can be examined and eradicated. On the whole, however, Shakespeare challenges the period's traditional understanding of melancholy more than he acquiesces to it and successfully adapts the humour to his own concerns. Within this process, it is his inclusion of melancholy in his comedies that I find to be most interesting. Whereas the addition of melancholy to his more tragic works seems logical due to its sorrowful qualities, Shakespeare's depictions of the humour in comedic settings reveal an ingenuous consideration for the ailment which sets him apart from other early modern playwrights. Indeed, he offers more psychological representations of the humour instead of farcical portraits. This notion is particularly interesting given the fact that, unlike his tragedies, Shakespeare's exploration of comic melancholy seldom originates in the source material

from which he borrows. Rather, they appear to stem from his personal fascination with the ailment.

This thesis will examine the presence and significance of melancholy in Shakespearean comedies. By considering its treatment in four plays, I hope to chart its progression as it moves from an undesired and foreign concept to a suitable social affect. In doing so, I also wish to underscore the means by which Shakespeare comes to challenge comic conventions by introducing the seemingly antagonistic notion of melancholy, ultimately blurring genres to offer a less farcical version of comedy where mirth and sadness coexist. The four works chosen, *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* offer a wide range of comedic works, from the relatively dark *Merchant* to the lighter pastoral humor of *As You Like It*. Although several scholars have already discussed the significance of melancholy in each of the plays, they have seldom considered them together as a lengthier discussion of the humour. Moreover, the presence of melancholy in these works has more than often been regarded in support of a larger argument. I wish to move away from such a model in order to offer a focused examination of the ailment itself within the comedies. By reading them chronologically, my aim is not to suggest a ranking of the plays based on quality or sophistication, but rather, to highlight how Shakespeare tailors melancholy to the various situations he explores and how his use of the melancholic discourse progresses throughout his comedic canon to become a complex and integral aspect of his works.

Several issues will be considered in relation to Shakespeare's use of melancholy in comedic settings. Notions of identity are crucial to his psychologically-inclined development of the humour. Melancholy either undercuts a character's sense of identity

or comes to define it and can thus serve as both as an encouragement or a deterrent to self-assessment. Likewise, gender is an ongoing concern in Shakespearean comedies, and a contrast of male and female melancholy in the comedies helps to establish the humor's overall dramatic function. Additionally, Shakespeare transforms the humour into a social performance. The reception of this theatrical melancholy by other characters is crucial to its putative integration into the plays' comic resolutions. Moreover, Shakespeare associates melancholy with mercantile concerns. Indeed, his treatment of it suggests a life of early modern travels --and the increased social mobility it entails-- as one of the humor's probable causes. Furthermore, the merchant characters' reliance on water metaphors when expressing their anxieties appears integral to their melancholic dispositions. This use of imagery is particularly prevalent in Shakespeare's earlier depiction of melancholy, where the humor is perceived as a destabilizing force. Lastly, in each of the four plays, Shakespeare contrasts melancholy with mirth, most notably through his "fool" characters. This opposition is an important element of melancholy's comedic treatment as mirth initially counters sorrowful displays before Shakespeare ultimately conflates both into suitable social affects.

Chapter One will examine how melancholy and identity are intricately connected in T*he Comedy of Errors*. Focusing primarily on Antipholus of Syracuse and Egeon, the chapter will consider the ailment as a menacing element which invades the Ephesian setting and disrupts its pre-established notion of identification. Moreover, issues of gender and mercantile concerns will receive attention because the melancholy centers on the male, merchant characters. A consideration of the play's ending, where melancholy seemingly dissipates once the family crisis is resolved and its members reunited, will

reinforce how the humor is tied to notions of self-identification. Chapter Two will consider Antonio's enigmatic sadness in *The Merchant of Venice*. It will suggest that the merchant's lack of participation in the play's overall development both creates and sustains his sorrowful demeanor and alienates him from the play's social sphere. The chapter will also contrast Antonio's melancholy with Portia's, observing how the heiress of Belmont ultimately prevails over the merchant by shedding her dejected countenance and actively pursuing her interests. Finally, I will observe how Antonio's status at the end of *Merchant* reflects the position melancholy holds within the play's social realm. Chapter Three will examine Jaques' affected melancholy in *As You Like It*. The focus will be on the shift Shakespeare undertakes in his comedic works, geared specifically toward the exploration of young love, and how his treatment of melancholy changes accordingly. Jaques effectively holds an accepted social position in Arden Forest, but exerts little influence on the play's development. His encounters with the characters from Court will demonstrate how his melancholy has no bearing on the more festive and romantic matters of the play. Moreover, his departure will highlight melancholy's apparent failure at integrating into the social sphere once again. The last chapter will observe how melancholy pervades the setting of *Twelfth Night* and consequently affects the entire play. The chapter will consider how Shakespeare uses the character of Viola to successfully purge Illyria of its various excesses, by representing in her the numerous melancholic strains found in the play, establishing more realistic notions of love and courtship in the process. Moreover, by examining Feste's function in the play, the chapter will suggest that, by the end, Shakespeare aligns melancholy with mirth to form a final

critique of social performance and introduce a subdued, more tempered strain of melancholy, linked to temporality.

Family Affair: Melancholic Identities in *The Comedy of Errors*

In his introductory chapter to a collection of essays dealing with the play, Robert Miola asserts that "the critical and theatrical history of *The Comedy of Errors* requires double vision" (38). As he explains, "the traditional reading of this play as simple or pure comedy directly opposes more recent evaluations, particularly those in the modern era which perceive in *Errors* dark and disturbing elements" (17). Miola's profession of an acute polarity of opinions on the play highlights its intriguing conflation of antagonistic notions. Accordingly, it is not surprising to notice in it seemingly opposite thematic elements. More specifically, Miola's claim that the play comprises both dark and humorous elements alludes to its striking reliance on comedy and tragedy as agents of its progression. It is also interesting to note how Miola's model of "double vision" applies to a humoural analysis of the play as well. Within it, the traditional comedic presence of mirth is challenged by the fascinating insertion of melancholy.

This chapter will examine Shakespeare's treatment of melancholy in *The Comedy of Errors*. Drawing on the work of both Anne Thompson and Robert Miola, it will initially highlight the relationship between melancholy and the search for identity and observe how, by transposing it from a purely physical affliction to a more complex psychological one, Shakespeare effectively strengthens the play's assessment of self-identification. However, this chapter will go beyond the critics' interpretations and argue that melancholy takes on the role of an external threat which invades the Ephesian setting and disrupts its preconceived notion of identity. Furthermore, it will discuss how melancholy affects male members of the same family. On this subject, I will consider

how Egeon's melancholy, which displays strong ties to the tragic genre, exists primarily within the first and final act, in comparison to his son, Antipholus of Syracuse, whose affliction permeates the play.

Consequently, using René Girard's theory of mimetic contagion, an analysis of the impact these characters have on Ephesus will demonstrate how, despite its restricted scope, melancholy engenders social repercussions. By examining its development in accordance with Gail Paster's socio-humoural theory, I wish to underscore the balance that exists between the two brothers as the mistaken identity crisis develops. It is through the twins, I argue, that Shakespeare establishes an inherent opposition between melancholy and mirth. Each twin's pre-established affect is challenged once the mistaken identity crisis comes into play. When Antipholus of Syracuse enters Ephesus, he temporarily abandons his sorrowful countenance and adopts his brother's merrier disposition. When the latter becomes embroiled in the confusion, the pattern is reversed. This crisis, in turn, suggests that a melancholic loss of self and the shedding of one's identity can lead to self-discovery. Moreover, the chapter will discuss how the mercantile profession, with its incessant travelling, its connections to water and increased social mobility, seemingly creates and sustains a melancholic disposition. Lastly, an examination of the play's resolution, in particular the efforts of the mother in reuniting the family, will bring in questions of gender and finally separate melancholy from notions of identity, if only momentarily. In this final argument, I will contrast Lynn Enterline's sexualized reading of Emilia with a more socio-humoural outlook, as I hold that the Prioress, as both woman and recluse, provides the necessary steps to usher in the comedic resolution.

While some critics emphasize *Errors*' "amazing insight into the paradoxes of individual and collective behavior" (Girard, 86), others are put off by its unpolished comedic plot and low-brow humour, perceiving the play as an early draft of Shakespearean comedy (Bevington, 2). Based largely on Plautus's *The Brothers Maneachmus*, *The Comedy of Errors* is Shakespeare's initial attempt at carving out an English version of Latin Comedy. Plautus' comedy presents itself as a farcical exploration of mistaken identity that occurs when long-lost twin brothers find themselves in the same city. Though it revolves essentially on confusion and the disruption of social stability, the story's narrative structure remains simple and humorous. Building on Plautus' treatment of mistaken identity, Shakespeare problematizes his version by incorporating a wide-range of emotions. Indeed, he modifies the original play to include multifaceted dramatic elements, establishing a narrative where "both the laughter and the discomfort are inseparable" (Miola, *The Plays and the Critics*, 38). The addition of melancholy, I argue, is one of these dramatic elements.

The first scene marks a strong shift from *The Brothers Maneachmus*. In Plautus' version, the twins' story is merely recalled in a short prologue (1-107). Instead of a terrible shipwreck, which tears a family apart, the brothers are lost at a market. Moreover, in the Latin play, the siblings are presented as orphans. Shakespeare alters this last fact by incorporating the twins' father, Egeon, and having him begin the play by describing the tragedies that befell his family. By doing so, Shakespeare introduces the concept of melancholy from the very start. Indeed, the old merchant is the first character to speak, and his recanting of the calamities which plagued his family provides all the expository details needed to enjoy the ensuing comedic plot. Barbara Freeman even suggests that

"the whole play can be looked at as Egeon's dream" (Bevington, 4). To push Freeman's argument further, I would argue that it is through him that Shakespeare frames the comedy. Asked by the Duke to relate his life story, Egeon is quick to define it as one of sadness "that by misfortune was ... prolonged, / To tell sad stories of my own mishaps" (I, i. 119-120). Before anything that can be said to be comic even transpires, Egeon veils the play with his tragic narrative. In a peculiar departure from traditional comedic structure, Shakespeare begins his play with a secondary character whose main affect is grief. Recalling Miola's theory of "double vision", Egeon embodies the darker, more tragic elements which seep in through an otherwise humorous plot.

Throughout the scene, Egeon betrays an oddly serene --if not welcoming-- attitude toward death, concluding: "yet this my comfort: when your words are done / My woes end likewise with the evening sun" (I, i. 26-27). This draws further attention to his melancholy. Given the sorrows he endured, a tragic countenance comes to be expected of the old merchant. His melancholy, however, adds an intriguing layer to his character. It transcends the woes he relates and becomes his dominant trait. By opening the play with Egeon's sadness, Shakespeare frames it with melancholy. Indeed, his impending death, set for dusk, serves as a reminder of where the play is heading, and when it will effectively culminate. Although it eventually becomes apparent that Egeon will be spared, the play's numerous temporal references contribute in maintaining his seemingly inevitable demise within the audience's scope (Bevington, 2). Given this chapter's humoural analysis, the case can be made that Shakespeare uses Egeon to initially insert melancholy into his comedy while preemptively projecting it towards its resolution. The fact that Egeon only appears in the play's first and last scenes reinforces this particular

notion. Accordingly, the play's climax, where the mistaken identity crisis reaches Ephesus' Priory, is preceded by the reappearance of the Duke, who, a merchant explains, "comes this way to the melancholy vale / The place of death and execution" (V, i. 120-121). Upon re-entering the play, Egeon attributes his son's failure to recognize him to his "feeble key of unturned cares" (V, i. 311), declaring that "grief hath changed me since you saw me last" (V, i. 298). By now, there is no doubt that the play will end with rejoicing as all is effectively in place for the family reunion to occur. Still, Egeon and his melancholy are brought back to effectively complete the narrative frame. In this sense, his melancholy proves extremely useful to the play's overall development. Certainly, the drama begins with a set of tragic expectations.

However, as previously mentioned, it rapidly becomes clear --to the audience at least-- that the brothers will ultimately meet and reunite with their father. Thus, Egeon's gloom is perceived as something that will dissipate once the play reaches its resolution. His melancholy, connected to the tragedies of his past, remains peripheral to the story. Moreover, Egeon conflates tragic elements with merrier ones throughout the play -- "happy were I in my timely death" (I, i. 138). He defines the shipwreck that separated his wife and him and left each of them with one twin as an incident in which "fortune had left us both alike / What to delight in, what to sorrow for" (I, i. 105-106). This not only underlines the tragicomic quality of his lexicon, but more importantly, it introduces the humoural opposition which unites the brothers, as Egeon's initial mention of his sons presents them in terms of mirth and melancholy.

Whereas Egeon's grief appears rigid and unyielding, the melancholy exhibited by Antipholus of Syracuse seems more flexible. Accordingly, it is his son's ailment which

successfully invades the play and challenges its pre-established notions of identity. Upon arriving in Ephesus, Antipholus comments to a fellow merchant on how his servant, Dromio, proves to be "a trusty villain, sir, that very oft / When I am dull with care and melancholy, / Lightens my humours with his merry jest" (I, ii. 19-21). Though slightly toned down in comparison to his father's overpowering assertion of grief, Antipholus' melancholy is nevertheless an integral part of his character. It stands as the first insight Shakespeare provides to him. Furthermore, the fact that Dromio apparently jests "very oft" validates his master's affliction as being of relatively frequent occurrence. Contrary to his Latin counterpart, Maneachmus II, who, though he declares himself to be "a man of many moods" (II, i. 398), proves to be slightly merrier upon his arrival in a foreign city (II, i. 346-349), Shakespeare sets up Antipholus of Syracuse as melancholic from the start.

Antipholus thus reveals a strong psychological strain of melancholy that can dissipate and return as time passes. Moreover, his affliction carries social implications. Lawrence Babb identifies England's "high regard for the melancholy man" (180) as well as "the general acceptance of the idea that it was an attribute of superior minds" (184) as evidence that melancholy was restricted to higher classes. Likewise, Gail Paster Kern, in *Humouring the Body*, argues that "affect ... was expected to mirror the social hierarchy because both were built into the analogical order of things. Thus, in *The Comedy of Errors*, part of the ethos of service in the Syracusan servant Dromio is subordinating his humor to that of his moody master" (209). "The experience of an emotion", Paster explains, "is thus transactional not only in being a response to a stimulus- whether that stimulus is external or internal, real or imaginary, present or remembered- but also in

occurring almost inevitably within a dense cultural context" (8). Consequently, the dynamics of Antipholus and Dromio's relationship seems to rests on this humoural balancing. As his master exhibits a melancholic countenance, the servant must display "merry jest". When his master later bids him to "jest in good time" (II, ii. 63), Dromio professes that he "durst have denied that before you were so / Choleric" (II, ii. 64-65). Antipholus of Syracuse comes across, much like Maneachmus II, as a man of multiple humours, between which Dromio appears to navigate quite skillfully. Melancholy, however, seems to be the Syracusan merchant's dominant trait, as well as the one Dromio proves to be most successful at combating. Though the scene does not forestall tragic elements as the previous one did, Antipholus of Syracuse is nevertheless initially presented as melancholic. Although Shakespeare might not directly endorse the restricting of the humour to higher classes, the notion of a humoural balance is particularly crucial to an examination of melancholy in *Errors*, especially when, later on, it shifts from linking master and servant to uniting the brothers. In addition, I would argue that, unlike his father, Antipholus' melancholy appears grounded in who he is rather than what has happened to him. This renders his affliction more malleable than Egeon's and allows it to integrate the Ephesian world more easily.

As he sets foot in Ephesus, Antipholus of Syracuse soliloquizes on his intention to "go lose myself / And wander up and down to view the city" (I, ii. 30-31), before concluding that he must, "to find a mother and brother, / In quest of them, unhappy, lose myself" (II, ii. 39-40). This innate sense of loss seemingly stems from his melancholic disposition. In "'Errors' and 'Labors': Feminism and Early Shakespearean Comedy", Anne Thompson, drawing on Coppelia Kahn's analysis of the play, links the question of

identity present in the play to "the fear of losing hold to the self... the fear of ego loss" (92-93). She further argues that "Antipholus' search for his mother represents a nostalgia for a loss state of bliss [and] the undifferentiated union of mother and child" (93). As Thompson suggests, Antipholus of Syracuse's melancholy seemingly transcends the basic mistaken identity plot and transforms into a quest for family. Building on his allusions to "losing" his identity, Antipholus subsequently likens himself to "a drop of water / That in the ocean seeks another drop" (I, ii. 35-36). Even though Shakespeare might have found the parallel between identical twins and drops of water irresistible -- Messenio, in Plautus's play, remarks how the two brothers resemble "two drops of the same identical ilk" (V, viii. 1594)--, the image certainly reflects the connection melancholy entertains with identity. As Miola observes, the "metaphor suggests the universal need of people for each other and the threat of self-loss in the ocean of the world" (*The Influence of New Comedy*, 24).

For Antipholus, the notion of losing oneself implies a loss of identity. Miola thus perceives *The Comedy of Errors* as a "complex play on loosing and finding [which tilts] the force of complication toward a comedy of identity and deliverance" (25). Overall, both critics imply that, in order to find his family and claim his true self, Antipholus of Syracuse must shed his identity and start anew. His melancholic disposition, partly revealed in the metaphor depicting drops of water engulfed by the ocean, appears crucial to this process. However, though a loss of self is necessary for Antipholus to pursue his quest, abandoning his identity does not successfully quench his melancholy. I would suggest that melancholy holds a much larger role in the play than its correlation with a loss of self indicates. First, it seems to be closely associated with the merchant

profession. Furthermore, I would argue that the allusion to symmetrical drops of water foreshadows the interchangeability of the brothers and the humoural balance which Shakespeare establishes between them. This last notion hints at how Antipholus of Syracuse's entrance in Ephesus challenges the city's stable notion of identity.

Antipholus' affliction exists beyond its mere association with an identity crisis. His mercantile lifestyle, with its lengthy oceanic travels and increased social mobility, contributes in sustaining his melancholic disposition. This idea also applies to Egeon, whose status as merchant is of considerable importance in the play. In the opening scene, the Duke first refers to him as "merchant" (I, i. 3), as the latter alludes to his "wealth increased / By prosperous voyages I often made" (I, i. 39-40). Moreover, Egeon clearly identifies his profession as a cause for the subsequent grief he suffers, explaining that "great care of goods at random left / Drew me from kind embracement of my spouse" (I, i. 42-43). Furthermore, his imminent execution, acting as a catalytic agent for the play's hasty resolution, is connected to the merchant life as well. In the opening minutes of the play, the Duke provides this explanation as to Egeon's imprisonment:

> The enmity and discord which of late
> Sprung from the rancorous outrage of your Duke
> To merchants, our well dealing countrymen,
> Who, wanting guilders to redeem their lives,
> Have sealed his rigorous statutes with their bloods;
> Exclude all pity from our threatening looks (I, i. 5-10).

The conflict which led to Egeon's capture thus stems from a mercantile dispute between the two cities. Everything about him is somewhat tied to his mercantile lifestyle, from the breaking up of his family, to his expected death as well as the overwhelming grief and melancholy this subsequently creates. As he concludes his narrative to the Duke, Egeon asserts: "and happy were I in my timely death / Could all my travels warrant me they live" (I, i. 138-139). The dual meaning of "travels" --as travelling or as hardship-- points to the fundamental role his profession plays in the overall display of his tragic melancholy.

Similarly, Antipholus of Syracuse declares himself "stiff and weary" (I, ii. 15) from incessant traveling as he enters the play. Upon his arrival, he receives a warning from a fellow merchant who advises him to "give out you are of Epidamnum, / Lest that your goods too soon be confiscated" (I, ii. 1-2). Both father and son are immediately associated with the mercantile profession. Their condition, however, differs from what Babb identities as "traveling melancholy", where the afflicted individual, coming home following a long journey abroad found himself "resent[ing] the world's neglect of his superior abilities" (76). Here, the heightened social mobility from which Egeon and his son benefit results in a lack of a grounded sense of self, as their travels in search of family further alienate them from the identities they so desperately seek to retrieve. This not only increases their melancholy, but also highlights their positions as "outsiders" entering Ephesus. Moreover, the association between merchant and melancholy is reasserted by the play's end. As Bruce R. Smith remarks, "since all the men in question … are merchants, the ending of *The Comedy of Errors* affirms values, ethical and monetary, that belong quite solidly to urban burgesses in the social hierarchy of early

modern England ... For all the exoticism of Ephesus as a setting, *The Comedy of Errors* celebrates the code of commerce" (119). Thus, as the comic resolution unfolds, Egeon's apparent pardon and the reunion of the long-lost brothers indicate that commerce is likely to prevail between Syracuse and Ephesus. The men in the play find themselves validated in their mercantile ways. It remains disputable, however, whether or not the play's ending successfully rids the merchants of their melancholy. Indeed, this notion will be examined in further details later on when considering the overall effectiveness of the closure Shakespeare provides for his comedy. Nevertheless, the connection between the characters' melancholy and their craft proves an important one as they pervade the Ephesian setting and its notion of identity.

In addition, the play's commentary on the merchant profession engenders water imagery. Despite the general perception of melancholy as a dry substance (Babb, 9), Shakespeare associates it with water throughout *The Comedy of Errors*. Indeed, references to the ocean emphasize how the merchant life appears almost synonymous with melancholy and the problematic notion of self-identification. In his opening monologue, Egeon recalls how "a league from Epidamnum had we sailed / Before the always-wind-obeying deep / Gave any tragic instance of our harm" (I, i. 62-64). Finding himself shipwrecked and widowed because of a sea storm, Egeon is quick to rail against the deep waters and identify them as the source of his grief. When he reappears in the final act, he rationalizes why his son fails to recognize him by emphasizing how "this grained face of mine be hid / In sap-consuming winter's drizzled snow, and all the conduits of my blood froze up" (V, i. 312-313). Here, the parallel is even stronger, as images of snow and frozen blood both highlight the coldness of melancholy and allude to

water. Moreover, as Harry Levin (132) mentions, there are striking similarities between Antipholus of Syracuse' initial mention of drops of water and Adriana's when she describes the troubled state of her marriage:

> For know, my love, as easy mayst thou fall
>
> A drop of water in the breaking gulf,
>
> And take unmingled thence that drop again
>
> Without addition or diminishing,
>
> As take from me thyself and not me too (II, ii. 124-128).

Thus, water appears as a medium through which the characters can vehicle their sorrow. Antipholus of Syracuse's metaphor not only refers to his feelings of irrelevance in an ever expanding world, but, as Miola describes it, "it illuminates Egeon too … venturing on the high seas" (*The Influence of New Comedy*, 25). Oceanic imagery ties the merchants to their melancholy while providing them with a stunning metaphor to illustrate their impressions of self-loss. Perhaps the connection lies within the enhanced social mobility they possess. As Egeon and Antipholus spend most of their time travelling in search of family, they find themselves surrounded by water –literally and figuratively. Incapable of laying claim on a grounded sense of identity, they rely on images of water to express their concerns because it is a sight most familiar to them and stands as an integral part of their affliction. Moreover, water imagery, much like Antipholus' melancholy, seems to gradually seep into the play as it progresses and unsettles the Ephesian setting.

When discussing *The Comedy of Errors*, much if often made of its setting, particularly concerning the ways in which the city of Ephesus is depicted within the New Testament. Elizabeth Hart, in "'Great is Diana' in Shakespeare's Ephesus", stresses how the city's "status as an early and even model Christian community did not prevent it from taking on apparently contradictory meaning for the early moderns ... While it was often associated with the regenerative spirit of Pauline scripture, it could often be linked to images of religious divisions" (1). She also notes how Ephesus "serve[d] to reconcile the powers of the virginal and the maternal, embodied emblematically in the figure of Diana" (Hart, 15). Hart (6) locates this last notion in the play as embodied by Emilia, the long-lost wife and mother. Within a discussion on the significance of melancholy, Ephesus serves a multi-layered purpose. While the town's identity is visibly destabilized upon the arrival of melancholic figures, it also offers the merchant characters the opportunity to soothe their woes. The city's status as a model of Christianity and, as Kent Cartwright puts it, its "reputation ... as a place of magic" (1), render it an ideal locale for an exploration of mistaken identities, separated families and the quest for selfhood. Melancholy challenges its identity before ushering in a resolution that, in reuniting the estranged family, transcends the play's initial situation. Moreover, Antipholus of Syracuse's interaction with Ephesian characters proves a telling example of how his melancholic demeanor infects the play.

Keeping with the initial humoural division operating in the play, Antipholus of Ephesus appears quite different from his father and brother. At the outset, he is no stranger to the play's setting. Moreover, although he, too, is a merchant, nothing is made of any travels he might have to undertake. More importantly, he betrays no sign of

melancholy as he enters the play. Lastly, Antipholus of Ephesus is unaware of his familial situation. Thus, for him, there exists no urgent need to embark on a lengthy quest for family and self-identification. While they may be identical in appearance, the twins are strongly differentiated through their psychological makeup. However, when Antipholus of Syracuse enters the play and triggers the identity crisis, he effectively alters his brother's countenance. Upon setting foot in Ephesus, the Syracusan twin is mistaken for his "merrier" brother. Furthermore, as the events engendered by the identity crisis unfold, Antipholus of Ephesus grows increasingly melancholic. This, I argue, highlights the humoural balance existing between the brothers. Recalling Paster's perception of a humoural balance existing between master and servant, Antipholus of Syracuse's intrusion into the Ephesian setting establishes a similar parallel with his brother, one which effectively conflates Paster's model with Miola's notion of "double vision". The twins interchange mirth and melancholy as the crisis develops, keeping both elements in the play's foreground.

While his brother displays it from the onset, Antipholus of Ephesus' melancholy reveals itself gradually as the confusion of mistaken identities increases. When he gets locked out of his house, he declares "I will depart in quiet, / And, in despite of mirth, mean to be merry" (III, i. 107-108). The allusion to feigning mirth recalls Dromio of Syracuse wrongfully describing his master as being in a "merry vein". In both cases, mirth is mistakenly ascribed. Moreover, when being questioned by the Abbess on her husband's mysterious condition, Adriana professes that "this week, he hath been heavy, sour, sad, / And much different from the man he was; / But till this afternoon his passion / Ne'er brake into extremity of rage" (V, i. 45-48). Although her revelation situates his

sudden passion within a narrow and distinct time frame, alluding to him exhibiting melancholy a week prior to the play's events, it does not suggests that Antipholus of Ephesus is prone to the inherent melancholic fits more clearly associated with his brother. Indeed, Antipholus of Ephesus' change of humour does not seem to be a pre-existing condition. In his essay "Comedies of Error: Plautus-Shakespeare-Molière", René Girard examines a phenomenon operating within the play which he identifies as "mimetic contagion" (75), where "stubborn insistence on the integrity of difference, the will to preserve as if nothing had happened makes the problem worse and the confusion tends to spread to broader and broader areas" (74-75). Accordingly, as the play progresses, Antipholus of Ephesus grows increasingly melancholic and comes to resemble his father and brother. As Lalita Pandit argues (22), his arrest for allegedly stealing a gold chain (IV, iv.) echoes that of Egeon prior to the play's opening act. Moreover, the increasing confusion that dovetails with the crisis of mistaken identity gradually thrusts him into the role of the stranger in Ephesus, recalling his brother's situation in the opening act. Though he initially seems quite different from the other male members of his family, Antipholus of Ephesus draws closer to them as the play progresses and develops a melancholic countenance, one which he seemingly caught from his brother.

The means by which the Ephesian twin displays his melancholy completes the tripartite structure of masculine melancholy Shakespeare establishes. He creates an interesting pattern between the brothers which revolves around notions of identity and self-loss. Antipholus of Syracuse willingly forgoes his identity in search of his brother and is unwittingly ascribed his twin's identity by the characters he encounters. Antipholus of Ephesus, on the other hand, sees his sense of self challenged, denied and

eventually stolen. Both brothers do essentially lose themselves, for different reasons, within Egeon's melancholic world. It is as if Antipholus of Syracuse' ailment, once inserted into the story, infects his Ephesian twin. As the play moves forward, the Antipholi evolve on separate, parallel tracks which will undoubtedly converge. It becomes apparent that, in order to solve the problem of mistaken identities, both men's trajectories must intersect. Girard's assertion that "the recognition scene is also a resolution" (66) demonstrates how crucial a meeting of the brothers is to the play's resolution. It also emphasizes the social implications at hand. If every character is fooled when encountering the twins one-on-one, the only possible setting in which their proper identities can be re-established is a public one. Effectively, only by having them both in the same place can other characters successfully differentiate between them. Moreover, I would maintain that Girard's analysis of the recognition scene is also useful in re-ascribing the proper humour to each man. Therefore, as his brother reacquires mirth, Antipholus of Syracuse retrieves his melancholy in spite of reuniting with his family. Although the final act succeeds in ending the confusion, it fails to address the presence of melancholy within the social sphere.

As melancholy presents itself as a familial concern, it must inevitably be cured by a family reunion. Shakespeare must first untangle the brothers' identities in order to reunite them. Both men see their identities challenged and denied until this eventual meeting. This process follows Paster's model of socio-humoural balance. From being overtly melancholic, the Syracusan Antipholus unknowingly mirrors his brother's merrier condition. Upon meeting him, Angelo declares: "you are a merry man, sir" (III, ii. 177). Although Angelo believes himself to be conversing with Antipholus of Ephesus, his

allusion to mirth, recalling Dromio of Syracuse's comment of finding his mater "in this merry vein" (II, ii. 20), is striking. Shakespeare maintains the humoural balance between the brothers despite the mistaken identity crisis. More importantly, the mistaken identity crisis suggests that their respective selves are momentarily conflated into a single figure. By posing as his twin, Antipholus of Syracuse veils his personal melancholy with what Angelo falsely identifies as Antipholus of Ephesus' mirth. When the latter's melancholy subsequently appears, the pattern reverses itself. By taking on his brother's identity, the Syracusan twin actually heightens his own sense of sorrow. Antipholus of Ephesus, on the other hand, is not mistaken for someone else. It is his actions and discourse which are challenged by other characters. Consequently, for most of the play, both men are believed to be the Ephesian merchant.

As the mistaken identity plot transpires mostly on a public level, melancholy, being intricately linked to it, develops accordingly. Though it originally presents itself as an internal condition, it needs to be carried out socially. Within the very first lines of the play, Egeon bears his soul to the Duke in a lengthy monologue, upon a request from the latter asking him to "say in brief the cause / Why thou departed from thy native home / And for what cause thou com'st to Ephesus" (I, i. 28-30). Though expository in nature, the Duke's question invites a public expression of Egeon's melancholic disposition. The grieved merchant proceeds to "speak [his] griefs unspeakable" (I, i. 32) and "utter what my sorrow gives me leave" (I, i. 35), cementing his narrative as a sorrowful one. Moreover, the performative character of his delivery recalls the tragic countenance under which Egeon operates --"In Syracusa was I born and wed" (I, i. 36). As previously mentioned, it is his overt wish for death which stresses his melancholic disposition. Even

if Egeon's affliction is not as fluid as Anitpholus', it nevertheless penetrates the play's social realm. Similarly, Antipholus of Syracuse professes his desire to "lose" himself" in the city, drowning his personal concerns into a public space. Lastly, in addition to being locked out of his house, Antipholus of Ephesus sees his identity denied publically by several characters. The social level rapidly becomes the norm, the actual stage where the play's concerns will be addressed. Much like identities themselves, this particular trait seems attached to a melancholic disposition. Once again, the three men's social processes develop on parallel plotlines until they finally converge in the fifth and final act. In his edition of the play, Bevington mentions how "some editors argue that the play was staged according to classical practice, with three visible doors backstage representing three "houses" ... [and] the stage itself representing a market place or open area" (5). Such a possible staging would effectively heighten the value of social interaction. It is then no coincidence that the plot culminates in what is perhaps the play's most public setting --in front of the Priory-- where no less than twelve characters are present. There, melancholy enters the social sphere and is simultaneously addressed alongside the mistaken identity crisis.

Thompson remarks how "the ending of *The Comedy of Errors* is significant among the early or middle comedies due to the prominence of the mother" (92). Arguably, though Egeon's reappearance in the last act completes the melancholic frame and triggers the play's resolution, it is Emilia, the Abbess of the Priory and the Antipholi's mother, who solves the identity crisis. As melancholy flows down the male side of the family, the parties involved seem unable to properly address it. "The men in the [play]", Thompson writes, "are made to seem confused ... by the mistaken identity

plot" (91). Generally, melancholy was believed to be an almost exclusive masculine condition. As Carol Neely puts it, it stood for "a fashioned intellectual condition for gentlemen and heroes" (1). While, once again, Shakespeare does not seem to champion the idea a melancholy restricted to the higher classes, he certainly highlights its apparent connection to masculinity. Accordingly, the identity crisis prevents Antipholus of Syracuse' melancholy from being addressed. In my opinion this marks a shift in the relationship between melancholy and identity, where resolving self-identification issues will not cure the humoural affliction, but rather allow for its examination.

Consequently, Emilia enjoys dual immunity from the play's melancholy through both motherhood and womanhood, and can thus effectively resolve the crisis at hand. Through her role as an Abbess, she has successfully shunned herself from Ephesus' public sphere. This self-imposed withdrawal allocates her a certain authority over the play's humoural matters. Her true identity might be concealed, but her status as Abbess is nevertheless respected by other characters. She even recognizes Egeon before he does (V, i. 340-346). In *The Tears of Narcissus: Melancholia and Masculinity in Early Modern Writing*, Lynn Enterline observes that "melancholia disturbs the presumed sexual identity of self-representing masculine subjects" (4). Her examination of *Errors* focuses partly on Emilia's apparent asexuality: "purged of sexuality, the mother returns to render her judgment about the cause of melancholia" (226). This argument is indeed an integral part of the issue. Cloistered in the Priory, Emilia is sheltered from any sexual implication. This, in Enterline's view, renders her capable of accurately identifying her son's ailment. Her ability to do so, however, seems more heavily rooted in gender and social status than it does in her sexuality. Absent from most of the play's actions, she avoids the

melancholic pitfalls it creates and provides a timely resolution to the comedic plot. Upon hearing Adriana's account of her husband's recent strange behavior, she declares:

> Sweet recreation barred, what do ensure
>
> But moody and dull melancholy
>
> Kinsman to grim and comfortless despair;
>
> And at her feet a huge infectious troop
>
> Of pale distemperature, and foes to life (V, i.78-82).

Her assessment of the situation is crucial to an examination of melancholy within the play. Not only does she directly acknowledge the condition, but also actively participates in conflating the twins in order to untangle their identities. Her exchange with Adriana includes both brothers; the Abbess protects Antipholus of Syracuse while the wife refers to his Ephesian counterpart. Thus, the women's exchange, where Emilia vows to "have brought him to his wits again / Or lose my labor in assaying it" (V, i. 96-97), conflates both twins. Moreover, her mention of "dull melancholy", recalling the words of Antipholus of Syracuse in Act One, further unites the brothers under the condition. She does, however, blame Adriana for Antipholus of Ephesus's melancholy. Her accusation retracts the melancholy from Antipholus of Ephesus' mind and renders it a side effect of his wife's ill-temper. Once again, this suggests that Antipholus of Ephesus suffers from a melancholy which he does not control.

Nevertheless, by revealing the Antipholi's real identities, Emilia saves Egeon from his execution, reunites the family and effectively brings an end to the overwhelming sense of masculine sorrow. Both her gender and social position render her capable of

dissipating, if only momentarily, the melancholic cloud hanging over Ephesus. Her status as a mother also becomes symbolically significant when, upon settling the confusion, she declares: "after such grief, such nativity!" (V, i. 407). Her comment, coupled with her previous mention of "labor", showcase how she symbolically gives birth to both twins for a second time by sorting out the confusion and ascribing to them the correct social identity. Albert Kinney, in "Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* and the Nature of Kinds", draws an insightful connection between the play's expression of "the basic themes and human fears of estrangement, solitude, and exile –of being alone without family or friends" (160) and the notion of Nativity. Following his argument, I would argue that the resolution of the crisis through the mother suggests the idea that the melancholy of the lost self becomes the melancholy of the unborn, which can only be cured through nativity. Reuniting with Egeon, Emilia grants her sons a second birth as well as established and socially validated identities. Although the play enjoys a satisfying resolution, the ending remains somewhat problematic. Despite the apparent blossoming interest between Antipholus of Syracuse and Luciana, as well as the reunion of Egeon and Emilia, the play does not end in marriage. Furthermore, the brothers have their identities restored through their mother rather than their love interests. Another interesting aspect is the lack of consequences stemming from the events entailed by the identity crisis. The troubles of the last day are dismissed as a mere trickery of mistaken identity. Thompson rationalizes these peculiarities by arguing that the play is "not primarily concerned with marriage at all but with male identities, male bonding, and male friendship" (94). To push the argument further, the play also seems to be more

preoccupied with male melancholy. However, despite this focus, its position is left somewhat unclear as the play ends.

At the very end of *The Brother Maneachmus*, Maneachmus I professes a wish for both twins to return "to our homeland" (V, viii. 1676). There is no such statement in Shakespeare's comedy. Nothing is said of whether or not the characters will remain in Ephesus or if the family will stay together. Hence, Shakespeare does not grant its play a return to normalcy. Though the men's melancholy appears to have dissipated, no one overtly claims to be rid of it. There remains the possibility that the affliction could manifest itself again. As discussed previously, the men are still encased in their mercantile ways. Moreover, if the resolution of the identity crisis allows each brother to reclaim his identity, I would suggest that they recover their respective humours as well. Keeping in mind Paster's notion of a humoural balance existing within the play, this entails that Antipholus of Syracuse recuperates the melancholic countenance he displayed prior to entering Ephesus. Thus, the status of melancholy at the end of the play remains ambiguous. It is also interesting to notice how the play's final words do not belong to a member of the family concerned with this wearisome element, but to the Dromios. Though much more is made of the meeting of the Antipholi, their servants, *Errors*' oft-forgotten, secondary set of twins, reunite as well. As they exit, the Ephesian servant proclaims: "we came into this world like brother and brother, / And now let's go hand in hand, not one before the / Other" (V, i. 424-426). Thus, both sets of brothers have found each other and leave the play together. The uniting of the Dromios, however, proves significantly different from that of the Antipholi. As discussed previously, neither servant betrays any sign of melancholy during the play. Furthermore, Dromio of Ephesus' last

words suggest that the servants conflate their identities without necessarily separating them afterwards, an image which conveys notions of class relations more than humoural theory.

Overall, Shakespeare's original exploration of melancholy within a comedic setting proves to be quite potent. By moving the humoural condition away from its strictly physical implications and toward deeper psychological ones, with strong ties to ideas of self-identification, he develops it in conjecture with his central male characters. Virtually everything about Egeon and Antipholus of Syracuse, from their gender to their trade, is associated with melancholy. Moreover, Shakespeare's interpretation of the condition allows him to situate it within the social sphere, where it first challenges the stable notion of identity before allowing for a proper resolution to take place. This adds considerable depth and content to characters that tend to be overlooked when examining the Shakespearean canon. The playwright also opposes melancholy and mirth, a process he repeats in several of his subsequent comedies, creating a complex series of humoural parallels. In this sense, the reunion of the brothers leaves Antipholus of Syracuse's melancholy somewhat unaccounted for. In all, Shakespeare's use of melancholy, much like *The Comedy of Errors* itself, comes to stand as an early achievement by a remarkable playwright. Despite its rough edges, the play provides plenty of evidence as to its complexity and ingenuity.

When he moves on to writing *The Merchant of Venice*, Shakespeare further explores the intricate connections between melancholy and identity, both publically and privately. The main themes and issues discussed here are explored at greater lengths in the Venetian setting. However, though similarities can be drawn between the

melancholics of *The Comedy of Errors* and the merchant Antonio, there remain disparities between both plays' treatment of the humour. If Shakespeare inserted melancholy as an external threat in *The Comedy of Errors*, he renders it an integral and, certainly, enigmatic concern of *The Merchant of Venice.* There, the affliction comes from within the social setting and resides in the play's titular character. As he comes to write a problematic comedy, melancholy develops accordingly.

Lost at Sea: Passive Melancholy in *The Merchant of Venice*

In sooth I know not why I am so sad,

It wearies me, you say it wearies you;

But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,

What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,

I am to learn;

And such a want-wit sadness makes of me

That I have much ado to know myself (I, i.1-7).

Although it has elicited an extensive amount of criticism and interpretation over the years, there seems to be no general consensus regarding Antonio's enigmatic opening to *The Merchant of Venice*. His inexplicable sadness is thrust upon the audience from the start, only to be cast aside and never again directly addressed. Certainly, Antonio's confession of grief lends itself to an immensely vast array of readings, from homoerotic to economical. In spite of its nebulous origins, Antonio's melancholy and, more importantly, Shakespeare's treatment of it, stands as another landmark in the playwright's overall examination of the humour in comedic settings.

This chapter will focus on how Antonio's melancholy affects *The Merchant of Venice*. Drawing on both Lynn Enterline and Richard Levin, it will highlight melancholy's relationship to self-identification. Furthermore, following Theodore Leinwald as well as Simon Critchley and Tom McCarthy, it will examine how the merchant life seems once again rooted at the core of the affliction. However, beyond simply linking Antonio's melancholy to a grieving sense of loss, erotic, mercantile or

otherwise, this chapter will suggest that melancholy acts as both cause and consequence to an innate passivity; a state of utter inactivity which, ultimately, leads to Antonio's alienation from the play. If *Merchant* is to be perceived, as David Bevington argues, as an opportunity for the characters to learn how to "seek happiness by daring to risk everything" (178), then Antonio's position within the play's resolution provides a final illustration of how his melancholic disposition disables him on a social level. Furthermore, the chapter will discuss how Shakespeare contrasts Antonio's melancholy with Portia's. In an interesting departure from *The Comedy of Errors*, Shakespeare presents her as a case of female melancholy. Using Cynthia Lewis' reading of Antonio's relationship with Bassanio, I wish to demonstrate how his passive manipulations to secure the love of his friend are countered by Portia's active pursuit. As they both compete for Bassanio's affection, the heiress of Belmont, who rapidly shakes off her idle sense of sorrow, trumps the merchant and relegates him to playing second fiddle. Through this last argument, I imply that, in contrast to *The Comedy of Errors*, melancholy's social function translates into inertia and essentially weakens more than it reinforces one's status.

As was the case in the previous chapter, one of Shakespeare's primary additions to the original material he borrows from when writing *Merchant* is the inclusion of melancholy. *Il Pecorone*, the principal source of inspiration in terms of plot, contains many of the elements Shakespeare eventually inserts into his play: the lending of money to court a Lady, the mischievous Jew and even a contract entailing a pound of flesh (Bevington, Appendix 26). However, the staking of friendship between the two central male characters in *Il Pecorone*, Ansaldo and Giannetto (who respectively become

Antonio and Bassanio in the Shakespearean tale), acts as a mere catalyst for the ensuing action. It rapidly becomes clears that the tale actually belongs to Giannetto (Khale, 188). The dynamics of the relationship between the two male characters, in the Italian text, is not an issue. Accordingly, Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*, another one of Shakespeare's primary sources, offers mainly a rough draft of the character of Shylock. Marlowe's drama presents "the tragedy of a Jew" (Prologue, 30) and its similarities with Shakespeare's version begin and end with Shylock. Indeed, the only one of *Merchant*'s sources which effectively conveys some hints of melancholy is another of Marlowe's works, *Doctor Faustus*, whose protagonist betrays a sorrowful longing not unlike Antonio's. Murray J. Levith observes how "at the beginning of their plays, both the magician and the merchant are unhappy, Dr Faustus, though, thinks he understands the cause of his disquiet" (97). Other than their initial sadness, however, both characters are in fact quite different. I would argue that, though erroneous, Faustus' drive to "have obtain'd what I desire" (I, iii. 112) differentiates him from Antonio, whose dominant trait remains his passive melancholic countenance.

Antonio's opening speech immediately conveys his melancholic dispositions. Unlike Antipholus of Syracuse who off-handedly refers to times when he finds himself "dull with care and melancholy" (I, ii.20), the merchant locates himself in his sadness. The very first lines he speaks are concerned with this particular aspect. Indeed, Antonio displays a great interest in his own affliction, wishing to discover its particular makeup and origins. This self-interest only reinforces the importance assigned to his melancholy. Moreover, Antonio's use of "in sooth" implies that what he goes on to declare represents the synthesis of a longer conversation with his friends, Salerio and Solanio, one he seems

truly invested in. Thus, the comedy's titular character opens up the play by declaring himself grieved by a sadness of causes unknown. Though his situation does not entail tragedy in the ways that Egeon's opening monologue did, Antonio's speech marks a peculiar entry point into a comedic work. The initial focus of the play remains sadness. Furthermore, his assertion of having "much ado" in order to know himself, conveys notions of self-identification.

As she argues in regard to *The Comedy of Errors*, Lynn Enterline perceives *Merchant* as expressing anxieties regarding a "loss of self for which ... there seems no adequate compensation" (307). She observes that, as it was the case in Ephesus, *Merchant*'s "collective sense identity... is also shaped on the model of a masculine subject" (230). Similarly, Richard Levin, in *Love and Society in Shakespearean Comedies*, examines how the play "traces the struggle for inclusion into society and that the celebration merely establishes the identity of the winners" (21). Levin also perceives Antonio's initial sadness as a sorrowful expression of misidentification, describing the merchant as a "pitiable figure [and] an expression of melancholy and desperation" (78). However, the melancholy found in *The Merchant of Venice* seemingly transcends the relationship found in *Errors*, where a loss of self directly implied a melancholic state. Beyond the "want-wit" sorrow which prevents him from knowing himself, Antonio questions the origins of his melancholy and expresses a desire to learn of what "stuff" it is composed. As a result, despite its shift to a more psychological affliction, melancholy is simultaneously rendered more tangible. Moreover, his inquiries as to whether or not he caught his melancholy from somewhere --or something-- echoes Girard's notion of mimetic contagion. Though his ailment is not necessarily a social threat in the way that

Antipholus' was, it still represents something one should be wary of contracting. Its mysterious origin somewhat distances it from the play's concerns. Though it is included in the play from the beginning, melancholy is thus granted an external agency. While it certainly affects notions of identity, it is not restricted to them. Furthermore, I would argue that Antonio's passivity transcends his troubled sense of self. In a play in which characters are driven to act upon their desires, Antonio, at the center of it all, remains surprisingly static as the story progresses. His opening speech addresses this point. As he questions whether his melancholy was caught, found or stumbled upon, each verb substantially decreases his level of participation. By the last line, it is almost as if melancholy itself has come by the merchant and latched onto him.

Similarly, his exchange with Salerio and Solanio suggests his meekness. Antonio is quick to deny his friends' claims that his sorrow stems from mercantile or even romantic complications. To Salerio's assertion that his "mind is tossing on the ocean / There where [his] argosies with portly sail" (I, i. 8-9), he merely replies that "my merchandise makes me not sad" (I, i. 45). It is interesting how Antonio refutes his merchandise as a possible cause for his melancholy, yet does not associate it with mirth. Accordingly, Solanio's suggestion that Antonio is "in love" (I, i. 46) is also cast aside in an even more dismissive fashion. By striking down his friends' statements, Antonio renders his melancholy virtually hermetic to analytical probing. Solanio eventually abandons the guessing game and declares: "then let us say you are sad / Because you are not merry; and twere as easy / For you to laugh and leap and say you are merry / Because you are not sad" (I, i. 48-49) before professing that "Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time… of such vinegar aspect / That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile"

(I, i. 51; 54-56). Here, Solanio expresses a fundamental disposition which implies that it might not be in Antonio's nature to be merry. By declaring him melancholic simply because he is not happy, Solanio creates a polarized dichotomy of mirth and sadness, and situates Antonio on the sorrowful side. However, his claim that Antonio would in fact leap up and laugh should he be cheerful proves inaccurate once his overwhelming passivity is factored in. Indeed, such behavior would imply a capacity for action Antonio does not seem to possess. The melancholic merchant, it seems, is not eager to resolve his sorrowful countenance and remains inactively encased in it. Salerio, on the other hand, appears to understand this idea. He depicts Antonio in metaphors where he seems dominated by the elements. Whether he refers to his friend's mind "tossing on the ocean" or to the image of a harsh "wind that, cooling [his] broth / Would blow [him] to an ague" (I, i. 22-23), Salerio perceives his sadness as one on which he has no bearing. In his metaphors, Antonio, battered by the elements, remains passive. It is also interesting to note how the various diagnoses of his sadness come from other characters. Though he vehemently denies claims which aim to pinpoint the source of his melancholy, Antonio fails to venture a plausible hypothesis as to why he feels this way. By not doing so, he highlights how melancholy prevents him from actively participating in the world he lives in, thus amplifying his feelings of uselessness and sorrow.

During his initial musings on the source of his melancholy, much is also made of Antonio's profession. Much like Antipholus of Syracuse and Egeon, Antonio's melancholy is related to his trade. The play itself is filled with allusions to economy and the merchant life. Theodore Leinwald, in *Theatre, Finance and Society in Early Modern England*, argues that *Merchant* stands for a "very nuanced elaboration of credit relations

[which] proceeds from Shakespeare's only sustained imagining of a merchant" (13). Leinwald perceives Antonio as trapped within these credit relations, in the context of which "he cannot imagine a meaningful way to establish that he is 'a good man' (I, iii. 11)" (26). This struggle engenders his melancholic state. Given the play's extensive reliance on money, legal bonds and commerce, Leinwald's argument proves thoughtful and compelling. Though Antonio professes that the state of his affairs grieves him not, he never admits to happiness either. In a play whose very title suggests mercantilism, Leinwald rightfully links Antonio's melancholy to the same factors which plagued the merchant characters of *The Comedy of Errors,* namely an increased social mobility and the lack of a grounded sense of identity. Furthermore, Leinwald's argument parallels the work of Simon Critchley and Tom McCarthy who, in "Universal Shylockerie" present Antonio's disarray as "index-linked to his merchandise; his mind lies in his bottoms" (3). For Critchley and McCarthy, Antonio's humour is tied to his ships and the risks they run as they sail on tumultuous seas. According to the authors, "Antonio, title character and model citizen of the Venetian State, is sad: melancholy, anxious, as though manifesting the symptoms of a trauma brought on by a disaster that has not yet happened, or has not yet (as Becket would say) taken its course" (10).

Although these two arguments are insightful, they do not consider the larger function melancholy holds within the play. Even within the economical sphere, I would hold that Antonio is defined by his hindering passivity. To use Critchley and McCarthy's terminology, it is not so much that Antonio's mind "lies in his bottoms", but rather, that it lies at sea, away from him and out of his control. Though he is a merchant like Antipholus or Egeon, Antonio's sorrow is different from theirs. The Venetian merchant

lacks the social mobility brought on by lengthy oceanic travels. As his ships sails all over the world, Antonio remains in Venice, inactive and disconnected. The scenario Salerio depicts as he theorizes that Antonio's sadness stems from his merchandise illustrates this point:

> My wind cooling my broth
> Would blow me to an ague when I thought
> What harm a wind too great might do at sea.
> I should not see the sandy hourglass run
> But I should think of shallows and flat,
> And see my wealthy Andrew docked in sand,
> Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs
> To kiss her burial. Should I go to church
> And see the holy edifice of stone
> And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks
> Which, touching my gentle vessel's side,
> Would scatter all her spices on the stream,
> Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks
> And, in a word but even now worth this,
> And now worth nothing? (I, i. 22-36).

Aside from being quite poetic, the images recall Salerio's metaphors where Antonio found himself dominated by the elements. The winds that make Antonio shiver also threaten his ventures at sea. The sandy beaches where his argosies could shipwreck echo the unnerving passing of time as he inactively stands by. Thus, both merchant and

merchandise appear at the sea's mercy. Through this notion, Solanio presents Antonio's merchandise as a possible substitute for himself. As he conflates him with his profession, Salerio successfully conveys Antonio's inertia. Furthermore, the idea of his ship's side being slit by a rock and subsequently bleeding out silks and spices foreshadows the dreaded fate Antonio faces later on once he is trapped by Shylock's bond. Here, water metaphors still reflect the relationship between merchant and melancholy. However, they no longer appear drawn from an increased social mobility or lengthy travels. Water essentially renders powerless. As his livelihood is scattered on the ocean and floats adrift, Antonio remains on land, unable to act. Melancholy, both a cause and a consequence of his passivity, is thus reflected through his craft. This proves particularly interesting when considering the fact that Antonio is a member of the Venetian society rather than an outsider. Though he benefits from a social sense of belonging, unlike in *Errors*, the merchant is nevertheless melancholic.

Antonio also perceives his melancholy not solely as an ailment but, more importantly, as a marker of who he is or must be. "I hold the world but as the world", he informs Gratiano, "a stage where everyman must play a part / And mine a sad one" (I, i. 78-79). Despite questioning its significance earlier on, Antonio seems at ease with his sorrowful disposition and sees no reason to challenge it. Gratiano, concerned that his friend possesses "too much respect upon the world" (I, i. 74), advises him not to "fish… with this melancholy bait / For this fool gudgeon, this opinion-"(I, i. 101-102). Like Salerio and Solanio before him, Gratiano ventures a guess as to the origins of Antonio's sadness without concrete evidence that this is what afflicts him. However, rather than merely attempting to identify the exact cause of his friend's sorrow, Gratiano expresses a

clear distaste for it. His inquiry as to "why should a man whose blood is warm within / Sit like the grandshire cut in alabaster?" (I, i. 83-84) suggests a disdain for the inertia Antonio betrays. For Gratiano, melancholy is not a valid social role. Yet, as Leinwald points out, "Shakespeare does not offer Antonio an alternative to playing this particular part" (115). Accordingly, though he condemns melancholy in general, Gratiano does not grant Antonio an opportunity to adopt a merrier countenance. In response to the merchant's assertion of the sad part he must play, Gratiano initially replies: "let me play the fool" (I, i. 80), claiming the function of merry jester away from Antonio. As this first scene comes to a close, the origins of Antonio's enigmatic sadness remain a mystery. However, there is a sense that Antonio, no matter what the cause of his melancholy, will not become merrier as the play develops. Indeed, such a countenance belongs to the likes of Gratiano, Lorenzo and, more importantly, Bassanio. The three friends are the play's romantic figures who will subsequently court their respective love interests.

According to Leinwald, "Antonio is cast in the unappealing role of the sad toiler; while Bassanio enjoys the glamour and the risk that go with fleece-chasing" (118). Undeniably, the two characters are intricately linked. Bassanio needs the melancholic merchant's financial assistance in order to undertake his journey to Belmont. He thus appeals to his friend, to whom he "owes the most in money and in love" (I, i. 131). Antonio, seemingly out of friendship, agrees to help him out in his ventures. Their relationship comes to embody the initial contrast between passive and dynamic countenances operating in the play. While Antonio lends his credit to his disposal, Bassanio acts on his desire for Portia and sets sails for Belmont. The merchant's

willingness to help, however, comes with ulterior motives. Though burdened by his melancholy, Antonio uses the situation to secure Bassanio's affection.

In *Particular Saints*, Cynthia Lewis remarks how the name "Antonio" carries religious undertones of sainthood, which she explains "account in many cases for their attempts at selfless charitable conduct [and] puts them at odds with their worldlier societies and their own worldlier desires " (14). Lewis perceives this association between Antonios and martyrdom as stemming from "Saint Anthony's own spiritual tribulations and temptations of the flesh as well as his eventual inclusion in the earlier Renaissance tradition of wise folly" (15). "The very name Antonio", she writes, "suggests to audience of High English Renaissance drama, a willingness to compromise one's own well-being for a person or a principle seen as more important- or higher- the self" (21). In her analysis, Lewis is quick, however, to set aside *The Merchant of Venice*'s Antonio, which she perceives as "more troubling because his conduct borders on false martyrdom" (21). In this sense, Antonio's willingness to stake his "purse" and his "person" (I, i.138) for Bassanio becomes not so much a selfless act, but a calculated tactical maneuver to win his friend's affection. This notion complements homoerotic readings discussed by Leinwald or Steve Patterson who, in his essay "The Bankruptcy of Homoerotic Amity in Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*", argues that what is "central to the [play], is a dramatization of the failure of male friendship in a radically shifting mercantile economy- an economy that seems better regulated by a social-structure based on marital alliance and heterosexual reproduction" (2). Both critics perceive the potential loss of Bassanio as crucial to Antonio's melancholy. His inherent passivity prevents him from expressing his feelings positively and in turn, sustains his sorrowful demeanor. According to them,

Antonio's acceptance of the bond's terms, and his subsequent wish for death once his ships are lost, translate into manipulative gestures to secure Bassanio's love.

Certainly, there is enough evidence in the play to suggest that Antonio's melancholy stems from an unrequited infatuation for Bassanio. The argument, however, fails to convey how Antonio's passivity remains the dominant factor which dictates his melancholic behavior. "All my fortunes are at sea" (I, i. 177), Antonio informs his friend, echoing Salerio's metaphor of floating silks and spices. Moreover, though he professes that he will do the same, he urges his friend to "go forth [and] / Try what my credit can, in Venice do; / That shall be racked even to the utmost" (I, i. 180-181). Even though Antonio is willing to help, he is still reluctant to act. Bassanio must go and verify for himself what his friend's name will provide him with. Moreover, Antonio's lines present an image of torture which reinforces the sacrificial nature of his gesture. Beyond his love for Bassanio or the state of his credit, Antonio's gesture, whether selfless or manipulative, is a passive one. When Bassanio asks Shylock for a loan, using Antonio's credit as voucher, their exchange illustrates this point. The image of Antonio bound and immobile reiterates his melancholic state:

Shylock- Three thousand ducats, well.

Bassanio- Ay sir, for three months.

Shylock- For three months, well.

Bassanio- For the which, as I told you, Antonio shall be bound (I, iii. 1-5).

Bassanio's bargaining presents Antonio as bait for Shylock to seize upon, strangely echoing Gratiano's earlier advice not to fishing with "this melancholy bait" (I, I. 101). Bassanio understands how his friend is defined by this notion and thus entices

Shylock with the idea of Antonio being indebted to him in order to secure the loan. Later on, in Belmont, he compares the letter he receives from Antonio to the merchant himself. He offers a personification to Portia where "the paper as the body of my friend, / And every word in it a gaping wound / Issuing lifeblood" (III, ii. 264-266). This depiction presents one more conflation of Antonio with an image of saintly martyrdom, reiterating what he perceives his function to be within the play. Antonio sees his predicament as an opportunity to sacrifice himself for Bassanio's sake, since he cannot compete with the heterosexual love uniting his friend to Portia. Furthermore, his affliction contributes in heightening the fundamental opposition existing between Shylock and him.

When discussing the play, much is often made of the similarities which seemingly unite Antonio and Shylock. Lewis perceives them as "bound naturally by their strangeness and estrangements" (55). Henry Turner, in "The Problem of the More Than One", remarks how "both characters end the play alone, the former as the unbefriendable enemy and the latter as the undesirable friend" (12). Although they do occupy antagonistic positions in the play on several levels, I would argue that one of their biggest differences lies in their humoural dispositions. While Shylock has been granted several readings through the countless discussions centered on his character, he certainly does not appear melancholic. Despite his ethnicity, he participates in the Venetian economy, albeit in the socially-resented position of the usurer. Moreover, he never betrays any sign of the morose and desperate countenance under which Antonio operates. If anything, he is the choleric counterweight to the melancholic, looking to "feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him" (I, iii. 44). Moreover, while Shylock might not altogether belong to Leinwald's economic model, his participation in the play reveals itself considerably livelier than

Antonio's. Whether he is justified or not, Shylock takes action in light of the events transpiring around him. His behavior contrasts the merchant's idle forbearing of whatever befalls him and underscores the fundamental difference which, in my opinion, unites both characters. Consequently, when Antonio's ships vanish, Shylock's bond offers him the ideal venue for his inert sacrifice: a contract carrying horrendous stipulations which places the merchant's body at stake but does not require any action on his part. Whether Antonio truly desires to be released from the bond or not, it presents him with the perfect opportunity to elicit Bassanio's guilt in hopes of securing his affection. The embroilment between the merchant and the Jew, which culminates in the trial scene, plays a crucial role in setting up the play's resolution. Brought to court, their clash requires the intervention of a third party. Interestingly, it is Portia who provides a solution to the crisis. In doing so, she disputes --and eventually defeats-- Antonio's inert sense of melancholy.

Despite the powerful opposition between Antonio and Shylock, Portia plays an equally crucial role in the drama's development. Effectively, she appears in more scenes than Antonio --eight to his six-- and speaks almost three times more lines than he does (and almost twice as much as Shylock). Moreover, Antonio's melancholic passivity, initially countered by Bassanio, comes to be challenged by her driven dynamism. In the second scene of the opening act, on the heels of Antonio's overwhelming and enigmatic sadness, Portia declares herself "weary of this great world" (I, ii. 1). She displays a melancholy not unlike the merchant's, as her initial position recalls his passive predicament. Left as the sole heiress of her father's vast estate, she must stand by as suitors come in and attempt to win her by solving a riddle. Rather than lacking the desire

to remedy to her situation, she possesses no means to do so. "I may neither / Choose who I would nor refuse who I dislike;" she declares, "so is the / Will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead / Father" (I, ii. 22-25). What sets her apart from Antonio, however, is the fact that, despite its apparent hopelessness, she does not resign herself to the status she occupies. Moreover, her assessment of the County Palatine, one of her suitors, suggests an aversion to melancholy, as when she declares: "I fear he will prove the weeping / Philosopher when he grows old, being so full of / Unmannerly sadness in his youth" (I, ii. 47-49). Unlike Antonio, Portia does not wish for an inactive social role. Though respectful of her father's wishes, she tries her best to influence Bassanio, her personal preference among the suitors, in choosing the correct casket. In this sense, though she betrays a melancholic countenance not unlike Antonio's, Portia stands as his opposite. She does not desire a life of passive sorrow and is prepared to act in order to prevent it. When Bassanio receives a letter informing him of the tragic situation Antonio finds himself in, Portia's priorities in addressing him are evident:

> First go with me to church, and call me a wife,
> And then away to Venice to your friend:
> For never shall you lie by Portia's side
> With an unquiet soul (III, ii. 302-306).

Although she might not be aware of Antonio's manipulative ways, he remains an obstacle to her pursuit of Bassanio's affection. Antonio's melancholic mind games are a direct threat to her happiness. She will send Bassanio to Venice in order to resolve the matter so she can subsequently claim him to herself exclusively. She ultimately makes

the trip herself and intervenes in the trial, sparing the melancholic merchant while securing her husband's love.

The importance of the trial scene is undeniable in virtually any interpretation of *The Merchant of Venice*. Beyond its narrative implications, the scene becomes a social arena where the play's three central characters battle for supremacy. Levin perceives it as the moment where "the three characters, all responding to the betrayals they have endured and their fears of isolation, maneuver for advantage" (70). Accordingly, Lewis describes it as "a virtual play-within-a-play... inviting inspection of the characters' various use of theatrics" (64). These assessments raise an interesting question. If Shylock wishes to see the law uphold his bond and grant him a pound of Antonio's flesh, and Portia simultaneously attempts to rescue Antonio and secure Bassanio's love, what, then, is Antonio striving for? Although he vies for Bassanio's affection, Antonio is anything but vocal during the trial. His melancholy prevents him from laying any claims regarding his fate. Irremediably encased in his passivity, Antonio seems ready for death. His self-description at the start of the trial alludes to this notion: "I am a tainted-wether of the flock, / Meetest for death, - the weakest kind of fruit / Drops earliest to the ground, and so let me" (IV, i. 114-116). The image highlights how he perceives himself as an inactive participant. Similarly, his request for the court "to give the judgment" (IV, i. 239-240) suggests a distancing from any possible decision on the matter. Antonio's earlier declaration that the world is "but a stage" certainly applies in this case as, even with his life in the balance, Antonio seems determined to play the sad role to its end.

The merchant's apparent disregard for death reveals a conscious manipulation of his friend's feelings and sense of loyalty. When it initially appears that Shylock has

triumphed, Antonio asks Bassanio to "commend me to your honorable wife, / Tell her the process of Antonio's end, / Say how I lov'd you, speak me fair in death: / And when the tale is told, bid her judge / Whether Bassanio had not once a love" (IV, i. 269-273). Antonio, aware that he cannot actively compete with Portia for Bassanio's affection, hopes that his death can successfully cement his position as Bassanio's original love interest. This duplicitous attempt at winning his friend's love over Portia comes to represent the limited scope of Antonio's actions. This is the only approach he can resort to. He truly embodies the piece of paper Bassanio describes to Portia in Belmont (III, ii, 264-266), one on which the story is to be written. By sparing him, Portia foils his plan. Though his life is saved, Antonio, still utterly passive, cannot compete with her. Bassanio can now return to Belmont free of any of the grief that his friend's death would have engendered. The heiress of Belmont has rebutted the merchant's passive melancholic pleas.

It is interesting to note how Antonio's most active gesture in the play is his final decree against Shylock. Effectively, he proves slightly more invested in Shylock's punishment than he did in his own fate during the trial. Moreover, his decision to rob Shylock of two of his quintessential characteristics in the play, his religion and his money, proves interesting. To borrow Enterline's theory of a masculine melancholy brought on by a loss of self, I would suggest that Antonio's ruling is an attempt to deprive Shylock of what constitutes his identity and possibly transform him into a melancholic figure. Slighted by the outcome of the trial, Antonio is perhaps trying to exert revenge upon him. However, Shylock leaves the play too quickly to betray any evidence of the effects Antonio's punishment has on him, other than his vague and open-ended remark on

how he is "not well" (IV, i. 391), which, in itself, does not suggest melancholy. Overall, Antonio's participation in the trial scene, though quite limited, reveals itself to be in tune with his overall participation in the play. The inflexibility, on his part, to shake off his melancholic passivity proves costly once the play reaches its resolution.

The final act, following the tumultuous dealings of the Venetian trial, opens in Belmont, where Lorenzo and Jessica relate tragic love stories to one another. The predominantly melancholic mood recalls Portia's initial sorrow, one caused by the limits and impossibilities of love. In a sense, it serves as a warning of things to come for the pairs of newlyweds coming back from Venice. There is no insurance that melancholy will not eventually catch up with them as it initially did with some of the other characters. More importantly, the melancholy they express echoes a sense of sorrow tied to lyrical notions of heterosexual, romantic love. It has little to do with the inexorable sadness Antonio exhibits. The presence of Lorenzo and Jessica highlights their fundamental difference from the merchant. It also highlights the contrast between Venice and Belmont. Essentially, the latter's harboring of romantic coupling clashes with the former's depiction of melancholic passivity.

Though the fact is often neglected, *The Merchant of Venice* remains a comedy. Thus, its resolution includes a pairing up of six of its characters (Lorenzo and Jessica, Bassanio and Portia, and Gratiano and Nerissa) through marriage. This leaves Antonio as the odd man out, a role to which he appears resigned. As it was the case in *The Comedy of Errors*, I suggest that the merchant's melancholy is not clearly cured by the play's end, nor is it directly addressed following Antonio's opening speech. Although Portia welcomes him to Belmont and encourages him to stay, there is a lingering impression

that Antonio does not belong. His travel to Portia's estate, however, does offer him with one final opportunity to sacrifice himself for Bassanio's sake. When a clash erupts following the ring trick, Antonio, in an effort to smooth out the problem, declares:

I once did lend my body for his wealth,

Which but for him that had your husband's ring

Had quite miscarried. I dare be bound again,

My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord

Will never more break faith advisedly" (V, i. 249-253).

Antonio hopes to repeat the earlier pattern where he passively staked his body in Bassanio's favor. Faced with the prospect of being sidelined opposite of three couples, this is the only maneuver available to him. However, the result of his sacrificial gesture is somewhat different. Portia, having conceived of the ring trick, successfully subjugates both Antonio and Bassanio by the end of the scene. On the one hand, the trick grants her control in her relationship with Bassanio, as he must now ask for her forgiveness and swear fidelity. Moreover, even though Antonio is allowed to remain in Belmont with his beloved friend, Portia has effectively pushed him down a step on the scale of Bassanio's affection. Through the highly improbable return of Antonio's ships as the play ends, Portia scores another victory over him. By delivering him "better news in store for you / Than you expected" (V, i. 274-275), she effectively renders him even more indebted to her –in fortune and in life. Subsequently, Antonio is no longer a threat to her. Thus, Portia has no need to concern herself with his well-being as she previously did. Their last exchange suggests this particular element:

Antonio- Sweet Lady, you have given me life and living;

For here, I read certain that my ships

Are safely come to road.

Portia- How now Lorenzo?

My clerk hath some good comforts too for you (V, i.286-289).

Despite her professions of warmth and hospitality, Portia seems uninterested in Antonio. Although his salvation certainly served her well in securing her husband's affection, his presence in Belmont rapidly comes to be perceived as a nuisance. Moreover, his previous denial of any correlation between his sadness and the state of his affairs negate the possible curative effects that the return of his ships might have. If anything, his missing argosies could have been one last card to play in his attempt to guilt Bassanio into choosing him. This final dismissal of Antonio validates his position as a passive observer. Despite the threats he faces throughout the play, Antonio's behavior remains the same. Though the setting moved from Venice to Belmont, Antonio is still the sad figure who will grieve over his desires without acting on them. Though he is not explicitly cast aside at the end of the play, Antonio hovers on the outside the play's comic resolution. His melancholy renders him a tolerable inconvenience, one which can be socially entertained but that must ultimately be kept away from one's private life.

While Shakespeare tailors his treatment of melancholy in *The Merchant of Venice* to the mood and plot of his comedy, it does not present itself as an external force pervading the play. Rather, Shakespeare shapes it into an integral part of the story, one which is present in Venice's social sphere as the play begins. Antonio's melancholy might appear as an acknowledged social role, one he seems to cling to, but it does not seem to benefit him in any way. Antonio makes a desperate plea for Bassanio through

inactive sorrow but ultimately loses to Portia. Thus, melancholy takes a step forward in its foray into Shakespearean comedy. It is now a tolerated role one can adopt. However, it is still denied a complete participation in the social sphere. Moreover, Shakespeare centers it on a single character to a much larger degree than he did in *The Comedy of Errors*. When he moves on to writing *As You Like It*, he takes this process even further. Jaques is the resident melancholic of Arden forest, the cynical observer who defines himself through his melancholy, both personally and publically. Though the setting changes considerably between the two plays, Shakespeare's treatment of melancholy within a comedic setting evolves on similar lines. However, his pastoral comedy, far from merchants and oceans, ushers in a melancholy somewhat different from the one which plagued the melancholic merchant of Venice.

"A stubborn will to please": Jaques' Affected Melancholy in *As You Like It*

In *The Melancholic Muse: Chaucer, Shakespeare and Early Medicine*, Carol Hefferman suggests that "while it is impossible to imagine *Hamlet* without Hamlet in the play, Jaques is neither central to the action of *As You Like It* nor the play's hero" (103). Her assertion certainly seems accurate. Not only is Jaques unessential to the overall development of the drama, but he remains utterly inactive through it. Yet, over the years, scholars have devoted considerable attention to the character. Jaques' presence in *As You Like It* marks a strong shift from the other works examined so far. Rather than considering notions of self-identification or anxieties tied to the merchant life, the play is primarily concerned with the exploration of young love in a pastoral setting. Shakespeare develops his treatment of melancholy in accordance with this shift.

This chapter will focus on how Jaques' melancholy predominantly anchors itself in theatricality. Contrary to *Merchant*'s Antonio, whose passivity ultimately alienates him from the play's social sphere, Jaques' melancholy is tolerated in Arden because other characters perceive it as an affectation. Though he holds a socially accepted position, Jaques exerts little influence over the play's concerns and is relegated to a secondary role. Drawing on Richard Courtney's reading of the play as an on-going debate between the forest life and the realm of the court, this chapter will initially consider how the setting of Arden, standing in as a provisional social sphere, allows Jaques to define himself exclusively through melancholy. However, I will also argue that this particular locale fails to grant him an actual social position. His interaction with fellow exiles, as well as his opposition to the fool Touchstone, will demonstrate how he functions not unlike the

court jester, to whom the residents of Arden Forest come for entertainment rather than wisdom. Subsequently, using Cynthia Marshall's consideration of the melancholic figure as a social filter which absorbs other characters' melancholy in order for them to pursue their love interests, this chapter will suggests that Shakespeare contrasts Jaques with the play's central pair of lovers, Rosalind and Orlando. His encounters with each of them will not only highlight this particular notion but also indicate how his melancholy fails to stand on equal grounds with romantic love and fails to lead him to a similar sense of self-discovery. Lastly, through an examination of the play's closing moments, I will consider the ramifications of Jaques' departure from the final celebrations as well as his refusal to return to Court. While I agree with Marshall that, in his last address to the characters, Jaques attempts to redistribute the melancholy he has cultivated, I argue that his failure to do so, and his departure from the play, have more to do with *As You Like It*'s overall treatment of melancholy than it does with him specifically. It appears the humour is not yet capable of fully integrating into the comic resolution –at least not in the context of this play. The chapter's final claim will thus be that, since Arden represents an ephemeral, pastoral haven and not the more genuine early modern society, melancholy's bid for inclusion is once again denied. In the process, I will question Jaques' efficacy as a vehicle for a socially acceptable form of melancholy.

A study of the source material used in conceiving this pastoral comedy reveals the melancholic Jaques to be a Shakespearean addition. This fact is particularly interesting when considering how much Shakespeare borrows from Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde*. In terms of plot, the play and the prose work are almost identical. Lodge's story presents much of the events and characters found in *As You Like It*: the usurping Duke, a foil

between brothers, exiles to a Forest and idyllic love stories. However, none of the characters in Lodge's tale resembles Jaques –a striking fact given the amount of identical names found in both texts (Orlando, Ganymede, Rosalind, Oliver, etc.). The only possible comparison lies in a speech Adam makes in Lodge's story on the living conditions of man (62-67) which, as Brian Nellist points out in his introduction to the play (15), anticipates Jaques' "seven ages of man" speech:

> All our pleasures end in pain and our highest delights are crossed with deepest discontents. The joys of man, as they are few, so are they momentary, scarce ripe before they are rotten, and with withering in the blossom, either parched with the heat of envy or fortune (66).

The connection, however, is thin at best. Jaques' melancholic behavior stands as a Shakespearean insertion which presents another interesting stage of his overall treatment of melancholy. Despite numerous narrative symmetries, Shakespeare's version favors dialogue over action. He considerably reduces the violence of the story and condenses the events transpiring outside of the forest into a single act. It seems the playwright is eager to get his characters into Arden, where his exploration of pastoral love can properly develop.

In *Shakespeare's World of Love: the Middle Comedies*, Richard Courtney examines the ways in which Shakespeare develops a "new structure for comedy based on the idea of a journey… Here, in [*As You Like It*], he adopts the structure to bring about the main action of the play" (25). Courtney's reading stresses the inherent opposition that exists between the world of the Court and that of the Forest. "The play's core", he writes, "lies in Arden. This green world is the reverse of the court: court-forest is the play's first

double structure" (64). For him, Arden Forest lies at the center of the comedy's journey, where court-dwelling characters undergo meaningful transformations. While I agree with Courtney's overall argument, I doubt whether Arden Forest is actually a setting where, as he puts it, "everyone can discover the truth and find himself through errors and mistakes" (66). Certainly, the characters returning to Court at the end of the play emerge as enriched by their experience. However, I perceive the forest as less of a life-altering environment and more of a retreat; a place of holiday where people can forgo their concerns, if only momentarily. Arden does not enforce transformation on its inhabitants. It is within this environment that Jaques sustain his melancholic disposition. The passive revelry entailed by the pastoral seemingly benefits his development of the humour.

Thus, *As You Like It* presents fundamentally opposed worlds between which its characters navigate, similar to *Merchant*'s opposition of Venice and Belmont. Much like Court, the forest harbors its own social microcosm, with its authoritative structure and established social functions. Courtney, who perceives Jaques as a "cynic [who] prefers to be superior, apart from ordinary life" (89), draws a comparison to *Twelfth Night*'s Malvolio, describing both characters as an "element [in the play] that is irreconcilable [and] strikes a lightly discordant note" (92). However, I would argue that, when considering the play's treatment of melancholy, Jaques stands as a refined version of the passive Antonio. Similarly to *Merchant*'s titular character, he displays a significant attachment to his humour: "I do love it better than laughing" (IV, I. 4). Yet, he does so without any of its cumbersome elements of self-doubt or false martyrdom. Furthermore, Jaques' notion of identity transcends Antonio's uncertain probing as to the origins of his sadness. Jaques knows why he is melancholic and clearly takes pride in it. When they

first make mention of him, the Duke's lords identify him as "the melancholy Jaques" (II, i. 26). Far from being questioned or ostracized, Jaques' melancholy becomes his social identity. The residents of Arden Forest expect him to be of such a countenance. Upon hearing of the slaying of a stag, the Duke inquires: "but what said Jaques? / Did he moralize this spectacle?" (II, i. 48-49). Duke Senior, it seems, derives great pleasure from Jaques' "sullen fits / For then he's full of matter" (II, i. 67-68). Thus, Jaques thinks he has acquired a social function where his main duties consist of "weeping and commenting" (II, i. 65) and through which his melancholic disposition thrives. The passivity linked to his melancholy is no longer a hindrance. Moreover, Jaques possesses a strong notion of what his melancholy consists of:

> It is a melancholy of my own,
> Compounded of many simples, extracted from many
> Objects, and indeed the sundry contemplations of my
> Travels, in which my often rumination wraps me in a
> Most humorous sadness (IV, i. 15-19).

The primary difference, I would argue, between Jaques and the merchant Antonio, is that the former claims an explicit responsibility in having fashioned his own individual melancholy and attaches to it a definite uniqueness. Melancholy, for Jaques at least, is no longer an external threat which can contaminate indiscriminately, but a particular trait which can be used to distinguish oneself. "I can suck melancholy / Out of a song as a weasel sucks eggs" (II, v. 11-12), Jaques tells the lord of Amiens, singling out his specific ability for melancholy. By claiming to be in a state of permanent sorrow, however, Jaques becomes a type rather than a complex character. He believes himself to

be holding a valid social position and, although he defines it as a private sadness, Jaques needs to carry out his melancholy publically. This last element highlights the more performative aspect of Jaques' demeanor.

Theatricality has a significant impact on Jaques' behavior, much more than it did for Antipholus of Syracuse or Antonio. Arden allows him to fashion his melancholic persona to the best of his abilities. Despite his professions of preferring solitude to human contact, Jaques requires an audience to effectively play the part. His oft referred "All the world's a stage" speech (II, vii. 138-165) can be seen as an attempt to consider life as a set of social roles people act out as they age. Certainly, his monologue stresses the theatrical aspect of his demeanor, one he projects onto other characters and audiences alike. Thus, his speech presents an elaborate listing of roles a man can adopt throughout his lifetime. It is interesting how melancholy is not part of Jaques' aforementioned declarations. Although the case could be made that the overall mood of his speech echoes his overwhelming sense of cynicism, it remains peculiar that his melancholic persona does not specifically relate to any of the roles he describes. It is as if it truly did fashion it for himself. Still, in arguing that the world relies on performance, Jaques also validates his identity. By claiming exclusive rights to his melancholy, he carves out his part of "this strange eventful history" (II, vii. 163).

Unlike other melancholic figures examined so far, Jaques betrays no connection to the mercantile lifestyle. As a gentleman, he fails to express any of the apprehensions tied to travel and social mobility that plagued earlier merchant characters. Arden's passive observer is quite content with remaining within the Forest, where worldly concerns are inconsequential to him. The connection to water, however, remains, albeit in

a much different scope. In their initial discussion of Jaques, the Duke's lords recount how the wounded stag, collapsed on the barge of the river, "augmenting it with tears" (II, i. 43), brought Jaques to weep profusely "into the needless stream" (II, i. 46). Assuredly, a connection between Jaques, the stag and the river, centered on liquidity, could be established. However, I am inclined to think otherwise. Jaques links his tears to those of the animal solely because his melancholic countenance calls for it. The other instance where Shakespeare conflates him with water comes during Jaques' discussion with Orlando later on:

Jaques- By my troth, I was seeking for a fool when I

Found you.

Orlando- He is drowned in the brook. Look but in,

And you shall see him.

Jaques- There I shall see my own figure (III, ii. 281-285).

Here, the image suggests Orlando's critique of Jaques' inherent narcissism more than it comments on the latter's relationship to the brook. Jaques betrays none of the quasi-existential anxieties tied to water imagery that Antipholus or Antonio expressed. Water is merely an artifice which contributes in maintaining Jaques' ostentatious sense of melancholy. Despite his tolerated position, Jaques holds no authority in Arden. While the Duke heartily enjoys his company, he only does so for entertainment. Jaques' rants upon the world are not taken seriously by other characters who perceive his melancholy as nothing more than an affectation. When Jaques professes his wish to "cleanse the foul body of th' infected world / If they will patiently receive my medicine" (II, vii. 60-61), the Duke quickly admonishes him:

Most mischievous foul sin, in chiding sin.

For thou has been a libertine,

As sensual as the brutish sting itself;

And all th' embossed sores and headed evils

That thou with license of free foot as caught

Wouldst thou disgorge into the general world (II, vii. 64-69).

Essentially, Duke Senior's harsh answer sets the record straight as to the extent of Jaques' powers in Arden. Though he might be presently enwrapped in a perpetual state of sorrow, the Duke's rebuttal indicates how this might not have always been the case. His mention of Jaques' past sexual indiscretions denounces his fallacious demeanor. In chiding him, the Duke simultaneously highlights the theatrical aspect of his current humoural state and denies him the social authority Jaques seeks. However, even if he was to "disgorge" his melancholy onto the world, there is a sense that Jaques would not be taken seriously and that his sorrow would not propagate itself publically. In Arden, all social roles seemingly lose their agency as characters forgo their concerns to revel in pastoral delights. Therefore, melancholy is deprived of the undesirable --or threatening-- countenance it possessed in *Comedy of Errors* or even *Merchant of Venice*. Coming to Arden has allowed Jaques to fashion a melancholic personality which he perceives to be a prominent social role. However, other characters think very little of his discourse and identify his humour as posturing, treating it with indifference. Indeed, Jaques partakes in societal matters and comments idly on his surroundings, but never exerts any influence. He belongs to Lawrence Babb's model of the "cynical observer", who enjoys "privileges somewhat like those of a court jester [that] may be sour and surly as he pleases" (92). To

that effect, once the characters form Court pervade the pastoral setting, it becomes clear that Jaques' social position is challenged by the arrival of the fool, Touchstone.

According to Courtney, the main difference between the fool and the melancholic lies in their respective relationships to the two spheres of action found in the play. "Jaques", he writes, "dissolves the distinctions between court and forest by seeing them pessimistically; Touchstone dissolves them through his realism" (76). Courtney acknowledges the fool's ability, as a realist, to see through the social masks people don, a trait which allows him to navigate easily through different social environments. His discussion with Corin on the merits of court life versus those of the shepherd's life (III, ii. 13-83) speaks to that effect. "Jaques is his opposite", Courtney argues, "as a cynic he prefers to be superior, apart from ordinary life" (89). In cautioning everyone, Jaques isolates himself from both realms. Thus, in *As You Like It*, mirth and melancholy are set in a much sharper contrast than in other Shakespearean comedies. Like Court and Forest, Touchstone and Jaques are depicted in direct opposition to one another. Through their interaction, they compete for the same position. However, as their perceptions of one another indicate, both men do not operate on the same level within the play.

Following his first meeting with Touchstone, Jaques is visibly unnerved. "A fool, a fool!", he declares to Duke Senior, "A motley fool. A miserable world. / As I do live by food, I met a fool" (II, vii.12-14). As he goes on to describe his encounter, it appears that Touchstone has made a considerable impression on him. Certainly, his praising of the "noble" and "worthy fool" (II, vii. 33-34) does not betray the cynicism with which he normally operates. Effectively, Jaques is envious of Touchstone's capacity to "vent / In mangled forms" (II, vii .41-42). "O, that I were a fool!", he concludes, "I am ambitious

for a motley coat" (II, vii. 42-43). Jaques seems aware of the freedom attached to Touchstone's duties, one he lacks within the rigid melancholic structure he has created for himself. What Jaques seeks is "the liberty / Withal, as large a charter as the wind, / To blow on whom I please" (II, vii. 47-49). In this initial encounter, Shakespeare directly opposes the fool and the melancholic. In Alan Brissenden's words, "Jaques realiz[es] that he, himself, is no longer able to act as the court wit when there is a professional fool in the forest" (31). Jaques' reaction to meeting Touchstone highlights, once again, the theatrical aspect attached to his melancholy. He asks the Duke for a suit of motley in order to dress like the fool so he can better play the part. His ailment might be an integral part of his identity, but it nevertheless remains an accessory used in acquiring public recognition. It is also one that is easily upstaged by mirth.

Within the romantic and pastoral concerns of the play, Shakespeare grants a higher value to mirth than he does to melancholy. Jaques, enwrapped in sorrow, struggles to keep up with the fool's sharp puns and rapid display of wit. The large disparity in their respective opinions of one another reflects the inequality of their status. Touchstone's satirical courting of Audrey, and Jaques' subsequent intervention, emphasize this notion. As Jaques steps in and volunteers to give the young shepherdess away, inquiring of Touchstone: "will you be a man of your breeding, / Be married under a bush like a beggar? Get you to / Church, and have a good priest that can tell you what / Marriage is" (III, iii. 76-79), the fool merely addresses him as "good Master what-ye-call-'t" (III, iii. 68). Touchstone obviously pays less attention to Jaques than the melancholic does to him. Moreover, by referring to him in such a way, the fool not only makes a lewd pun on Jaques' name --as "outhouse"-- (Bevington, 312), but also denies him the recognition he

desires. By failing to acknowledge his melancholy, Touchstone implies Jaques' inferiority. For Courtney, Jaques' and Touchstone's squabble over matrimonial unions suggests similar opinions on idealism. "Touchstone and Jaques", he declares, "are alike in their rejection of the ideal and, therefore, in their incompleteness. For them, the ideal is absurd," (90). In his view, Jaques' intervention in Touchstone's mock courtship is simply an attempt to match wits with the jester, and not a defense of the sanctity of marriage. This idea certainly appears feasible, as Jaques' parting words to the fool, in the fifth act, "and to you wrangling, for thy loving voyage / Is but for two months victualed" (V, iv. 190-191), express a realistic perception of Touchstone and Audrey's union. However, I would hold that what truly emerges from their exchange is the inequity of their positions. In other words, Jaques believes himself to be conversing with an equal, whereas the fool pays little attention to what he has to say.

Following their discussion, it becomes clear that his melancholy is no match for Touchstone's wit. The fool understands how the role Jaques plays within Arden limits his abilities. His clownish behavior does not require the seriousness Jaques ascribes to his melancholic character. This, in turn, allows the jester to ensnare him in eloquent absurdities. His discourse on "a lie seven times removed" (V, iv. 68) proves a biting parody of Jaques' "seven ages of man" speech. As the fool spins out his web of banter, Jaques falls into the trap: "can you nominate in order now the degrees of the lie?" (V, iv. 87). Duke Senior, appreciating not only Touchstone's rhetoric but Jaques' gullibility as well, enjoys the scene. "He uses his folly like a stalking-horse", he declares of the fool, "and under the presentation of that he shoots his wits" (V, iv. 105-106). The image of the stalking-horse, echoing the wounded stag, presents the relationship of Jaques and

Touchstone as a predatory one and once again places the fool above the melancholy man. The final contrast between both characters lies in Touchstone's willingness to rejoin society by the end of the play and Jaques' refusal to act accordingly. Foolery is set to return to Court and the preferred social sphere, whereas melancholy opts to remain within the illusory pastoral realm. In the context of *As You Like It*, melancholy is certainly not equivalent to mirth. Interestingly, Shakespeare compares Jaques' affectation to romantic concerns as well. His encounter of the play's central pair of lovers reveals the ways in which his melancholy is also challenged by young love.

In her essay, "The Double Jaques and Constructions of Negation in *As You Like It*", Cynthia Marshall argues that "in Jaques' self diagnosis and in Burton's *Anatomy*, melancholy paradoxically both inscribes difference and testifies universality" (7). Her view of Jaques certainly highlights the dual nature of his self-ascribed ailment, one that simultaneously plays out on private and social levels. Marshall writes that he "functions ... to forestall the treat of melancholia, but in (successfully) doing so, he also figures melancholia's threatening estrangement of self from self ... The melancholy Jaques makes his living ... by cheerfully lampooning what he can be but is not" (3). However, it is Marshall's idea that "the melancholy Jaques ... thereby takes on the melancholic burdens set down by other characters upon their entry into Arden" (6) which proves of greatest importance to this chapter. It does seem that Orlando and Rosalind are freed from their melancholic burdens once they enter the Forest and can thus properly court each other. In the first act, both characters express an overwhelming sense of sorrow. Orlando deplores the mistreatment he endures at the hands of his older brother, Oliver. "This is it", he concludes, "that grieves me; and the spirit of my / Father, which I think is

within me, begins to mutiny / Against this servitude" (I, i. 21-23). Similarly, Rosalind answers her cousin's plea to "be merry" (I, ii. 1) with a declaration that "unless / You could teach me to forget a banished father, you / Must not learn me how to remember any / Extraordinary pleasures" (I, ii. 3-6). Jaques, who can "suck melancholy / Out of a song" (II, v. 11-12), allows them to forego their sorrowful worries once they are exiled in Arden.

Building on Marshall's argument, I would suggest that Jaques' interaction with the two characters also stresses the fact that, in *As You Like It*, the development of young love remains unscathed by melancholy. Jaques' excessive theatricality hinders his dealings with Rosalind and Orlando and denies him participation in the journey to mutual self-discovery the lovers undertake. As he banters with both of them, the superficiality of his countenance is further exposed, leaving very little doubt as to the status of melancholy in relation to love. Though quite brief, Jaques' encounter with Orlando is telling. The men are not inclined toward each other:

Jaques- I thank you for your company,

But good faith, I had as lief have been myself alone.

Orlando- And so had I; but yet, for fashion's sake, I

Thank you for your company.

Jaques- Gob b' wi' you. Let's meet as little as we can.

Orlando- I do desire we may be better strangers (III, ii. 250-258).

The courtesy of their language scarcely veils their distaste. Through their short discussion, Shakespeare presents a stand-off between types. Their confrontation centers on romantic concerns and, as it was the case with Touchstone's foolery, Orlando does not

grant Jaques' words the importance that his inflated sense of self dictates. As he declares, referring to Rosalind: "I do not like her name" (III, ii. 362), Orlando answers that "there was no thought of pleasing you / When she was christened" (III, ii. 263-264). Beyond defending the woman he loves, Orlando hints at Jaques' unimportance in regards to the play's love plot. The melancholic can rant all he wants, but in the end, he has little bearing on the lovers' courting. Moreover, Jaques' humoural disposition sets him in direct opposition to Orlando's romantic behavior. Their discourse becomes a debate between romantic and melancholic types. When Jaques concludes that "the worst fault you have is to be in love" (III, ii. 278), Orlando rapidly declares: "'Tis a fault I will not change for your best / Virtue. I am weary of you" (III, ii. 279-280). For Orlando, the fundamental division between them is irreconcilable. For him, Jaques is either "a fool or a cipher" (III, ii. 286), a nonentity who holds no authority over him. Their parting words highlight this opposition once more:

> Jaques- I'll tarry no longer with you. Farewell, good
>
> Seigneur Love.
>
> Orlando- I am glad of your departure. Adieu, good
>
> Monsieur Melancholy (III, ii. 287-290).

As was the case with most of their exchange, their debate never leaves the realm of courtesy. Despite their dislike, both men play the polite part. Orlando imitates the cynic's speech pattern, matching his sentence structure and use of French. Being the last one to speak, however, Orlando has the opportunity to modify at will the implications of his reply. Hence, he professes "adieu" to Jaques' "farewell", stressing a sharper sense of finality, and, where Jaques had identified him as "Seigneur", he refers to him as

"Monsieur", indicating a significantly lower level of respect. Moreover, despite being a guest in Arden Forest, it is Orlando who remains on stage while Jaques promptly departs. By getting the last word, Orlando demonstrates how the melancholic cannot influence the romantic. This disparate relationship is further explored when Jaques encounters the disguised Rosalind.

Jaques' discussion with Ganymede underscores her apparent superiority. Although he does not appear as eager to dismiss her as he did with Orlando, beginning their exchange by declaring: "I prithee, pretty young, let me be better acquainted / with thee" (IV, i. 1-2), Rosalind is far from impressed by his rhetoric. To Jaques' approval of sorrow over laughter, she retorts: "those that are in extremity of either are / Abominable fellows and betray themselves to every / Modern censure worse than drunkards" (IV, i. 5-7). Moreover, having come to Arden with Touchstone, she wholeheartedly chooses mirth over melancholy. "I had / Rather have a fool to make me merry", she declares to him, "than experience / To make me sad" (IV, i. 25-27). In her depiction of courtship, Rosalind understands the need for balance and self-knowledge. She despises the idealist notion of love and attempts to educate Orlando on what it really implies. Moreover, being the play's potential voice of reason, she disapproves of Jaques' melancholy. Effectively, it is to her that he delivers the speech where he defines his melancholy as of his own fashioning. Whereas Jaques stresses the uniqueness and authenticity of his humour, Rosalind easily perceives how much it relies on pre-conceived notions. As Jaques departs, she declares:

> Farewell, Monsieur Traveler. Look you lisp
>
> And wear strange suits, disable all the benefits of your

Own country, be out of love with your nativity, and

Almost chide God for making you that countenance

You are, or I will scarce think you have swam in a

Gondola (IV, i. 31-36).

In echoing the stereotypical traits attached to what Babb identifies as "the traveling malcontent" (73), Rosalind indicates her perception of Jaques' melancholy as purely theatrical. Her understanding, I would argue, stems mostly from the fact that she, too, is playing a role as Ganymede. However, Rosalind recognizes the limitations of affect as well as the need to eventually move away from it in order to reintegrate society. As Ganymede, she attempts to bring other characters to embrace a more realistic vision of love and courtship so they can happily return to Court. Jaques, on the other hand, professes no wish to abandon his melancholic persona. Thus, Shakespeare contrasts melancholy with romantic love and grants the edge to the play's young lovers. Even though Jaques falsely believes to be exerting an influence on their behaviors, his relationship with the young lovers, as was the case with Touchstone, is considerably imbalanced. The final difference between them and Jaques, found in their willingness to return to Court and his refusal to do so, underlines the lesser status melancholy holds at the end of the play.

Amongst the optimistic festivities of the last act, Jaques' departure proves problematic. In typical Shakespearean fashion, *As You Like It* ends in multiple marriages and the solving of dramatic tensions *in extremis*. Orlando is reunited with his brothers, Oliver will now marry Celia, and the usurping Duke Frederick, whom we are told, "was converted / Both from his enterprise and from the world, / His crown bequeathing to his

banished brother" (V, iv. 160-162), will now exile himself. Shakespeare effectively ties up loose ends in order for his character to return to society. The play ends in rejoicing, to which all participate save the melancholic Jaques who professes to be "for other than dancing measures" (V, iv. 192). Instead, he will join the newly converted Frederick since "out of these convertites / There is much matter to be heard and learned" (V, iv. 183-184).

For Marshall, Jaques' departure is "disruptive because of what he leaves behind rather than what he takes away with him" (8). Having absorbed the other character's melancholy, Jaques is now "redistributing [it] over to the four couples in the strangely prescribed gender formations in which Hymen has left them" (9). Jaques does bequeath what he feels is due to several characters, from the Duke's "former honour" (V, iv. 185) to a love for Orlando "that your true faith doth merit" (V, iv. 186). In the process, he reminds them of what awaits them at Court. However, there is no indication that he succeeds in giving them back their melancholy. Moreover, the overall indifference toward Jaques' professed wisdom, I would argue, still applies in this last scene. This renders his final speech as yet another generic display of which the characters enjoy without serious consequences. In my opinion, Jaques' departure has more to do with his perception of what a return to Court entails. While he enjoyed, in his view, an accepted function in Arden, there is no guarantee it will still be the case once he re-enters society. His passive demeanor might entail a fate similar to that of Antonio's. In other words, it is not so much that Jaques does not want to join the others, but that he chooses not to. Here, is it not so much that Jaques' performativity prevents him from joining other characters. The lovers are, after all, getting ready to reintegrate Court, a world where spectacle and

the upholding of social roles prevails. Rather, it is that his clinging on to a melancholic affectation prevents him from achieving the type of self-discovery that other characters underwent while in Arden. The lovers might still be upholding social roles, but their sense of identity appears much stronger than Jaques'.

Melancholy, in *As You Like It*, once again fails to integrate into the comic resolution despite the fact that Jaques benefits from a tolerated position as a melancholic commentator in Arden Forest. His humour is no longer considered something alien which can be caught or must be cured. However, even with this status, Jaques holds no influence. The forest residents look to him for entertainment, but never seriously consider his advice. Through his encounters with the characters from Court, Shakespeare undercuts his melancholy with what they represent: mirth and romantic love. The inherent inequality of their relationship, stemming from Jaques' false sense of importance, indicates how melancholy is relegated to a secondary function within the play. Moreover, Arden stands as a pastoral haven where characters can momentarily forget their concerns rather than a genuine social realm. In this sense, while his refusal to partake in the play's final celebrations can suggest a Shakespearean critique of isolation and social withdrawal, it also identifies the precarious position melancholy holds for Shakespeare as he turns to crafting his more festive comedies. Perhaps Jaques would rather stay behind because he feels his melancholy would not be properly received, despite the Duke's invitation (V, iv, 192). Conceivably, society might not ready to assimilate it. When Shakespeare writes *Twelfth Night*, however, the situation is considerably altered. The permeable setting lets melancholy in, and the humour inhabits the whole island of Illyria. Though the context changes one again, his exploration of

melancholy in this next work provides the final steps in melancholy's complex insertion into Shakespearean comedy.

"And thus the whirligig of time brings in his revenges": Melancholy's Social Permutation in *Twelfth Night*

She never told her love,

But let concealment like a worm i' the bud,

Feed on her damask cheek. She pined in thought,

And with a green and yellow melancholy

She sat like patience of a monument,

Smiling at grief (II, iv. 110-115).

Cesario's imaginary recounting of his sister's tragic story reflects *Twelfth Night's* enigmatic makeup. While the play proves a brilliant comedy, filled with festivity, role-playing and the topsy-turvy atmosphere of carnival, it also contains sorrowful undertones. Shakespeare sets the drama in Illyria, an island where revelry is sharply contrasted by darker elements, of which the prevalence of melancholy is undoubtedly one of its most striking features. While other works presented a single or limited number of melancholic characters, *Twelfth Night*, it seems, is overrun by them. Indeed, the play stands as one of the most potent instances where Shakespeare integrates melancholy into a comedic setting. The playwright presents several strains of the ailment and interestingly ascribes positive features to some of them.

This chapter will examine how melancholy permeates the whole setting of *Twelfth Night*, revealing itself in various forms and ultimately transcending its comic resolution. Drawing upon Richard Courtney, I will initially observe how Shakespeare undercuts the different forms of melancholy found in Illyria by inserting Viola at the center of the story's development and climax. In contrast with other characters studied so

far, I argue that Viola, though stricken with melancholy, does not yield to the humor and presents a somewhat more sincere and tempered expression of it. This notion, combined with Richard Levin's theory of a collective ailment spreading through Illyria, will highlight how melancholy affects almost every character in the play and how their interactions with Viola alters their countenances. Indeed, Viola's lovesickness and mourning for her brother contrast with the more superficial expressions of sorrow exhibited by Illyria's authority figures, Orsino and Olivia. Additionally, her cross-dressing, and the subsequent distaste she develops for it, calls into question the exaggerated melancholy they display. It is through her, I argue, that Shakespeare casts aside excessive melancholic exhibitions in favor of a more refined humoural affect. On this subject, this chapter will also note how Shakespeare ultimately aligns mirth and melancholy to oppose unwarranted social affectations. In doing so, melancholy finally integrates into the comic resolution. This superfluous sense of posturing in the play is mostly personified by Malvolio. The steward's interaction with the likes of Feste and Sir Toby will underscore the necessity for his eventual expulsion. Lastly, taking into account Anne Barton and Yu Jin Ko's arguments about temporality in the play, I will demonstrate how the melancholy that remains at the end of *Twelfth Night* is irrevocably tied to the passage of time and the intangible longing it creates. Although Viola effectively dissipates most of the play's melancholy, I hold that Feste ushers in this particular form. This final assessment of melancholy in a Shakespearean comedy will thus emphasize how the humor successfully achieves this transformation.

Twelfth Night's origins lay in both Italian comedies and contemporary English prose. Although some of the texts he draws from betray a sense of melancholy,

Shakespeare renders it one of his comedy's dominant traits. The Italian play *Gl'ingannati* (The Deceived) contains many of the comedic plot elements found in *Twelfth Night*, notably the cross-dressing of its heroine and the ensuing confusion it engenders. It also develops within a similar festive atmosphere. However, other than Gherardo's brief mention of female melancholy (256), the play is void of any serious reflection on sorrow and remains, on the whole, a much bawdier work. Lelia's cross-dressing serves primarily to heighten the play's erotic humor and fails to suggest the more complex psychological woes Viola wrestles with. Shakespeare thus retains *Gl'ingannati*'s farcical elements but refrains from focusing on physicality --whether sexual or violent--. Moreover, *Twelfth Night* eradicates the sense of parental authority which prevailed in the Italian comedy. Shakespeare focuses primarily on a trio of young lovers and the confusion their mixed desires entail. Orsino and Olivia are, in fact, Illyria's authority figures and have full control over their actions and behaviors. This last notion is significant once their excessive melancholy is factored in. They come across as being solely responsible for the elaborate melancholic affectation with which they operate.

Another important source, Barnabe Rich's *Apollonius and Silla*, presents a love story that resembles the one transpiring in Illyria. Indeed, Shakespeare borrows from it a considerable amount of material to construct his plot --shipwrecked twins, mixed love stories due to a cross-dressing female character-- but leaves out its more solemn elements. He removes Julia's child bearing and transforms the cruel sea captain into a benevolent ally of Viola. Moreover, Rich's tale conveys a sense of melancholy not unlike the Shakespearean comedy. Trapped in an intricate love triangle, Silla displays a stoic sense of sorrow that recalls Viola's. Furthermore, Apollonius' assertion to have learned

the rules of love –"to speak pitifully, to looke ruthfully, to promise largely, to serue diligently, and to please carefully" (166), alludes to the same regulations Orsino relies on when indulging in lovesickness. In this sense, the choices Shakespeare makes vis-à-vis Rich's text, as Thomas Cranfil puts it in his introduction to a collection of Rich's works, comes across as " brilliant and purposeful" (lii). By focusing on the romantic concerns and phasing out the cruelty and violence of the original text, Shakespeare simultaneously presents a play more in tune with his on-going exploration of young love and allows for more psychological woes --most notably melancholy-- to seep in with greater ease. Effectively, *Apollonius and Silla*'s reliance on violence serves primarily to heighten the bliss of its resolution. At the end the story, we are informed that the characters "passed the residue of their daies with suche delight as those that have accomplished the perfection of their felicities" (192). Although a comic resolution prevails in the Shakespearean play as well, the tone of Rich's ending certainly jars with Feste's bittersweet song at the close of *Twelfth Night*, which leaves us on a profoundly melancholic note.

Similar to his analysis of *As You Like It*, Richard Courtney examines *Twelfth Night* under the assumption that it brings about a "profound social transformation ... that of love" (134). "To Shakespeare", Courtney writes, "dramatic action has specific power; it opens up a society that was previously closed in on itself ... the degree of change among the different people indicates the various transformations of the society" (134). For Courtney, Viola stands at the center of this social change: "In *Twelfth Night*, Viola's wearing of disguise is the dramatic action that begins the transformation of Illyria" (134). While I agree with Courtney's reading of Viola as essential to the play's climax, I

hesitate to identify love as the only meaningful transformation Shakespeare offers. Romantic love is certainly an important concern, but I would argue that the presence and significance of melancholy is as crucial to an analysis of the changes emerging from the drama. Viola's insertion into the Illyrian setting provides a suitable outlet for both Olivia and Orsino to cast off their overtly melancholic countenances.

When considering Viola's importance to *Twelfth Night*'s treatment of melancholy, several parallels can be drawn with *The Comedy of Errors.* At the outset, her arrival on the island recalls Antipholus of Syracuse's situation as he arrives in Ephesus. Both characters, grieving the loss of a sibling, come into a foreign setting. Shakespeare once again explores the repercussions identical twins have on an unsuspecting setting while presenting one of them as melancholic. Although Richard Wheeler, in his essay "Death in the Family: the Loss of a Son and the Rise of Shakespearean Comedy", associates *Twelfth Night*, among other plays, with "Shakespeare's direct response to his son's [Hamnet] death" (7), I am inclined to think differently. While the playwright's grief over loosing the male child of his own pair of twins certainly makes for a potent source of inspiration, there is evidently more at play. In my opinion, *Twelfth Night* marks the final stage of Shakespeare's depiction of melancholy in comedic settings, where the examination of the humor seemingly goes full circle. Certainly, evidence such as its mysterious and alien landscape, the presence of shipwrecked twins and the predominance of melancholy, leads to obvious parallels with *Error*s. Much like Antipholus of Syracuse, Viola embodies the melancholic figure who unknowingly affects a foreign locale. However, contrary to the merchant, she willingly forgoes her identity. Her role-playing is a conscious decision in order to seek protection while in Illyria. Consequently, her posing

as Cesario does not engender negative consequences such as the ones suffered by Antipholus of Ephesus once his twin brother arrives. Moreover, Viola appears as a much more well-rounded character than Antipholus of Syracuse. Melancholy is a part of her behavior but does not come across as her dominant trait. Additionally, her sorrows do not disrupt Illyria the way Antipholus' ailment did in Ephesus. In fact, most of the island's inhabitants are already melancholic when she enters the play. Her melancholy contributes in purging Illyria of its humoural excesses, especially the overwhelming theatricality with which characters express grief.

In this sense, in *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare pushes his treatment of melancholy further than he did in *The Comedy of Errors*. Although the captain's description of the shipwreck (I, ii. 8-16) to Viola recalls Egeon's narrative to the Duke (I, i. 36-95), the twins' overall situation is slightly different. Unlike the Antipholi, Viola and Sebastian are aware of each other's existence, but each believes the other sibling to be deceased. Thus, part of Viola's initial melancholy stems from the loss of her brother rather than anxieties related to self-identification. Moreover, whereas Antipholus of Syracuse professes a desire to lose himself and unknowingly adopts his brother's identity in the process, Viola washes up on an island unknown to both Sebastian and her. Here, the ocean's potency for danger echoes *The Comedy of Errors* once again. In its association with melancholy, water reacquires a threatening agency. Sebastian deplores to Antonio how his sister "is drowned already ... with salt water though I seem / To drown her remembrance again with more" (II, i. 28-30) and later describes to Orsino how he had "a sister / Whom the blind waves and surges have devoured" (V, i. 228-229). Likewise, Viola hopes that her brother has safely escaped the ship's sinking after the captain informs her that he saw him

"hold acquaintance with the waves" (I, ii. 15). Moreover, Antonio confesses to have saved Sebastian "from the rude sea's enraged and foamy mouth" (V, i. 74). Water thus regains the ability to cause grief by threatening to separate loved ones. However, in *Twelfth Night*, neither of the twins expresses feelings of vast anonymity in regards to water. Though it retains its menacing quality, water is no longer closely tied to Shakespeare's exploration of melancholy. The tumultuous waves have proven an efficient device in leading the twins on the island, but have little bearing on their thoughts and actions once they reach firm ground.

Similarly, the connection between melancholy and the mercantile lifestyle is no longer prevalent. As was the case in *As You Like It*, melancholy is no longer predominantly tied to a lack of social mobility as Shakespeare shifts his focus toward young love. Even though Viola is, in David Bevington's words, "an ocean traveler" (327), it remains unclear whether she, her brother or their father are linked with mercantilism in any way. Likewise, Antonio, the only other character remotely connected to water, possesses no strong ties to commercialism. In Orsino words, the sea captain is more of a "notable pirate" or a "saltwater thief" (V, i. 65) than he is a merchant. Interestingly, his affection for Sebastian does recall the peculiar relationship between Antonio and Bassanio in *The Merchant of Venice* –Cynthia Lewis makes this specific claim in her exploration of the "Antonio" characters in Shakespearean drama (28). Consequently, his unrequited longing for Viola's brother could be melancholic. However, his overall participation in the play remains a minor one and he is virtually shut out of its closing celebrations. Thus, mercantile concerns, which populated earlier Shakespearean

comedies, are present in *Twelfth Night* solely as remnants of the past. The melancholy created by such an artifice is no longer of interest and is quickly discarded.

In *Love and Society in Shakespearean Comedy*, Richard Levin examines how "the plot of comedy traces the struggle for inclusion into society and [how] that celebration merely establishes the identity of the winners" (21). In his analysis, he sees *Twelfth Night* as presenting "a corrupt age [that] seeks to recapture innocent through association with youth" (165). He writes:

> Many critics hear in the play what one calls 'a silvery undertone of sadness' and another a 'nostalgic elegiac note' ... yet these various elements are sometimes treated as intrusions of an alien-voice and anticipation of the tragedies that follow; they are less often recognized as integral parts of the play that help point out to subtler subversions of 'romantic' or 'festive' atmosphere (117).

Although his reading of the play focuses on its connection to "the keen competition for social rewards" (117), Levin recognizes the inherent sorrow that inhabits *Twelfth Night*. His theory that "all Illyrians suffer from the same malaise that expresses itself differently" (158) proves of particular interest to this chapter. What Levin identifies as a general ailment, I argue, is in fact various expressions of melancholy spread throughout the island's social sphere. Instead of a single character, Shakespeare presents the whole of Illyria as stricken with these longings. He creates an illusory locale where "nothing that is so is so" (IV, i. 8), a setting where humors run rampant and people can be "boiled to death with melancholy" (II, v. 3). Through the various characters he develops, Shakespeare represents several types of melancholy, whether romantic, mournful or

theatrical. These transcend pre-established dramatic barriers and impinge on every level of Illyria's social hierarchy, beginning with its authority figures.

Count Orsino opens the play by displaying the very essence of excessive melancholy, as he indulges in lovesickness for Olivia. Overwhelmed by his infatuation, Orsino wants to feed on the music of love. Though he claims to crave "excess of it, that surfeiting / That appetite may sicken and so die" (I, i. 2-3), he also seeks to sustain such feelings so he can continue playing the lovesick part. He maintains this urge for music throughout the play, later requesting songs which "relieve my passion much, / More than light airs recollected terms / Of these must brisk and giddy-paced times" (II, iv. 4-6). Orsino vies to maintain his melancholic countenance and believes himself to be embodying what love-melancholy represents. "For such as I am", he professes to Cesario, "all true lovers are, / Unstaid and skittish in all motions else / Save in the constant image of the creature beloved" (II, iv. 17-20). His declarations, echoing Apollonius' discovery of the art of love, highlight the generic love affects he indulges in. Yet, much is made of his apparent inconstancy in the play. Early on, Valentine wonders at how Cesario has been in his service "but for three days, and already you are / No stranger" (I, iv. 3-4). While Orsino's rapid embracing of his attendant can allude to their eventual union once Cesario becomes Viola, it also suggests an impulsiveness of feelings. Orsino himself proclaims that his "fancies are more giddy and unfirm, / More longing, wavering, sooner lost and worn, / Than women's are" (II, iv. 33-35). Such behavior undercuts his earlier declarations and underscores the melodramatic quality linked to his melancholic countenance. Furthermore, his generalizations about the sexes and romantic matters point out his ignorance of what love truly represents. Orsino enjoys the role of the lover in a

strictly lyrical fashion and revels in the melancholy it offers. This renders his character somewhat feeble. Accordingly, when Feste takes leave of him later on, he declares:

> The melancholic god protect thee, and the
> Tailor make thy doublet of changeable taffeta, for thy
> Mind is very opal. I would have men of such
> Constancy put to sea, that their business might be
> Everything and their intent everywhere, for that's it that
> Always makes a good voyage of nothing (II, iv. 73-78).

Similar to Rosalind's parting words to Jaques, the fool's declarations highlights the unreliability of Orisno's behavior. Additionally, the fashionable early modern pun on hunting "the hart" (I, i. 16) that Shakespeare works into the scene reflects the Count's overall drive within the play. Orsino is in love with love itself. Although he wishes, on some level, for Olivia to give up her isolation and accept him as a suitor, his desire has little to do with its actual object. Olivia is merely the outlet through which he can sustain his melancholic longing and have "fell and cruel passions" (I, i. 21) follow him. In this sense, Orsino is content with courting a lady who has "abjured the sight / And company of men" (I, ii. 39-40).

Like Orsino, Olivia appears "addicted to melancholy" (II, v. 198). While he begs for the "food of love" (I, i. 1), she spends her time mourning her brother. Valentine informs the Duke how "like a cloistress she will veilèd walk, / And water once a day her chamber round" (I, i. 27-28). This overwhelming sorrow dictates her actions and rules over her entire household. Early on, Feste asks her to grant him "leave to / Prove you a fool" (I, v. 54-55) and proceeds to demonstrate how absurd her mourning is through a

clever discussion of her brother's soul (I, v. 63-69). Feste rapidly identifies the fundamental problem with her enduring melancholy. While her grief has a valid basis, she has expressed it for too long. Though different from Orsino's lovesickness, her mourning has also become a ridiculous manifestation. This somber atmosphere, hanging over her house, partially explains why Feste has been away for so long and why her steward has gained significant authority. Malvolio offers Olivia what she requires: "he is sad and civil, / And suits well for a servant with my fortunes" (III, iv, 5-6). She relies on him to maintain a state of permanent mourning. Along with Orsino's romantic longing, her melancholy completes the frame of excessive sorrow which encloses the play. Through them, Illyria is encased in melancholy.

As Courtney explain, Orsino and Olivia "sit apart, each in splendid but ridiculous isolation, at either side of Illyria. Viola moves between them, bringing fresh air to their unrealities" (107). His reading applies not only to the play's treatment of love but of melancholy as well. Viola bridges the gap between Orsino and Olivia by responding to each of their melancholic woes. Though she eventually abandons it, her decision to pose as a eunuch reveals a performative desire which, within the spirit of carnival, the play champions to some extent. Posing as a young gentleman benefits her in a twofold purpose. First, it allows her to navigate between both Orsino's court and Olivia's household, where her multifaceted melancholy complements both characters. In addition, she successfully leads them to reject such dispositions. Her insertion into Illyrian society brings both characters to abandon the excessive melancholy they display. Her grief for Sebastian, although concealed, recalls Olivia's mourning for her brother. By getting over her own sibling's death fairly rapidly, Viola underscores the absurdity of Olivia's

enduring grief. When the sea captain informs her of Olivia's state, she declares: "O, that I served that lady, / And might not be delivered to the world / Till I had made my own occasion mellow" (I, ii. 41-43). Viola acknowledges the need for mourning, but alludes to its finality as well. She is thus simultaneously positioned to sympathize with Olivia's grief and, as Cesario, lead her beyond it. She then asks the captain to "conceal me what I am" (I, ii. 53) desiring to serve Orsino in disguise. Likewise, the "barful strife" (I, iv. 41) of the unrequited love she develops for the Count recalls his own infatuation with Olivia. However, Viola's love comes across as more genuine than Orsino's. It is when she is "out of [her] text" (I, v. 204) that she sparks Olivia's interest. In addition, whereas the Count delights in generalizing about men and women's approaches to romance, Viola conflates them by playing both sexes, underlying Orsino's blatant lack of knowledge on the matter. She embodies a more earnest, revised version of his love-melancholy. Thus, her disguise as Cesario offers her the opportunity to influence both characters.

Although the arrival of Sebastian in Illyria precipitates the ending of the play, providing balance to the precarious melancholic love triangle Shakespeare puts forward, it is his sister who brings Olivia and Orsino to cast off their melancholic tendencies. Infatuated with Cesario, Olivia declares: "methinks 'tis time to smile again" (III, i. 26). Her desire is both a physical attraction for the disguised Viola and a more psychological inclination to forego her grievous dispositions. Viola has won her over with both her "face" and "spirit" (I, v. 287). Sebastian provides Olivia with a replica of the young gentleman she falls in love with, one that transforms her infatuation into a socially valid heterosexual desire. It is through Viola, however, that Olivia casts off her melancholic countenance. Likewise, as Cesario, Viola becomes Orsino's favorite attendant, one to

whom the Count has "unclasped ... the book even of my secret soul" (I, iv. 13-14). As Cesario, Viola speaks of a sister who "loved a man / As it might be, perhaps were I a man, / I should your lordship" (II, iv. 196-108), obviously alluding to her desires for Orsino. When the Count learns of Olivia's infatuation with Cesario, he erupts in scornful declarations:

> Why should I not, had the heart to do it,
> Like th' Egyptian thief at point Of death
> Kill what I love? –a savage jealousy
> That sometimes savors nobly. But hear me this:
> Since you to nonregardance cast my faith,
> And that I partly know the instrument
> That screws me from my true place in your favor,
> Like you the marble-breasted tyrant still.
> But this your minion, whom I know you love,
> And whom, by heaven I swear, I tender dearly,
> Him I will tear out of that cruel eye
> Where he sits crowned in his master's spite.-
> Come, boy, with me. My thoughts are ripe in mischief.
> I'll sacrifice the lamb that I do love,
> To spite a raven's heart with a dove (V, i. 115-129).

Orsino speech indicates how he rapidly casts off his love-melancholy. First, his cruel and spiteful address to Olivia marks a strong departure from his earlier adoration of the Countess. It also suggests, as Feste alluded to earlier on, that Orsino's melancholy

might not have been that profound to begin with. In a sense, the quickness with which he turns on the object of his adulation highlights the superficiality of his demeanor. Furthermore, Orsino's declaration draws attention to the shift his affection undertakes. By the end of his speech, the focus has moved to Cesario. Although Orsino might be alluding to a strong friendship with his young servant, he hastily transforms it into a valid heterosexual desire once the play's confusion is finally eradicated. Once Cesario becomes Viola, the Count is more than willing to reciprocate her feelings, suggesting once again that his lovesickness for Olivia was rather shallow. As he tells Viola: "Your master quits you; and for your service done to him, / So much against the mettle of your sex" (V, i. 320-321). Again, the arrival of Sebastian allows Viola to reclaim her sex and become "Orsino's mistress and his fancy's queen" (V, i. 388) which rids him of his latent lovesickness. Therefore, Sebastian stands as a foil to Viola's efficient suppression of melancholy, one which dissolves the lingering gender-related confusions.

However, the play ends on a discordant note. In the end, Viola remains in her masculine attire. Moreover, the Count last addresses her still as "Cesario" (V, i. 385). While she has certainly lead Orsino and Olivia to reject their theatrical sorrows, she remains within her performance –at least for the moment. Her cross-dressing, which stands at the basis of the changes she engenders in Illyria, highlights the precarious position she finds herself in at the end of the play. Perhaps the durability of the transformations she brought about rests on the upholding of her role as Cesario. This problematic notion evokes concerns which the love plot's climax fails to resolve. Shakespeare, it seems, differentiates between various models of social performance. Viola's appears tolerated --if not encouraged-- because of its beneficial effects on other

characters. Shakespeare's critique of excessive affectations develops through other characters. Effectively, although the young lovers' realm seems purged of it, there remains, I argue, a strong melancholic sense as the play comes to an end. I suggest that this strain relates primarily to *Twelfth Night*'s secondary characters.

Beyond the concerns of *Twelfth Night*'s central plot, the play's other characters express melancholic sorrows as well. Theirs however, have little to do with mourning or lovesickness. They echo a stronger performative desire, which Viola also offsets. Though he is often associated with it, Malvolio does not display an overtly melancholic behavior. Rather, he supports the one operating within Olivia's household. Described by Maria as nothing more than "a puritan [and] a time-pleaser" (II, iii. 146-147), Malvolio delights in keeping the house in a somber mood, where there can be "respect of place, person [and] time" (II, iii. 91) and where he can revel in his authority. Being "sick of self love" (I, v. 87), he entertains aspirations of becoming "Count Malvolio" (II, iv. 34) and possessing "the humour of the state" (II, iv. 51), ambitions that, arguably, do not explicitly include Olivia. In this sense, he performs to an even higher degree than his mistress does. Hence, Malvolio's function, like Jaques, lies in the upholding of rigid and solemn dispositions, which Olivia's excessive mourning allows him entertain. Though he is not so much melancholic, his theatricality is sustained within a sorrowful environment. Olivia's wish for continued mourning grants him authority over the likes of Maria, Sir Toby and Feste.

Amongst them, I hold the fool as his primary opponent. Unlike Jaques and Touchstone, their relationship does not express the perennial clash of mirth and melancholy usually found in Shakespearean comedies. Malvolio embodies a more noxious type of social performance, which, unlike Viola's, needs to be expelled from

Illyria. If anything, the fool displays a more sorrowful countenance than the steward does. Levin perceives Feste as "probably the most intelligent character in the play" (156). "Yet", he writes, "he is a mere jester. It is a ludicrous as well as a haunting sight to see [him] grossly habited in fool's garb" (156). The professional fool, who returns to Olivia's house after "being so long absent" (I, v. 16) embodies an almost intangible sense of melancholy. Levin writes that, for him, "the past was better" (159). I agree that Feste appear slighted by his current condition. "To see this age!", he declares to Viola, "a sentence is / But a cheveril to a good wit. How quickly the / Wrong side may be turned outward" (IV, i. 11-13). Feste even hesitates to refer to himself as a fool, preferring to be identified as Olivia's "corruptor of words" (III, i. 36) since words, he explains, "are grown false [and] I am loathe to prove / Reason with them" (III, i. 24-25). His melancholy stems from the decrepitude of his status. As the play develops, Feste punctuates it with wisdom, both witty and strangely sorrowful. On the one hand, he ridicules both Orsino and Olivia for their excesses with his sharp reasoning. Yet, his songs recall the melancholy spread throughout Illyria. Feste's jestings remain performances which entertain the various characters that request them, but also call attention to the underlying sorrow which plagues the comedy. The fool simultaneously embodies the play's sad and merrier elements. Thus, melancholy breaks the inherent barrier established in previous works and actually aligns itself with mirth to fight off the unwarranted affectation Malvolio represents.

Although Feste fights against the sense of strict order the steward represents, both characters serve a similar function within Olivia's household. Their respective success in altering or maintaining her mood essentially dictates the overall countenance her house

will adopt. Feste and Malvolio are locked in a struggle where each man desperately tugs in his direction is hopes of shifting the balance. Viola's arrival challenges this particular notion.

Contrary to Illyrian characters, Viola quickly shuns the performative function she must carry on. Upon realizing that Olivia has fallen for her --as Cesario-- she immediately chides herself: "I am the man. If it be so –as 'tis- / Poor lady, she would better love a dream. / Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness / Wherein the pregnant enemy does much" (II, ii. 25-28). This characteristic sets her apart from other characters in the play. Viola understands the dangers related to performing a fictitious social role. This could explain why other characters do not take kindly to her arrival in Illyria. "In my conscience", Feste tells her, "sir, I do not care for you" (III, i. 28-29). Similarly, Malvolio perceives her as "forfeited against any denial" (I, v. 142) and describes her to his mistress as "very / Well-favored, and speak[ing] very shrewishly" (I, v. 156-157). Both the fool and the steward perceive her as a threat to their respective positions in Olivia's household. By bringing Olivia to cast off her melancholic disposition, Cesario threatens the malleability that defines her demeanor, a flexibility that exists as long as she remains single and grieving. While this is the case, both Feste and Malvolio maintain a certain power within her household and dictate whether the mood will be merry or somber. Without a masculine presence by her side, the two characters can claim Olivia in a non-sexualized manner. Sir Toby also adheres to this model as he, too, benefits from Olivia's influenceable disposition. As long as Olivia refuses to entertain suitors, Toby can continue to enjoy her hospitality and drink boisterously. "I am sure care's an enemy to life" (I, iii. 2-3) he declares to Maria early on, in what reveals itself to be a sharp

Shakespearean insight into a deceitfully merry character. Upon first glance, Sir Toby belongs to the Falstaffian model of charismatic lechery. However, much like other Illyrians, he ultimately displays melancholy. When he hears Feste's love song (II, iii. 39-52), he describes the fool's voice as "a contagious breath" (II, iii. 54). Toby not only expresses his appreciation of the song, but also alludes to the notion that he might be sharing the clown's sorrow. As Levin argues, the song affects Toby and Andrew Aguecheek because it "provides a thinly veiled reminder that [their] dreams are long past" (136). Much like Feste, Toby puts on the act of a merry drinker to avoid facing a harsher truth. Thus, his admonition of Sebastian in the final act --"I hate a drunken rogue" (V, i. 200)-- could be interpreted as a dejected self-assessment. Toby and the fool seemingly share a bitter sense of unhappiness regarding what once was. As Feste tells Olivia concerning her kinsman, "he is but mad yet, Madonna; and the fool shall / look to the madman" (I, v. 134-135).

In this sense, Toby is threatened by Cesario as much as Feste or Malvolio. His arrival challenges the status Toby has claimed within Olivia household. Likewise, he intends to keep Aguecheek around to enjoy his wealth, but is well aware that his cousin will never marry him. The mock duel he orchestrates between Sir Andrew and Cesario speaks to the notion that Toby actually perceives each of Olivia's suitors as competition that must be neutralized. As he tells Fabian, "this will so fright them / Both that they will kill one another by the look, like / Cockatrices" (III, iv. 196-198). As long as Olivia is in mourning, Toby can continue to do as he pleases. Consequently, he does not partake in the final celebrations. As Olivia successfully abandons her melancholic tendencies, Toby loses what little authority he enjoyed. As he exits the play, complaining of the beating he

received at the hands of Sebastian, Olivia orders to "get him to bed and let his hurt be looked to" (V, i. 207), providing a final dismissal of the character. Much like Feste, Toby perceives how harmful Malvolio is to the merry lifestyle he advocates. While the fool remains clever in his bantering of Malvolio, Toby's interactions with him betray strong, hateful feelings. "Art thou more than a / Steward?", he asks Malvolio, "Dost thou think, because thou art virtuous, / There shall be no more cakes and ale?" (II, iii. 113-115). With the help of other characters, Feste and Sir Toby undertake to oppose the steward's overbearing role-playing. Shakespeare, it seems, separates melancholy from the theatrical function it once held and aligns it with mirth in order to oppose overindulging affectation. Though she is not directly involved with the plot to ridicule Malvolio, Viola can be perceived as its trigger. The transformation Olivia undertakes because of her coincides with the Illyrian characters' attempt to dismiss Malvolio. It is as if they realize that as Cesario comes to be in Olivia's good graces, they are running out of time to act against the steward.

Although Courtney links Malvolio to Jaques (92), there are considerable differences in both characters' exits from their respective plays. Whereas the melancholy man was invited to join in *As You Like It*'s final celebrations, Malvolio is thrown out of *Twelfth Night*. Although Olivia observes how he "hath been most notoriously abused (V, i. 379), echoing Malvolio's exact words to Feste earlier on (IV, II. 87-88), she does not ask him to stay as Duke Senior did for Jaques. Moreover, while Orsino orders his attendants to "pursue him, and entreat him to peace" (V, i. 380), he does so for personal reasons, adding that Malvolio "hath not told us of the captain yet" (381). The Count is eager to have the sea captain set free so that Viola can recuperate her female guises. In

fact, he cares little for the steward. It seems that Malvolio's somber countenance is too excessive for the more subdued and tempered melancholy which installs itself in Illyria by the end of the play. His promise to "be revenged on the whole pack of you" (V, i. 379), however, drives a stake in the play's comedic armor. In Edward Cahill's words, "Malvolio alerts us to the necessity of comedy and to the profound implications of its failure" (1-2). Cahill perceives the expulsion of the steward as vital to a festive, humorous ending. "As the receptacle of the play's unwanted tragic potential", he writes, "the Malvolio subplot makes comedy possible for the main plot" (9). As Viola brings characters to shed their theatrical melancholy, Malvolio becomes the notion's unwarranted embodiment which must inevitably be expelled from the play. The epilogue, however, does not belong to her. Although she effectively rids Illyria of most of its melancholic excesses, Feste's final song suggests that there remains a sense of sorrow after all.

Both Anne Barton's essay "Shakespeare's Sense of an Ending in *Twelfth Night*" and Yu Jin Ko's "The Comic Close of *Twelfth Night* and Viola's *Noli Me Tangere*" examine the play in relation to its consideration for the passage of time. The two critics link temporality to the inherent melancholy which dominates the play. Barton claims that "in the final act of T*welfth Night*, a world of revelry, of comic festivity, fights a kind of desperate rearguard action against the cold light of day" (308). Moreover, she identifies "two contradictory kinds of time [that] have run parallel through the comedy, diverging only at its end. One is the time of holiday and of fiction, measureless and essentially beneficent … the other time is remorseless and strictly counted" (309). Barton recognizes how an apprehensive attitude towards time creates a melancholic atmosphere which then

spreads through the play as the sense festivities dies out. "The passing of time", she explains, "is painful [and] may even seem unendurable" (310). Ko shares her opinion that "a particular strain of melancholy runs throughout this play" (2). "It is the progress from pleasure to decay", he writes, "that predicates and precipitates what I think is the defining sentiment of the play: mournful longing, or what the play repeatedly calls 'melancholy'" (4). Both critics remark how the fleeing sense of festivity contributes in accentuating sorrowful feelings of a lost era. Ko observes that "though [in the play] ephemerality is assigned only to the object of desire, it applies equally to the experience of satisfaction: satisfaction decays pleasure" (4). It is this specific type of melancholy, I argue, that remains once Viola successfully purges Illyria of its displays of sadness. As the play draws to an end, so does its praising of fictitious roles and the illusory world of foolery and misrule. By leading Olivia and Orsino to shed their melancholy and embrace more genuine sentiments, Viola brings them into the real world without actually departing from the island. Likewise, reality sets in for the play as a whole. By the end, the characters reside in a much different Illyria, one that includes more realistic versions of both mirth and melancholy. I suggest that it is this strain of melancholy, linked to temporal progression, which remains in the end.

The central characters of *Twelfth Night* acknowledge the importance and influence that time exerts throughout the play. During one of her encounters with Cesario, Olivia declares that that "the clock upbraids me with waste of time" (III, ii. 130). Similarly, when she decides to conceal her identity from Illyria's residents, Viola defers any acknowledgment of consequences to later on: "what else may hap, to time, I will commit; / Only shape thy silence to my wit" (I, ii. 60-61). When she finds herself caught

between the Count and Olivia, she draws on temporality once again, imploring time to "untangle this, not I; / It is too hard of a knot for me t'untie" (II, ii. 41-41). However, while the characters of *Twelfth Night*'s central plot understand the power temporality possesses in the play and rely on it, the secondary characters, as Barton points out, fight desperately against it. As Ko argues, "nowhere does the sense of holiday time rushing to its end appear more palpably than in the revels of Toby and his crew" (4). This last element is best reflected in the inherent opposition which unites Feste and Malvolio. As mentioned previously, Feste longs for former days where his jesting truly did "walk the orb like the sun" (III, i. 38-39). His songs allude to the fact that behind the misrule and foolery, lays a powerful melancholic longing caused by the rapid fleeing of time. His rendition of "Come Away Death" (II, iv. 51-66) combines his gentle of mocking of Orsino with hints that death and decay are not so far behind for all of them.

Moreover, the concerns Feste expresses implicate the play's lower-order characters as well, as they are, in fact, closer to the degeneration he alludes to. In this sense, the plot against Malvolio represents a means through which they attempt to extend festivities and delay the inevitable melancholy that will follow. When plotting to incarcerate Malvolio, Sir Toby declares: "we may carry it thus for our pleasure and his penance, / Till our very pastime, tired out of breath, prompt us to / Have mercy on him" (III, iv. 139-141). In chastising the steward, they hope to regain former glories and avoid Barton's "cold light of day" (308). Thus, the merrier characters get one last hurrah in their struggle against reality. Their trickery of Malvolio grants them a brief moment of rejoicing. However, by the play's final moments, it appears their mirthful spirits have indeed "tired out" (III, iv. 140). The absence of Toby, Maria and Aguecheek from the play's ending, I suggest,

indicates how these characters cannot prevent the melancholy of time from pervading the setting. Even the play's quartet of young lovers cannot delay its arrival --nor do they want to. Their new outlooks allow them to embrace the end of celebrations and the settling in of realistic notions of love and life. Instead, Shakespeare has Feste sing the epilogue (V, i. 389-408). The fool's bittersweet lament on time ushers in the socially transformed melancholy Shakespeare has been hinting at. Ko interprets this final performance as suggesting "the kind of melancholic lull that informs the rhythm of the most gratifying revels" (5). "The play itself", he argues, "falls victim to the wind and the rain in also ending too quickly. Indeed, the play's ending becomes a trope for the ending of all things in time" (9). Effectively, Feste's song manages to incorporate both the comic and tragic ends of the play's spectrum.

In my opinion, this final scene reflects the status melancholy finally holds within Shakespearean comedy. "The wind and the rain" (V, i. 390) may be an occasional nuisance which can dissipate and return in time, but it is nevertheless part of everyday life. Melancholy is no longer an overpowering ailment that supersedes people's existence, but an integral part of life. In *Twelfth Night*, Shakespeare uses Viola to successfully rid Illyria of its excessive, theatrical displays of melancholy. Her more realistic approach to the humour allows both Orsino and Olivia to develop a strong desire for her, a problem Shakespeare remedies by inserting her twin into the play. As the Count and Countess find love, they cast off their sense of sorrow. Moreover, through the use of secondary characters, Shakespeare dispels the rigid dichotomy which opposed mirth and melancholy in earlier works. By ushering in a subdued sense of sorrow, tied to the inevitable passing of time, he presents a melancholy suitable for everyday life.

These four plays, my thesis argues, essentially chart melancholy's comic progression in early Shakespearean drama. Through issues of identity, gender and theatricality, Shakespeare negotiates a place for it within the structures he develops. Initially considered a dangerous force to be cured or combated, melancholy gradually becomes an accepted social affect. Similarly, Shakespeare eventually abandons the connections he previously established between melancholy and mercantile concerns. As his comedies shift toward exploring romantic love, his treatment of melancholy changes accordingly and he ultimately aligns the humour with mirth against excessive, theatrical displays. Like the passage of time, melancholy becomes an unavoidable aspect of life which should be recognized without being necessarily fought off.

Overall, melancholy effectively plays up to the very nature of comedy. Rather than tragic demises, the comic genre seems centered around questions of social acceptance or rejection. The plays present situations where characters can attempt to negotiate their way into the resolutions. More often than not, this process revolves around notions of identity and self-discovery. Melancholy thus offers an identity that is initially denied social integration before morphing into a suitable social affect. It is once Shakespeare successfully wrestles it away from its pre-conceived notions that such a process can be achieved. It essentially legitimizes the ailment as an everyday occurrence that must not necessarily be driven away at all costs or that is strictly reserved for members of the higher classes.

This also points to the genre of tragicomedy and the effective blending of dramatic genres that characterizes much of the Shakespearean canon. Though the concept of sadness might initially clash with comic conventions, it appears to belong in the comic

worlds that Shakespeare depicts. Shakespearean comedy, it seems, is never solely mirthful or celebratory. The use of melancholy becomes a crucial element in his exploration of dramatic genres. Sorrowful elements are thus essential to Shakespeare's creation of a less farcical strain of comedy. Accordingly, although his later comedies do not include explicit treatments of the humour such as the ones examined here --the word "melancholy" fails to appear altogether in *The Tempest*--, a strangely sorrowful atmosphere looms over these plays, as if melancholy, upon permeating the realm of *Twelfth Night*, had etched its place within Shakespeare's dramatic scope. One can ponder whether these later works are what Shakespeare was striving for when he wrote his earlier comedies. As he moves on to more tragic plays, Shakespeare continues his exploration of the humour, most notably in *Hamlet*. Though his following works suggest different concerns from those examined here, he further considers melancholy's dramatic possibilities. As Levin observes: "In *Hamlet*, Feste's disillusionment appears in a younger, less resilient man" (165). His comparison of the two characters evidently reiterates the potent connection that exists between mirth and melancholy throughout Shakespearean drama.

Assuredly, the relationship between melancholy and tragicomedy merits further attention. Beyond the four plays studied here, there exist countless instances within the Shakespearean canon where the lines between genres are blurred and their seemingly rigid conventions are obliterated. This examination of melancholy thus opens the door for a consideration of comic elements in tragedies, history plays and romances alike. Moreover, it suggests that a closer investigation of humoural matters and early modern afflictions in dramatic texts might prove as insightful. Certainly, a study of the influence

of early modern medicine on comedy would undoubtedly yield fascinating results. Altogether, Shakespeare's development of melancholy in comedic works achieves the dual purpose of reflecting the period's fascination with the humour and innovating upon it. As is the case with many of the issues Shakespearean drama explores, the examination of melancholy both borrows and extrapolates on early modern knowledge and effectively transcends dramatic genres. Though Hamlet remains the traditional example of a character displaying "something in his soul / O'er which his melancholy sits on brood" (III, i. 167-168), the presence of melancholy in Shakespearean comedy reveals itself to be equally warranted and riveting.

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