

SONGS OF SALVATION:
SHAKESPEARE'S DEFENSE OF PERFORMING ARTISTS
THROUGH SECULAR BALLADS IN THREE PLAYS

by

LATISHA FLETCHER REHN

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Abstract

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LaTisha Fletcher Rehn, MA

The University of Texas at Arlington, 2018

Supervising Professor: Dr. Amy Tigner

In many of Shakespeare's comedies and romances, the "broadside," or street ballad is the prominent musical form that the characters reference. The broadside transcended class boundaries and, unlike traditional songs, usually consisted of lyrics written by a known writer that were sung to a folk tune. The subject matter of these songs was seldom virtuous, and the inclusion of the somewhat unsavory street songs carries connotations beyond audience identification in Shakespeare's work when viewed through a theological lens.

The government-sanctioned Protestant religion was becoming more staunchly conservative in London, and what theater-goers would often have observed outside the Globe were fervent Puritan protesters condemning actors and musicians as an abomination to God. The list of grievances held by conservatives toward players was extensive, ranging from their distaste of earning profit from false identities to their disdain for the feminization of men who dressed in

women's clothing to play the roles of leading ladies. Religious tracts were circulated that cited debaucheries and heresies committed by the theater; however, royal mandates barred playwrights from defending themselves through their art. The inclusion of secular ballads, such as "Greensleeves" in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, however, alludes to Shakespeare's growing resentment toward his detractors in the Puritan movement.

Shakespeare's defense of performing artists is in part constructed from the ballads that he chooses for his characters to sing. The musical allusions and performances found in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *As You Like It*, and *The Winter's Tale* produce an intricate web of confession and condemnation that leads the playwright out of the realm of conformist toward a less complacent persona as an opinionated critic of his culture. I argue that while writing under the weight of royal censorship, Shakespeare's covert use of objectionable street ballads in the comedies works to undermine the piety of Puritans and expose their priggish condemnatory nature as folly.

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Chapter 1

“Let It Thunder to the Tune of Greensleeves!”

Religious Resistance through Secular Ballads in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

In three of Shakespeare’s comedies written between 1597 and 1601, the “broadside,” or street ballad is the prominent musical form referenced by the characters. The broadside transcended class boundaries and, unlike traditional songs, usually consisted of lyrics written by a known writer that were sung to a folk tune. The subject matter of these songs was seldom virtuous, as historian John Long explains, “Generally the broadside ballads described some curious event such as an unusually spectacular execution, the confession of a notorious criminal, or the birth of a monster, or presented amorous and lewd lyrics.”¹ While the inclusion of unsavory street songs often supplies bawdy humor to the comedies, they also carry connotations beyond fun and frivolity in Shakespeare’s work when viewed through a theological lens.

The government-sanctioned Protestant religion was becoming more staunchly conservative in London, and what theater-goers would often have observed outside the Globe were fervent Puritan protesters condemning actors and musicians as an abomination to God. The list of grievances held by conservatives

¹ Long, John H. *Shakespeare’s Use of Music: A Study of the Music and its Performance in the Original Production of Seven Comedies*. New York: Da Capo Press, 1977. p.1-2

toward players was extensive, ranging from their distaste of earning profit from false identities to their disdain for the feminization of men who dressed in women's clothing to play the roles of leading ladies. Religious tracts were circulated that cited debaucheries and heresies committed by the theater; however, royal mandates barred playwrights from defending themselves through their art.² The inclusion of secular ballads allowed Shakespeare to give voice to his growing resentment toward his detractors in the Puritan movement. I argue that a close study of the context, placement, and history of two ballads found in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*—*Greensleeves* and Christopher Marlowe's *Live with Me and Be My Love*—demonstrates this resistance to Puritanism not only from performing artists, but also from members of the middle class who lived outside of London during the Renaissance.³

² Dutton, Richard. "Shakespeare and Marlowe: Censorship and construction." *The Yearbook of English Studies* 23. (1993): 1-29. p. 23

³ A thorough analysis of the specific ballads that Shakespeare utilizes is surprisingly absent within the prodigious body of scholarship devoted to him. As Christopher R. Wilson, lead editor of *Music in Shakespeare: A Dictionary*, notes:

In the numerous modern editions of Shakespeare's works (with some exceptions such as David Lindley's New Cambridge edition of *The Tempest*), glosses to musical terms are usually minimal. When these are compared to the more detailed discussions of other recurrent themes in the Shakespeare canon, it becomes clear that this topic has been considered of secondary importance. Few editors of Shakespeare have much expertise in the historical place of musical terminology. Hence, comprehensive analysis of the musical lexis in the dramatic and poetic works of Shakespeare [is lacking].

Notably, the vast majority of work concerning Shakespeare's use of music is found in dictionaries such as Wilson's or compilations that record the occurrence, lyrics, authors, and publication histories of the songs to which Shakespeare alludes. I have relied heavily upon Ross W. Duffin's *Shakespeare's Songbook*, which lists all songs by play, and even provides the act and scene where the reference is located. Duffin's book contains a simple melody line playable on any treble instrument, the unabridged lyrics to the tunes, and a very useful publication history for each song. His work, however, stops there; analysis of any type is absent. While many scholars have

The strength of English devotion to Protestantism can be more or less gauged by location and social status: if one resided far from London and had few (if any) connections with the Crown—such as the characters in *Merry Wives*—it was likely that he/she would practice the official faith with lingering Catholic customs or even Pagan rituals.⁴ The locale of the action in this play is Windsor, even then known as the site of a royal castle, but it was also the location of St. George’s Chapel, where knights were inducted into the Order of the Garter.⁵ Since the play was probably written specifically to be performed at an Order of the Garter ceremony, it is not unusual that Shakespeare chooses this setting; however, utilizing rural characters who are not a part of the nobility infuses the population of Windsor with anti-Protestant tendencies. Alexandra Walsham contends that: “people of relatively low social status and rank [often subscribed to] a religious culture conventionally described as residually Catholic, 'superstitious', and 'magical,'” and while there is nothing notably Catholic about

commented on the importance of music in the plays, few have taken up the challenge of studying them explicitly. In the foreword to Duffin’s work, Stephen Orgel laments: “[*Shakespeare’s Songbook*] has theoretical and critical implications that go beyond the practical, revealing how deeply Shakespeare’s drama is informed by the music of his age, and how much we have lost by being unaware of it.”³ This “unawareness” has created an opportunity for research in an area that is relatively wide open.

⁴ Some biographical works, such as Stephen Greenblatt’s *Will in the World*, claim to have found the conclusive answer to the question regarding Shakespeare’s preference for Protestantism or Catholicism. Greenblatt contends that Shakespeare was privately Catholic and that his family belonged to an underground ring of residual Catholicism that would have been illegal at the time. This historical recount is interesting; however, it really has no implications on my own research

⁵ Historical information about Windsor, England was collected from Marjorie Garber’s *Shakespeare After All*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2004. p. 359-60

the Fords or Pages, elements of superstition and magic can be found throughout the play.⁶ The most obvious reference to the occult is the transformation, in Act 5, of the Windsor countryside into a fairy wonderland worthy of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This scene exudes a sort of paganism, as Falstaff is not simply ostracized from Christian society for his immoral actions, but is ferreted out as if he were a witch. The elaborate shaming ceremony, according to Carol Neely,

...takes its form from the popular protocols for identifying a witch (by burning and scratching), extracting a confession, and reconciling estranged participants...No doctors, witch-hunters, or exorcists are consulted, but the whole community participates; just so, in the period, most accusations of witchcraft and possession emerged from and were managed at the local level.⁷

The portion of the population that subscribed to a staunch form of Calvinism was actually quite miniscule, and the majority of English rural areas incorporated some type of semi-pagan principles into their spiritual beliefs.⁸ *The Merry Wives of Windsor's* position as a citizen play, then, does have import in regard to the work's relationship to religion.

⁶ Walsham, Alexandra. "‘Frantick Hacket’: Prophecy, Sorcery, Insanity, and the Elizabethan Puritan Movement." *The Historical Journal* 41, no. 1 (1998): 27-66. p. 31

⁷ Neely, Carol Thomas. *Distracted Subjects: Madness and Gender in Shakespeare and Early Modern Culture*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004. p. 148

⁸ Walsham. *Frantick Hacket*. p. 38

The cast of the play, however, is extremely self-aware of its merchant class status and desires to elevate itself through piety, tradition, and knowledge of popular trends in London.⁹ Their musical references, for example, illustrate an attempt to evoke greater sophistication through the selection of certain types of ballads—though, as I will later illustrate, the lyrics of those ballads do not reflect the socially conservative ideals that were being endorsed by the royal court. The citizens of Windsor do not discuss traditional country folk songs, but instead, only those compositions that are very popular in the more cosmopolitan London. Three common types of vocal songs existed in the Renaissance: traditional ballads, broadside ballads, and ayres (or art songs). Historian John Long defines traditional tunes as:

marked by strong rhythms, simple melodies, and the crudeness often associated with popular art. They were danced, as well as sung, to a simple instrumental accompaniment such as the pipe and tabor, cittern, or fiddle. The tunes were anonymous, stemming

⁹ Shakespeare, the son of a provincial glover, desired to ascend the social ladder and undoubtedly bestowed this same ambitious trait upon the middle-class characters in *Merry Wives*. In October 1596, Shakespeare applied for and subsequently purchased a coat of arms for his family and later even signed his last will and testament: “William Shakespeare, of Stratford upon Avon in the county of Warwick, *gentleman*,” a class distinction that he had obviously grown quite proud of. See Stephen Greenblatt’s *Will in the World*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004. p 79. In *Merry Wives*, a play about the middle classes, Shakespeare exhibits a similar concern with class hierarchies and social climbing by beginning the work with a discussion of coats of arms, and the men of the town admire that of Justice Shallow (1.1.7-15). The first fifteen lines of the comedy firmly establish the middle-class citizens as desirous of titles and willing to dote on and admire anyone who already holds such a distinction.

from the folk, and one tune might serve for any number of different lyrics.¹⁰

This type of ballad originated in rural England and is noticeably absent in *Merry Wives*, as if the characters hope to distance themselves as much as possible from the provincial existences that they are, in fact, immersed in by omitting anything related to the culture of their self-conscious unsophisticated small town.

For the characters of *Merry Wives*, London would seem a far more fashionable place to live, as their own society lacks dances, theater performances, and other types of social gatherings. Their delegation to the outskirts of cosmopolitan life may be what leads the country merchants to be quick to adopt the broadside, or street ballad, form that was hugely popular with city dwellers. The majority of the songs found in *Merry Wives* can be traced to this style of ballad, including *Greensleeves*, which boasts the lusty lyrics commonly associated with this type of song. The verses allude to adulterous activities and even prostitution succumbed to by Lady Greensleeves, the wife of a fictitious nobleman. The subject matter of this ballad is appropriately humorous, however, as the main plot of the play revolves around Sir John Falstaff's attempts to make Mistress Ford his paramour.

The final category of music that Shakespeare appropriates for his play is the ayre (or art song)—a much more complicated composition. This style is

¹⁰ Long. *Shakespeare's Use of Music*. p. 1-2

second only to the even more intricate madrigal, which contains no lyrics but requires highly trained musicians for performance. The madrigal, then, was only presented at very special functions, such as a court performance. The ayre, conversely, could have been mastered by a number of the players from Shakespeare's troupe, as many of the men were well-trained musicians in addition to being actors, and so this form is incorporated in his plays much more frequently. The ayre is known as a work written by a literate composer who also provides an original accompaniment, whereas the traditional and street ballads borrow their tunes from folk songs. *Live with Me and Be My Love* (which I will discuss later in this paper), sung by Sir Hugh Evans in *Merry Wives*, is one such art song.¹¹

Greensleeves is mentioned twice in the comedy, and its mythical origins serve as an attempted connection between the common citizenry of Windsor and its royal counterpart. *Merry Wives* is Shakespeare's only work that details the lives of ordinary early modern English citizens, but even so, an apocryphal story maintains that the comedy was commissioned by Elizabeth I for a royal performance at a knighting ceremony at Windsor in 1597. The street ballad *Greensleeves*, which is mentioned twice in *Merry Wives*, has similar mythical origins. An apocryphal story claims that Henry VIII wrote the song to showcase

¹¹ Helen Sewell identifies *Live with Me and Be My Love* as an art song, and *Greensleeves* as a broadside ballad, in her article, "Shakespeare and the Ballad: A Classification of the Ballads Used by Shakespeare and Instances of Their Occurrence." *Midwest Folklore* 12, no. 4 (1962): 217-34. p. 231

his love for Anne Boleyn, but it is extremely doubtful that there is any truth in this tale. First, the lyrics weave the story of a woman who is intent on cheating on her husband and the latter's ensuing sorrow over the loss of his lady—an ironic gift for a queen who was executed following allegations of sexual impropriety. The registration date for the ballad is also far too late to be attributed to the former King; Henry died in January of 1547, and *Greensleeves* was not registered until September 3, 1580. The earliest surviving textual evidence for the ballad is found in *A Handefull of Pleasant Delites* (1584), but it is possible that the song may have been included in the earliest edition of that collection (1566); unfortunately, no surviving copy of the first printing exists.¹² The tune that the lyrics would have been sung to is an Italian form that did not make its way to England until decades after Henry's death. Whether or not Shakespeare and his audience were aware of these supposed royal origins remains unknown; however, if they were believers of the apocryphal story, the fact that there are two references to the ballad in *Merry Wives* illustrates that the characters are earnestly attempting to align themselves with the tastes of a higher society.

Secondary implications to the Henry VIII connection with *Greensleeves* are related to the King's role in designating Protestantism as the only legal means of worship in England. At first glance, this correlation may seem weak, but the

¹² The publication history of *Greensleeves* can be found in Ross Duffin's *Shakespeare's Songbook*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004. p. 179

textual evidence is irrefutable, as each time the ballad is mentioned it is enveloped in religious allusions. The first occurrence is found in Act 2 when Mistress Ford (in regard to Falstaff's honorable words but villainous disposition) states that: "... they do no more adhere and keep place together than the hundred and fifty psalms to the tune of *Greensleeves*," but Stephen Greenblatt's *The Norton Shakespeare* takes liberty with these lines (2.1.54-55).¹³ The First and Second Folios record instead: "...then the hundred psalmes to the tune of Greene-sleeves," choosing not to correct Mrs. Ford's inaccurate calculation of the number of psalms, and the First Quarto omits the lines completely. Mistress Ford's mistake is probably Shakespeare's intention and not a typographical error; textually, it illustrates that she may not be quite as pious as she presents herself to be. Any God-fearing woman at the turn of the seventeenth century would have been well aware of the number of psalms contained in the *Bible*, and in a culture that thrived on memorization as the cornerstone of education, it is likely that a person of Mrs. Ford's class could recite several of them. Especially considering that Mrs. Ford could read and write, it appears that her error is not one stemming from a lack of religious knowledge, but is an intentional mistake assigned to her in order to illustrate her somewhat duplicitous nature.

¹³ All of the quotations from *The Merry Wives of Windsor* are cited from the 2nd edition of *The Norton Shakespeare* (2008), unless otherwise indicated.

Culturally and politically, however, Mistress Ford's correlation between psalms and street ballads unearths the tensions that were increasingly noticeable between the Church and popular culture. To invoke *Greensleeves* so prominently in *Merry Wives* introduces into the play the turn of the sixteenth century debate over the propriety of popular music in an ever more conservative Protestant England. This mournful tune possesses a contagious waltz-like feel derived from its 6/8 meter and was appropriated for many purposes in the Renaissance, from alehouse sing-along-song to church hymn, but utilizing secular music for religious purposes began to fall out of favor in the decades preceding the composition of *Merry Wives*. Susan Brigden notes a sudden religious fervency that began to arise some twenty years prior to the first performance of *Merry Wives*:

Protestant playwrights then had used bawdy jokes for a godly purpose, and scripture songs and psalms had been sung to ballad metre in alehouse singsongs. In the mid 1570's all this started to change. Religious songs could no longer be sung to the tune *Greensleeves*. Sacred and secular music were divorced, and even sacred music viewed with suspicion, its beauty seen as part of the Devil's wiles to seduce people from true worship.¹⁴

¹⁴ Brigden, Susan. *New Worlds, Lost Worlds: The Rule of the Tudors, 1485-1603*. New York: Viking, 2000. p. 252-3

Philip Stubbes, a prominent Puritan activist who firmly believed that music could be a vehicle to damnation, wrote several religious tracts during Shakespeare's lifetime that denounce English society. Probably born in 1555 and living in London, Stubbes was a member of the gentry, and following the death of his young wife during childbirth in 1590, he wrote a tract dictating the proper behavior for English women, *A Christall glasse for christian women Conteyning an excellent discourse of the godly life and christian death of mistres Katherine Stubbes*.¹⁵ His most influential work, however, is his *Anatomie of Abuses in Ailgna*, and Bruce Smith contends that: "*Greensleeves* seems to offer a perfect example of the kind of music Philip Stubbes singles out for attack in [this tract], first published three years after the original broadside of *Greensleeves* appeared."¹⁶ In his *Anatomie*, Stubbes comments on the impropriety of secular music:

Wherefore, if you would have your sonne...affected to baudrie, scurrilirie, filthie Rimes, unsemely talkyng...If you would have hym, as it were transnured into a woman, or worse, and inclined to all kinde of Whoredome, and abhomination, set hym to Dauncyng Schoole, and to learne Musicke, and then shall you not faile of your purpose. And if you would have your daughter

¹⁵ See Henry Morely's *English Writers: An Attempt Towards a History of English Literature*. Cassell & Company Ltd., 1892. p. 194, for biographical information on Philip Stubbes.

¹⁶ Smith, Bruce R. *The Key of Green: Passion and Perception in Renaissance Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009. p. 180

Whorische, baudie, and uncleane, and a filthie speaker, and suche like, bryng her up in Musicke and Dauncyng...[and then] you have wone the goale.¹⁷

His assertions that music leads to lasciviousness and effeminates men coincides interestingly with *Merry Wives* as the comedy unfolds and produces Falstaff—a knave who hopes to seduce a married woman, and who eventually becomes Shakespeare’s only adult male cross dresser.¹⁸ Stubbes’s pamphlet was originally published in 1584 but became so popular that three additional editions were printed. The final version was released in 1595, only two years prior to the first performance of *Merry Wives*, creating the distinct possibility that throughout this comedy Shakespeare is directly responding to Stubbes’s allegations of abomination in Elizabethan society.

It was not uncommon for Puritan protestors to linger outside of the Globe shouting condemnations at the players and theater-goers, and thus this religious assault against the artistic freedoms of musicians was shared by Shakespeare’s theater. Stubbes did not disguise his abhorrence for players in *Anatomie*, claiming: “They are quite contrarie to the word of grace, and sucked out of the Devills Teates, to nourish us in Idolatrie, Heathenrie, and sinne. And therefore...

¹⁷ Stubs, Phillip. *Anatomie of Abuses*. London: Richard Jones, 1584. Accessed through the *EEBO* database. No pagination available.

¹⁸ Excepting, of course, the male actors themselves who dressed in women’s clothing to play female roles.

[God's] curse upon their backs.”¹⁹ Shakespeare, in fact, seems to be addressing Stubbes's grievances point by point. The Puritan specifically refers to comedies as plays that incorporate: “Love, Bawdrie, Cosenage, Fletterie, Whordome, Adulterie,” and *Merry Wives* contains a plot point or character to embody each of these qualities.²⁰ Most can be found encompassed in the moment when *Greensleeves* is mentioned the second time, evoked by Falstaff in Act 5: “My doe with the black scut! Let the sky rain potatoes, let it thunder to the tune of *Greensleeves*, hail kissing-comfits, and snow eringoes; let there come a tempest of provocation, I will shelter me here [embraces Mistress Ford]” (5.5.16-19).²¹ In this particular passage, *love* is obviously what Falstaff is feigning for Mistress Ford. The lack of real love on Falstaff's part strips away any hope of redemption for the antagonist, but it creates an interesting correlation when considering a second apocryphal story surrounding *Merry Wives*, whereby Elizabeth I allegedly requested that Shakespeare write a play in which the knight of the Henry IV

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ The first chapter of my thesis focuses on *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which is one of Shakespeare's least popular plays. There has been far less scholarship done over *MWOW* than many other of his works; however, some researchers have found interest in Falstaff's shaming scene, where children are dressed like fairies and attack him with pinches in the night, and I have referenced this scene here as well. Alexandra Walsham's "*Frantick Hacket*": *Prophecy, Sorcery, Insanity, and the Elizabethan Puritan Movement* contains a very close analysis of this scene, focusing on the idea that Falstaff is being ferreted out as a witch. Her argument includes a study on the anti-puritan messages that are conveyed through the scene, and I have included some of her observations in my essay to strengthen my own assertions about the religious anarchy that takes place there. Walsham, however, does focus mainly on the fairy and witchcraft elements, while my own writing is more attached to Falstaff's invocation of the "Greensleeves" ballad as he calls to the heavens.

histories was shown in love. One can observe *Bawdrie* (risqué, coarse and/or obscene language) when Falstaff calls Mistress Ford his “doe with the black scut,” as scut can mean tail, but is also a reference to pubic hair. *Cosenage* is a fraudulent business scheme, which once again can be traced back to Falstaff’s desire to bed Mistress Ford in order to gain her husband’s fortune. Fletterie can be defined in the early modern period as “gratifying deception and/or delusion,” which is a meaning that Shakespeare evokes in the final couplet of Sonnet 42, and which can be seen here through Falstaff’s intent to make Mistress Ford believe that she is a desired and sexually ideal woman.²² *Whoredome*, in the literal sense, can really only be traced to Mistress Quickley, as she was the madam of a house of ill repute in the Henry IV plays, though Falstaff’s attempts to bed Mistress Ford to gain access to her money reeks of prostitution. Taking the term as merely a propensity for promiscuity, however, provides an example through Falstaff’s request that “there come a tempest of provocation”—*provocation*, here, being tinged with *provocative* and meaning the action of arousing sexual desire or interest. Further, the *Greensleeves* ballad Falstaff calls out also contains allusions to the business of prostitution; the adulterous woman found in the song is wearing a green dress, which was seen in the Renaissance as the result of being rolled around, in sport, on the grass so that the garment would be stained with green, and thus this color choice was also associated with prostitutes. Potatoes (actually

²² "Flattery." *Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University, 2009.

sweet potatoes, as white potatoes had not made their way to England except as a curiosity), eringoes (candied sea holly used as a sweet meat), and comfits (sweetmeats made of some fruit or root and preserved with sugar) were also considered aphrodisiacs in the early modern period. The last item Stubbes mentions, *adulterie*, is blatantly depicted, as Falstaff is attempting to begin a sexual relationship with Mistress Ford, who is married. Additionally, *Greensleeves* also incorporates adultery through its portrayal of a man lamenting the loss of his adulterous lady. Integrating all of these vice elements could, obviously, be mere coincidence, but the overabundance of all of these archetypal sins, the forthrightness with which they are presented, and the close proximities of the date of the registration of *Merry Wives* with the publication of Stubbes's tract all point to a direct correlation between the two works.

While the inclusion of *Greensleeves* in the comedy proves scathing and scandalous as a result of its lyrics, Shakespeare's allusion to Christopher Marlowe's ayre, *Live with me and be my Love*, could be viewed as heresy by most Puritans due to the religious import of the speaker of the lines and the moral ambiguity of Marlowe himself. Shakespeare infuses strong anti-Protestantism into his play by incorporating Marlowe's work, as the latter was generally perceived as an Atheist following his death in 1593. A month prior to this untimely death, Richard Baines presented a deposition to Elizabeth's Privy Council titled *A note Containing the opinion of one Christopher Marly*

Concerning his damnable Judgment of Religion, and scorn of Gods word, which chronicled 18 different blasphemies that Marlowe had supposedly committed, including Baines's assertion that Marlowe had said: "That [Christ] was the son of a carpenter, and that if the Jews among whom he was born did crucify him, they best knew him and whence he came," as well as, "That Christ was a bastard and his mother dishonest."²³ Baines was an English intelligence agent, and his reports probably had the authority to damage reputations; however, it must also be noted that Marlowe and Baines were familiar with each other for many years, Marlowe had made similar allegations against Baines in the past, and Baines had been arrested in his youth for attempting to poison the well at the seminary that he himself had attended.²⁴ Even without Baines's testimony, however, some Elizabethans had already viewed his *Dr. Faustus* as slightly Catholic or even Atheistic. Marlowe was a playwright who seemed to differ greatly from Shakespeare, who according to Richard Dutton "is not known to have troubled the authorities in anything more subversive than a failure to pay a small sum in property taxes," while Marlowe was "a perfect heretic."²⁵

²³ Baines, Richard. "A Note Containing the Opinion of One Christopher Marly Concerning His Damnable Judgment of Religion, and Scorn of Gods Word." *The Complete Plays: Christopher Marlowe*. Eds. Frank Romany and Robert Lindsey. New York: Penguin, 2003. xxxiv-xxxv. p. xxxiv

²⁴ Kendall, Roy. *Christopher Marlowe and Richard Baines: Journeys through the Elizabethan Underground*. Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2003.

²⁵ Dutton. *Shakespeare and Marlowe* p. 23, 29

Shakespeare's choice to utilize Marlowe's ballad creates a rift between *Merry Wives*'s protestant parson, Sir Hugh Evans, and the religion he is supposed to be advocating. Evans is singing to himself to ease his nerves as he awaits an impending duel with Doctor Caius, probably intending to recite Psalm 137, but instead he conflates the words of *Live with Me* with those of the psalm:

To shallow rivers, to whose falls
Melodious birds sings madrigals,
There will we make our beds of roses,
And a thousand fragrant posies.
To Shallow...
Melodious birds sing madrigals
When as I sat in Pabylon
And a thousand vagram posies...
To shallow rivers to whose falls. (3.1.13-25)

Evans confuses the opening lines of Psalm 137, which begin: "By the rivers of Babel we sate, and there we wept, when we remembred Zion," with a line from the second stanza of Marlowe's ballad: "By shallow Rivers to whose falls."²⁶ He continues with several more of Marlowe's lyrics— "Melodious Birds sing Madrigals / And I will make thee beds of Roses / And a thousand fragrant Poses"—before inserting: "When as I sat in Pabylon," which is the proper first line of the psalm. Evans, then, by proving that he is just as familiar with a love ballad as he is with the book of psalms, illustrates the same sort of duplicitous

²⁶ *The Booke of Psalmes*. Geneva: Rowland Hall, 1559. and Christopher Marlowe's *A Most Excellent Ditty of the Lovers Promises to His Beloved, to a Sweet New Tune Called, Live with Me and Be My Love*. London: Thomas Symlock, 1628-1629.

nature found in *Mistress Ford*, and assigning *Come Live with Me* to the country parson, then, seems to be another way in which Shakespeare illustrates the lack of religious fervency among members of the rural middle classes.

Shakespeare's somewhat veiled rebellion through song differs from a few of his contemporaries who were much more direct in their opposition to powerful people, such as Thomas Lodge. Lodge knew Shakespeare and was also a writer, even providing the source material for *As You Like It* with his play, *Rosalynde*. He wrote a tract, *Defense of Poetry, Music, and Stage Plays* as an assault against Stephen Gosson, a fervent religious man who had attacked players and their theaters in his *The Schoole of Abuse*. Gosson was not just another protesting puritan, but was a well-respected Anglican clergyman who was appointed in 1600 to lead St. Bartolph's church in London, a post second only to that at St. Paul's. Ironically, Gosson himself was a failed playwright who had initially moved to London in hopes of fame and fortune.²⁷ It was only a year after giving up that enterprise that he wrote *The Schoole of Abuse*, which claims that: "Musicke has had her clothes tottered, her flesh torne, her face deformed, her whole bodie mangled and dismembered," and goes on to accuse everyone living during the English Renaissance—but specifically theaters—of ruining the aesthetic and Godly properties of music:

²⁷ Gosson's biography can be found in Tanya Pollard's *Shakespeare's Theater: A Sourcebook*. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004. p. 19-20

[Society] has so disfigured her lookes, defaced her beautie, so hacked her, and hewed her... geven her so many woundes, that she is striken to death, in danger to peryshe, and present in place the leaft part of her selfe...Plutarch complaineth, that ignorant men, not knowyng the majestie of auncient musick, abuse both the eares of the people, and the Arte it selfe with bringing sweete conserts into Theaters, which rather effeminate the minde, then procure amendment of manners as spurres to vertue.²⁸

Thomas Lodge responded to this denouncement with his own, *Defense of Poetry, Music, and Stage Plays*, which defended players and musicians, directly addressed Gosson's complaints, and spanned over 100 pages of print.

Shakespeare was much more subtle in his rebuttals, however, and in the same way that allusions to Elizabeth I can be found in the queens of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and images of James I are detectable in *Antony and Cleopatra*, Shakespeare envelops his social commentaries within the characters and references of his plays.²⁹ The two allusions to the bawdy *Greensleeves* ballad in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, then, may be Shakespeare's delicate way of responding to his detractors, a statement that may have been lost even to his

²⁸ Gosson, Stephen. *The Schoole of Abuse*. London: Thomas Woodcocke, 1579.

²⁹ For examples of allusions to Elizabeth I in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, see Louis Montrose's "Shaping Fantasies': Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture." *Representations* No. 2 (Spring, 1983), pp. 61-94

original Renaissance audience. For the members of his writing circle and his fellow players, however, it was undoubtedly a riotous inside joke.

Writing political and/or religious commentaries in the Renaissance was dangerous work, especially considering that Elizabeth had proclaimed in 1559 that the censors:

...permyt none [theater productions] to be played wherein either matters of religion or of the governaunce of the estate of the common weale shalbe handled or treated, beyng no meete matters to be wrytten or treated upon but by menne of authoritie, learning and wisdom, nor to be handled before any audience, but of grave and discrete persons.³⁰

These *grave and discrete* audience members were certainly not frequently found at the Globe, and so speaking one's mind required, according to Richard Dutton, "a suitable fictional veiling of topical issues, so as not to cause specific offence either to identifiable individuals of note or to friendly foreign powers," a veil that, for Shakespeare, is in part constructed from the ballads that he chooses for his characters to sing.³¹ The use of popular tunes in Shakespeare's plays is not uncommon, as musical elements were widely used in Renaissance drama: the entrances of nobles are marked by trumpet fanfare in the tragedies, well-known

³⁰ Dutton, *Shakespeare and Marlowe*: p. 23, 29

³¹ *Ibid*, p. 21

ballads are usually interwoven throughout the comedies, and most performances even began with a musical overture and ended with a dance commonly referred to as *jig*. Stephen Orgel contends that: "The allusion, the appropriation [of popular music], brings into the play a sense that the characters have a history, a past, a life beyond the confines of the fiction; a life, moreover, that overlaps with that of the audience," creating an intimacy between players and spectators through references that have largely fallen out of use.³² Looking past the simple act of appropriating popular music for a play, however, produces an intricate web that leads the playwright out of the realm of 'known conformist' toward a less complacent persona as an opinionated critic of his culture.

³² Orgel, Stephen. "Foreword." *Shakespeare's Songbook*. Ed. Ross W. Duffin. New York: W. W. Norton & Company 2004. 11-14. p. 13

Chapter 2

“I Can Suck Melancholy Out of a Song:”

Jaques’s Music and the Search for Salvation in *As You Like It*³³

Due to the religious revelations that the characters sustain at the conclusion of the comedy, *As You Like It* (1599-1600) serves as a surprisingly pious intermediary work between the bawdier *Merry Wives* and *Twelfth Night*. The moral redemptions in *AYLI* stand in stark contrast to the characters in the other two plays who exit the drama just as corrupt as they entered. Following Falstaff’s public shaming, the amorous knight sloughs off any kind of moral lesson, asserting: “When night dogs run, all sorts of deer are chased,” highlighting a ‘boys will be boys’ philosophy (5.5.215). When the masks are removed in *Twelfth Night*, the puritanical Malvolio pays the price for the many deceptions, and Viola/Cesario even chooses to remain in her boys’ clothing, wishing to extend the charade. *Twelfth Night*, then, emphasizes what many disapproved of in the theater, that “plays led to all kinds of vice and that acting itself was simply a dangerous form of pretense and illusion.”³⁴ Conversely, *AYLI* offers the redemptive Jaques, an exiled courtier who ultimately opts to join a monastery

³³ While there remains a lack of specific interest in Shakespeare’s use of ballads, that is certainly not the case when encountering the body of scholarship relevant to his religious philosophies. Essays such as the seminal “Myth and Type in *As You Like It*,” by Richard Knowles, effectively unpack many of the religious symbols and allusions found in the play. Knowles focuses on the conflation of mythical and Christian allusions in *AYLI*, but it neither discusses the character Jaques, nor the Puritan presence in London at the time of its first performance.

³⁴ Sim, Alison. *Pleasures and Pastimes in Tudor England*. Stroud, Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2014.

rather than return to court. As a former-courtier-turned-fool, Jaques is not a singularly unique Shakespearean character, as the later romance, *The Winter's Tale*, touts Autolycus (who is the subject of my third chapter). These two observers are similar in that they are both exiles with a sordid past, but Jaques vows piety, expressing a gift for absolution: "Give me leave / To speak my mind, and I will through and through / Cleanse the foul body of th' infected world," while Autolycus, a ballad monger, would prefer that others join him in his delinquency (2.7.58-60). Autolycus's status as a thief in his community and Jaques's reputation with unsavory women hardly qualify either of them as a moral compass for the rest of the characters to follow, and yet they remain the most philosophically charged men in their plays. Jaques delivers one of Shakespeare's most well-known monologues, "All the world's a stage, / And all the men and women merely players, / They have their exits and their entrances, / And one man in his time plays many parts..." which invites the audience to view the action on the stage as a microcosm of the world around it (2.7.138-41). While Jaques goes on to describe the seven stages of a man's life, the "many parts" that performing artists could play on their "stages" are evaluated through the characters of Jaques and, later, Autolycus. Jaques's love of hearing and composing ballads, even in his most melancholic of moods, places him within the debate concerning the heathenry that some early modern Christian groups associated with popular music, and by extension, to the supposed debauchery of theaters as well (4.3.43-

4).³⁵ Jaques and Autolycus are two sides of the same coin, and I argue that they serve to illustrate the different paths that men could take in the eyes of Puritans in the Renaissance: Jaques is a champion for melancholic redemption while Autolycus highlights Shakespeare's eventual acceptance of cheerful damnation. Furthermore, Jaques ultimately becomes a metaphor for the protesting Puritans, illuminating the hypocrisy and joylessness of condemnatory religious leaders such as Stephen Gosson.

As You Like It, through the intersection of its Biblical allusions and pastoral pagan landscapes, provides the contentious backdrop necessary for Jaques to negotiate his spiritual conflicts. As the setting for the play, the Forest of Ardenne cannot escape its similarities with the Garden of Eden, and the characters frolic through the pastoral landscape as if it were still a Godly paradise untouched by the fall.³⁶ Upon Duke Senior's first appearance, he reinforces the idea of Ardenne-as-Eden by referring to the primordial Adam, remarking to Lord Amiens "...Are not these woods / More free from peril than the envious court? / Here feel we not the penalty of Adam," promoting the sentimental idea that man and

³⁵ All quotations from *The Winter's Tale*, unless otherwise indicated, are from *The Norton Shakespeare*. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al, 2nd ed., New York, W.W. Norton & Co, 2008. 2892-2961.

³⁶ Many scholars have pointed out that the original spelling for the forest in the folio printings was "Arden," an Anglicized form that Thomas Lodge also used in the source play *Rosalynde*. Later editions of *AYLI* have opted to amend the spelling to "Ardenne," a French version that is more representative of the setting of the play. "Arden" was also the spelling of Shakespeare's mother's surname, however, the *Oxford Companion to Shakespeare* asserts that the allusion to his mother's name is "purely sentimental."

woman are once again in their ancestral garden without fear of sin or judgement (2.1.3-5). He goes on to assure his companions that the forest is a perfect home and will provide their souls with sustenance; it is a destination where they may find “tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, / Sermons in stones, and good in everything” (2.1.16-7). Ardenne, then, is portrayed as a moral blank slate upon which the exiled aristocracy are invited to make their marks. Their pastoral world appears free from the moral constraints of society at court; however, Jaques often becomes symbolic for the absent setting from which they have been thrust. He consistently reminds the carefree characters, frequently through songs and scripture, that their behavior in their pastoral paradise is absurd. Richard Knowles, who wrote the seminal work on religion in *AYLI*, contends that much of the abundance of Biblical allusion in the play:

is indeed playful hyperbole about love, but most of it cannot be explained as a surviving convention of romance. Rather, the Biblical references and religious language spoken by most of the main characters seem designed to suggest evanescent, half-playful parallels between this world of romantic comedy and a more serious country of the religious mind.³⁷

Knowles’s affirmation of the connections Shakespeare draws between romantic comedy and serious religious inquiry are mirrored in the play’s dual locations.

³⁷ Knowles, Richard. “Myth and Type in *As You Like It*.” *ELH* 33, no. 1 (1966): 1–22. p. 10.

The forest is filled with poetry and song; however, there is the near-constant reminder that the cast must return to their less innocent city lives. A great degree of what hampers joy in the play is Jaques's constant reminders of the evils of the outside world, the world where order and repression might be restored. He alone views their forest utopia as a charade, perhaps the same sort of make-believe masquerade one finds in plays. The absence of the formal court location and the predominance of the pastoral setting serve to highlight the priggishness with which Jaques rails against the flaws of humanity. Absent a group of like-minded men in Ardenne, his judgment and sullenness are blatantly sanctimonious and hypocritical, exposing him as a representation of what men can become when unable to slough off the judgmental pressures of the church.

Jaques participates little in the action, but is a constant condemnatory presence throughout the comedy, spilling his philosophical black bile onto the festivities of the main players, similarly to the ways in which puritan protesters denounced the recreational amusements of the theater. His despondent nature casts gloomy shadows upon every act in which he is involved, up to and including the joyous marriage scene in Act 5. He is quite literally introduced to the play as "melancholy Jaques" when a lord conveys to Duke Senior the sullen man's reaction to a deer hunt: "The melancholy Jaques grieves at that, / And in that kind swears you do more usurp / Than doth your brother that hath banished you" (2.1.26-8). Killing deer in the forest serves two purposes for Duke Senior and his

company—the necessity for food, of course, but also as a reclamation of some of what they had lost. The king was then considered to own the forests' animals, thus, hunting the deer in Ardenne would be considered poaching—and worse—theft from their ruler. The hunt, then, would most likely have provided the company with an afternoon's pleasure, and although Duke Senior is somewhat saddened by the idea of the slaughter, remarking that he considers the animals "poor dappled fools," Jaques is nearly inconsolable (2.1.22). Senior's Lord reports that he left Jaques in his contemplation "...weeping and commenting / Upon the sobbing deer," but perhaps more importantly, Jaques even condemns those who injured it, ranting that they are "usurpers, tyrants, and what's worse" (2.1.65-6, 61). Jaques's judgmental and melancholy nature is established before he steps foot onto the stage through Duke Senior's Lord's deer anecdote. It is also through this episode that Duke Senior establishes that the sanctimonious Jaques is a person deserving of ridicule. He is nearly giddy when he hears that Jaques was left in his fitful state, ordering his lords: "Show me the place [where Jaques is] / I love to cope him in these sullen fits, / For then he's full of matter," or pus, illustrating the Duke's intent to abuse Jaques for his condescending attitude (2.1.67-9). The Duke, a mostly passive and pleasant protagonist, often bears the brunt of Jaques's musings, but consequently also finds folly in mocking him. The idea of a puritanical character becoming a target of needling is one that Shakespeare visits again two years later when *Twelfth Night's* priggish Malvolio

is laughed off the stage, vowing revenge against his abusers. While Jaques is not destined to share Malvolio's disgraced exit, it is clear at the conclusion of the drama that he will choose to continue his consistent judgment of mankind into the next chapter of his life. Jaques serves as a stand-in for the religious critics of the theater; he is always just outside the main action, ready to condemn the innocent merriment of those around him.

Jaques quickly works to establish himself as a morally superior member of the party, a platform from which he casts down judgments similar to the castigations directed toward performing artists in the period. The melancholic man who revels in seclusion is a stock figure of Renaissance drama; however, Jaques's caustic demeanor coupled with his constant allusions to Christian narratives and philosophies serve to construct from him the image of an unctuous critic.³⁸ Jaques aligns himself strongly with Christianity throughout his first entrance to the stage in Act 2 scene 5. He requests a song from Amiens who acquiesces with a traditional folk ballad appropriate to their pastoral surroundings:

Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And turn his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither.
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather. (2.5.1-8)

³⁸ *The Norton Shakespeare* regarding Jaques: "He is a stock figure of the melancholic man prone to solitude and black thoughts because of an excess of black bile, one of the four humors" p. 1637, footnote 4.

Through the nature-laden lyrics, Amiens mirrors the carefree temperament possessed by all of the exiled characters save Jaques. While the latter implores Amiens to continue the tune to the next verse, it seems that the request is only genuine insofar as it allows Jaques an excuse to proffer his own original composition to the tune once the traditionally known lyrics have run out. It is with his verse that Jaques makes his first Biblical allusion and his second judgement of Duke Senior:

If it do come to pass
That any man turn ass,
Leaving his wealth and ease
A stubborn will to please,
Ducdame, ducdame, ducdame.
Here shall he see
Gross fools as he,
An if he will come to me. (2.5.44-51)

Here, he chides Duke Senior and his role as a Moses-like figure, asserting that only a fool would leave his city life behind to wander in the forest. Richard Knowles derives the reading of Senior-as-Moses from the repetition of the allegedly nonsensical word “ducdame.” Most editions of *AYLI* gloss the word as either mere gibberish or as “come hither” to replicate the sentiment in Amiens’s first two verses.³⁹ Knowles, however, traced the word through an etymological study in French and offers three distinct translations for Jaques’s “Greek invocation” (2.5.53). He asserts that “ducdame” could be rewritten as *Duc*

³⁹ *The Norton Shakespeare*, for example, glosses “Ducdame” as “A word of unknown meaning. Possibly a variation on a Welsh phrase meaning “Come hither” or on a Gypsy phrase meaning “I foretell.” p. 1644, footnote 8.

d'amis, the “the leader of friends;” or *Duc d'ane(s)*, the “leader of the ass(es);” but he is most convinced by *Duc d'ame(s)*, or “the leader of the soul(s).⁴⁰ He explains:

[Jaques] would seem to be mocking with strong irony the pastoral role Senior has assumed. What strengthens this reading is Jaques’s apparent recognition that Senior’s role is a secular version of that of Moses: that like that other good shepherd, the Duke has gathered his flock of exiles, has raised something like Eden in the desert wilderness, and seeks sermons from stones while his table is mysteriously supplied with manna.⁴¹

This translation of *duc dame* provides a much stronger link between Duke Senior and Moses than the more subtle allusion that he is simply a man leading a group of people aimlessly through the wilderness. It is further enhanced by Jaques’s farewell, only a few lines later: “...I’ll go sleep if I can. If I cannot, I’ll rail against all the firstborn of Egypt,” an obvious reference to the circumstances surrounding the departure of Moses into the desert to escape Pharaoh’s cruel and oppressive treatment of the Israelites in Egypt (2.5.54-5).⁴² While the “firstborn

⁴⁰ Knowles, Richard. “Ducdame.” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 18, no. 4 (1967): 438-41 p. 439-40

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 440.

⁴² *King James Holy Bible*. 2004. Web. The story of Moses and Pharaoh can be found in the book of *Exodus*. At 12:29, the final plague that drives Pharaoh to release the Israelites is described: “And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne, unto the firstborn of the captive that [was] in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle.”

of Egypt” allusion does extend the Biblical metaphor through to the end of the scene, Knowles’s comparison is problematic in terms of creating an outright link between Duke Senior and Moses: Senior cannot be both the symbolic leader of the persecuted as well as a slain son of the tyrannical Pharaoh. It is possible that this mixed metaphor is an intentional conflation, similar to the scriptural errors of Mistress Ford and Sir Hugh Evans in *Merry Wives*, which point out the characters’ hypocrisies, but in contrast to the comical Windsorians, Jaques does not appear to have a duplicitous nature. His sardonic demeanor requires that his comments on Duke Senior be viewed as earnest, and so his disjointed fool-esque logic serves merely to establish his self-perception as morally superior, granting him the freedom to judge those around him with a righteous stinging tongue.

In essence, Jaques cements his status as a self-appointed, official social critic when two scenes later, he straightforwardly vocalizes his desire to scrutinize his fellow exiles without penalty by asking to become a fool, a gesture that ultimately exposes not only his unctuous nature, but also his hypocrisy and the gaping void he has in his knowledge of human nature. He muses, “O that I were a fool, / I am ambitious for a motley coat,” after a philosophically charged conversation he has with Touchstone (2.7.42-3). Through his negotiations with Duke Senior to become his fool, Jaques once again marries the language of music

with that of religion. In dreaming of his future as a sanctioned critic of society, he entreats Duke Senior:

...I must have liberty
Withal, as a large a charter as the wind,
To blow on whom I please, for so fools have;
And they that are most galled with my folly,
They most must laugh. And why, sir, must they so?
The why is plain as way to parish church. (2.7.47-52)

Jaques's personification in his request to be a fool—his desire to have “a large a charter as the wind”—foreshadows the scene's ending ballad, “Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind,” where the characterization of the wind coincides with Jaques's own personality, or at least the traits he hopes to claim as a fool. His penchant for musicality illustrates a tenuous duality within him: He wants to take part in the fun, but his religious dogma does not allow for what he deems folly. The structure of his request to Duke Senior reflects this conflict: He begins with a musical allusion, then moves immediately to disparaging his company—those who are most guilty must “laugh”/appreciate him most—and finally finishes his request with the tongue-in-cheek-advice that those who are judged by him should make their way to church. His use of the path to church as a metaphor for the ease with which his observations should be borne illuminates an underlying message that Jaques consistently reinforces throughout the play: His own flaws must be overlooked as he judges others and attempts to lead them to his idea of salvation. He asserts: “Give me leave / To speak my mind, and I will through and

through / Cleanse the foul body of th'infected world, / If they will patiently receive my medicine.” None of the numerous characters within the play are able to avoid Jaques’s judgments, and Howard C. Cole notes that they are metaphorically trapped in a prison where the aspiring fool believes that acceptance of his spiritual insights is the only way to illuminate the soul. He contends: “Jaques’ patients are not to be stalked but straitjacketed, intimidated by a motley that denies to others the liberty of blowing back.”⁴³ In this manner, Jaques is not unlike the Puritan protesters who rail against Shakespeare’s theater—the righteous Christians who desire to be heard but refuse to hear.

As the scene closes, Jaques does finally perform the ‘windy’ ballad to which he alludes, but it is tinged with Christian imagery that works to transpose the song from Jaques’s treatise on foolery to yet another reminder of the guilt and need for penance he believes his cohorts should feel—albeit hypocritically. He sings as if he has forgotten his own transgressions with women and points out the foolishness in the amorous desires of the other characters as if he has somehow attained a sort of moral superiority that transcends the desires of Earthy flesh.⁴⁴

He sings:

⁴³ Cole, Howard C. "The Moral Vision of *As You like It*." *College Literature* 3, no. 1 (1976): 17-32. p 23.

⁴⁴ The tune, “Blow, Blow, Thou Winter Wind,” is usually attributed to Amiens, and that is the case both in *The Norton Shakespeare* and in Duffin’s *Shakespeare’s Songbook*. Greenblatt notes in the Norton, however, that “[The folio] does not indicate who sings this song. It is usually assigned to Amiens” (1648). I disagree with the choice to designate Amiens as the ballad singer. First, Jaques quite clearly alludes to the song earlier in the scene, so it only makes sense

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude.
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.
Hey-ho, sing hey-ho, unto the green holly,
Most friendship, is feigning, most loving, mere folly.
The heigh ho, the holly;
This life is most jolly. (2.7.174-83)

On the surface, his lyrics effectively convey his feeling that he is not as unkind as others believe, that the company should be more grateful for his presence, even if he is sometimes rude, and then goes on in the refrain to ridicule the situations in which many of the other characters have found themselves: muddled romantic endeavors and friendships that have led to exile. Beyond that, however, he deigns those relationships as mere frivolity by utilizing the repetitive plant imagery of the "holly," infusing the popular secular nature ballad with the solemnity of Christ's crucifixion, a juxtaposition that makes the characters' earthly delights appear trivial. Beginning in the medieval period, the holly plant began to hold a strong symbolic significance for Christians. The sharp pointed

that he would return to sing those same words to close it. Additionally, before Amiens allegedly bursts into song, he has never been named in the scene. Act 2 scene 7 begins: "Enter Duke Senior and lord[s] like outlaws," where it can be assumed that Amiens is among the party, however, he never speaks until the song ensues at line 174, and then does not speak again. Thus, it is my argument that this song should be attributed to Jaques, not Amiens. Further, as the bulk of dialogue in this section is devoted to Jaques's request to be a fool, the most 'foolish' act that he could perform would be to sing a snippet of a ballad that provides insight and humor. John Long notes in his essay, *The Ballad Medley and the Fool*, that "...One of the essential characteristics of the Elizabethan jester, court fool, or 'natural' was the fragmentation of wit or personality associated with him and displayed in his motley dress, his antic gestures, and *his singing of musical medleys*" (511, emphasis mine).

leaves are reminiscent of Christ's crown of thorns, and the small red berries represent his drops of blood. Elizabeth Griffiths reports that even when some English forests were being cut down due to a rise in the need for domestic fuel during the early modern period, "Evergreen hollies, whose shoots provided tasty winter fodder, especially for deer, became a protected species imbued with almost mystical qualities."⁴⁵ The magic surrounding holly was in part a holdover from the pagans, who believed that hanging the evergreens around their homes would protect them from evil spirits.⁴⁶ The *Christian* symbolism associated with holly became prevalent in England in the medieval period and was widely recognized by the seventeenth century, even by Queen Elizabeth I. An apocryphal story from southwestern England contends that St. Joseph of Arimathea (who buried Jesus Christ following the crucifixion) traveled to Glastonbury to found a Christian church. While there, he drove his staff into the ground, which transformed into a holly tree (sometimes referred to as "holy tree," "holy thorn, and/or "Christ's thorn) around which an annual holiday ceremony was founded whereby the townsfolk would come together and cut a sprig of the tree to be sent to London where it was used to decorate the Queen's breakfast tray on Christmas morning.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ "Conference Report: The Society's Winter Conference, 2010: Woods and Their Uses in Medieval to Modern Britain." *The Agricultural History Review* 59, no. 1 (2011): 149-50. p. 149

⁴⁶ John Parkinson mentions that the old tradition of using holly around the house at "Christ Tide" is mere "superstition" in his, *Theatrum Botanicum: The Theater of Plantes. Or, an Universall and Compleate Herball*. London: Tho. Cotes, 1640. Pagination unavailable (*EEBO* database).

⁴⁷ Marion Bowman studies the history, symbolism, and import of the holly festival at length in

Reading Jaques's ballad with the repetitious holly symbolism in mind removes all of its ties to nature by reimagining the wind not as a metaphor for Jaques's scornful breath, but as the holy spirit. The opening lines of the ballad, "Blow, blow, thou winter wind, / Thou art not so unkind / As man's ingratitude," become a religious invocation as well as a means to shame the assembled party. The refrain, "Hey-ho, sing hey-ho, unto the green holly, / Most friendship, is feigning, most loving, mere folly. / The heigh ho, the holly," reminds the characters that their Earthly relationships are insignificant in comparison to the relationships they should have with God and that they should raise their voices to "sing hey-ho, unto the green holly," or holy.⁴⁸ Jaques's second ballad performance is rife with Christian imagery, just as his "Greenwood Tree" ballad was, and his amalgamation of music, performance, and religion point to the sometimes tenuous interconnectedness between those disciplines. His request to become a fool proves to be both a desire to perform and to evangelize.

Ironically, though Jaques is ecstatic to meet the actual fool, Touchstone, and vows that he must also be such an entertainer, he does not possess the insight into human nature nor the cleverness to retain such a position. Upon his encounter with Touchstone, the latter observes:

"The Holy Thorn Ceremony: Revival, Rivalry and Civil Religion in Glastonbury." *Folklore* 117, no. 2 (2006): 123-40.

⁴⁸ The first Folio provides the spelling, "holly," however, the *OED*'s entry for the word suggests that spellings throughout the 1500-1600s were virtually interchangeable between holly, holy, and hollie.

...’Tis but an hour ago since it was nine,
And after one hour more ‘twill be eleven.
And so from hour to hour we ripe and ripe,
And then from hour to hour we rot and rot;
And thereby hangs a tale... (2.7.24-8)

In Touchstone’s wordplay, Jaques fails to see the sexual innuendo or that he has become the victim of the fool’s jest, remarking: “...When I did hear / The motley fool thus moral on the time / My lungs began to crow like chanticleer, / That fools should be so deep -contemplative” (2.7.29-31). He only appreciates Touchstone’s remarks on the passage of time (a subject he takes up himself later in the scene through his “Seven Stages of Man” soliloquy), but does not recognize the double entendre of his raunchy puns. When Touchstone declares “...from hour to hour we ripe and ripe,” he is leaning on the similarity in pronunciation between “hour” and “whore,” casting the passage of time not as a noble pursuit, but as a way for men to navigate life as a series of lascivious conquests. His observations that men ripe and rot are similarly vulgar in that to “ripe” was to mature sexually while to “rot” puns on “rut,” which means “to have sex in an animal-like state of excitement.”⁴⁹ In closing, Touchstone ruminates, “and thereby hangs a tale,” punning on “tail” or penis. Jaques’s misunderstanding of Touchstone’s verbal jabs illuminates his lack of wit and foreshadows his failure to speak truth about the world. Cole notes: “Unlike Touchstone...this fool takes himself with complete seriousness and

⁴⁹ *The Norton Shakespeare*, p. 1645, footnote 5.

wishes to pontificate.”⁵⁰ Further, it is clear that Jaques only wants to “fool” insofar as it serves his ego and allows him to provide his personal commentary on the society he keeps. He is destined, however, to fail at becoming an entertainer.

Duke Senior understands Jaques’s purpose at once, exclaiming:

Fie on thee, I can tell what thou wouldst do...
Most mischievous foul sin, in chiding sin;
For thou thyself hast been a libertine,
As sensual as the brutish sting itself,
And all th’embossed sores and headed evils
That thou with licence of free foot hast caught
Wouldst thou disgorge into the general world (2.7.62, 64-9).

He not only points out that Jaques is spiritually poisonous, but that he is a hypocrite—utilizing the same accusations of sexual misconduct that Touchstone previously introduced. Duke Senior’s imagery of “embossed sores,” “headed evils,” and “disgorging” (or vomiting) elicit a strong sense of disgust, and additionally paint Jaques as a carrier of pus and pestilence that must be contained in order to protect the world from a pandemic of his melancholic damnations.

At this moment in the play, it is difficult not to see the parallels between Jaques and Shakespeare’s contemporary critic, Puritan pamphleteer, Stephen Gosson (who I discussed at length in Chapter 1). Being a failed fool, Jaques’s shortcomings mirror Gosson’s inability to become a playwright; subsequently, both do eventually turn their backs on their aspirations to be entertainers and instead join pious religious groups. Interestingly, *AYLI* was entered in the

⁵⁰ Cole, p. 23

Stationer's Register on 4 August 1600, the same year that Stephen Gosson was transferred from his post as rector at Great Wigborough, Essex (some 60 miles east of London) to St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate—less than a mile from Shakespeare's newly opened Globe Theater.⁵¹ Thomas Lodge, who actually wrote *Rosalynde*, the source material for *AYLI*, famously squared off with Gosson in defense of the theater. After Gosson published *The Schoole of Abuse*, which laid out his religious arguments against the performing arts (including music and theater), Lodge countered with his own treatise, *Defense of Poetry, Music, and Stage Plays*, which refuted Gosson's Puritan principles.⁵² The close proximity of *AYLI*'s registration to Gosson's appointment at St. Botolph's suggests that Jaques's melancholic moral rhetoric as well as his ultimate decision to join a religious sect are more than mere coincidence. Shakespeare and Lodge were both playwrights and knew each other, and though it may be conjecture, it is possible that Shakespeare added the Jaques character (who did not exist in Lodge's original prose piece) as an homage to Lodge and his outspoken advocacy for artists. Lodge's introduction to *Rosalynde* in the original 1590 publication is a

⁵¹ The publication history of *AYLI* is cited from Jean E. Howard's introduction to the play in *The Norton Shakespeare*, p 1623. Biographical information concerning Stephen Gosson's career is from: Pollard, Tanya. "Stephen Gosson." *The Encyclopedia of English Renaissance Literature*. Eds Garrett A. Sullivan Jr. and Alan Stewart. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2012. p. 394.

⁵² Lodge's tract is an example of a work that was banned by the censors for attacking religious institutions in England, though it is believed to have been privately circulated, according to Lodge's entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

perfect example of the disgust he had for his detractors. He provides a cutting warning to any “gentleman” who would dare to judge or censure his creativity:

To be briefe Gentlemen, ... If you like it, so: and yet I will be yours in duetie, if you bee mine in fauour. But if *Momus* or anie squint-eied asse that hath mightie eares to conceiue with *Midas*, and yet little reason to iudge; if hee come aboard our Barke to find fault with the tackling, when he knows not the shrowdes, Ile downe into the hold, and fetch out a rustie pollax, that sawe no sunne this seauen yeare, and either well be bast him, or heaue the cockscombe ouer boord to feede cods. But courteous Gentlemen that fauour most, backbite none, & pardon what is ouerslipt, let such come & vwelcome, Ile into the Stevvards roome, & fetch them a kan of our best beuradge.⁵³

Through his seafaring metaphor, Lodge’s passionate distaste for the Puritans—or ‘squinty-eyed asses’—who protest the arts is palpable, and even violent.

Shakespeare is much more subtle in his treatment of his religious adversaries (with the obvious exception of *Twelfth Night*’s Malvolio); however, I contend that he desired to retain some of Lodge’s warnings from *Rosalynde*, and thus instilled some of Stephen Gosson’s qualities into Jaques, the mockable moralist who ends

⁵³ Lodge, Thomas. *Rosalynde*. London: Thomas Orwin, 1590. p 3.

up living alone in a cave awaiting his union with Duke Frederick, the play's principle antagonist.

Despite his inability to attain a motley coat, Jaques is not dissuaded from his self-imposed calling to spread melancholy and righteousness to all he meets. When he appears stalking Touchstone and Audrey in Act 3, he overhears their plans to be wed in the forest by the local vicar, Sir Oliver Martext, but at once intervenes on behalf of salvation. He censures Touchstone: "And will you, being a man of your breeding, be married under a bush, like a beggar? Get you to the church, and have a good priest that can tell you what marriage is" (3.3.68-70). Even on a day of utter love and happiness, Jaques cannot help but to stain the festivities with his proselytizing. Touchstone acquiesces to his request for a more solemn and traditional ceremony, telling Audrey, "We must be married, or we must live in bawdry," believing there is truth in the sanctimonious words of the melancholy Jaques (3.3.79). The scene continues, afterward, to couple religion and music. Though it is not Jaques who sings the ballad, Touchstone serenades the vicar, Sir Oliver:

Farewell, good Master Oliver. Not
[Begin song] O, sweet Oliver,
O, brave Oliver,
Leave me not behind thee

but

Wind away,
Begone, I say,
I will not to wedding with thee. (3.3.80-7)

Originally, the tune, “O, Sweet Oliver” was a duet where a woman would sing the first three lines, and a man the final three, but here, Touchstone performs the entire ballad himself, and not as a quarrel between lovers, but to inform the vicar that he shall not be performing their wedding ceremony after all.

Beyond its use as an amusing exit for the fool, Shakespeare’s use of the popular Elizabethan ballad, “Sweet Oliver,” calls into question Touchstone’s acceptance of Jaques’s Christian advice by alluding to his esteem for alleged atheist, Christopher Marlowe, to whom he also nods in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.⁵⁴ In 1592, Shakespeare previously mentioned “Oliver” in *I Henry VI* (1.3.9), a play that may have been a collaboration with Marlowe. According to analysts at the University of Pennsylvania, “[There is] new evidence that all three *Henry VI* plays contain language written by another author. Their⁵⁵ analysis identifies Christopher Marlowe as the likeliest candidate, although other writers may have been involved as well.”⁵⁶ In this brief scene, there is another more obvious reference to Marlowe when Touchstone confides to Audrey: “When a

⁵⁴ Duffin provides, in *Shakespeare’s Songbook*, that “O Sweet Oliver” was licensed on 6 August 1584. It was utilized by Ben Jonson previous to *AYLI* in his 1598 play, *Every Man in His Humour*. I contend that the song continued to garner popularity for years, as I have also located references to it in Thomas Dekkar’s long-running *The Honest Whore, Part 1* (1604) which had its 6th and final quarto publication run in 1635 (publication information for Dekkar’s piece is from: Jackson, Ken. “Bethlem & Bridewell in *The Honest Whore*.” *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* 43, no. 2 (2003): 395-413.)

⁵⁵ Alejandro Ribeiro, Rosenbluth Associate Professor in the Department of Electrical and Systems Engineering at the University of Pennsylvania and Gabriel Egan, Professor of Shakespeare Studies at De Montfort University

⁵⁶ Lerner, Evan and Amanda Mott. “Penn Engineers’ Network Analysis Uncovers New Evidence of Collaboration in Shakespeare’s Plays.” *Penn Today*. University of Pennsylvania, 25 October 2016.

man's verses cannot be understood, nor a man's good wit seconded with the forward child, understanding, it strikes a man more dead than a great reckoning in a little room. Truly, I would the gods had made thee poetical" (3.3.9-12). It is generally believed that Touchstone's reference to the "great reckoning in a little room" is a description of the way that Marlowe was killed during a bar room fight over his bill.⁵⁷ The language leading up to the allusion is also a plea for writers such as Marlowe and himself to be understood and not condemned; Touchstone, as a representative for entertainers, begs to be "understood" for his "verses" and "good wit." By ending with his wish, "I would the gods had made thee poetical," it seems that he is speaking directly to Audrey, whom he sees as less intellectually gifted than himself, but it is also possible that he is speaking to Jaques, who he knows is watching the couple from the fringe. Just as Shakespeare alluded to Marlowe in a *MWOW* scene including a parson, he does so again during the only scene in *AYLI* containing a vicar, and similarly to the former, the remembrance of Marlowe blurs the line between perceptions of sanctity and sin as well as the playhouse and the world outside the Globe.

By Act 4, Jaques has sloughed off his desire to become a fool and returns to his revels in the philosophies of melancholy, a shift in mindset that highlights his inner struggle between what he is and what he aspires to be. Cynthia Marshall notices this duality as well, noting: "The melancholy Jaques makes his living, we

⁵⁷ *The Norton Shakespeare*, p. 1658, footnote 3.

might say, by cheerfully lampooning what he could be but is not,” which suggests that Jaques’s moods and sanctimoniousness are a result of his failures rather than his desires.⁵⁸ Though the characters at the beginning of the play only abuse Jaques when he is not present, Rosalind mercilessly marks him as a sinner directly. After he confesses that he loves melancholy more than laughter, she rebukes him: “Those that are in extremity of either are abominable fellows, and betray themselves to every modern censure worse than drunkards” (4.1.5-7). Following her judgment, Jaques embarks on a defense of his melancholic principles that provides insight into his own self-perception:

I have neither the scholar’s melancholy, which is emulation; nor the musician’s, which is fantastical; nor the courtier’s, which is proud; nor the soldier’s, which is ambitious; nor the lawyer’s, which is politic, nor the lady’s, which is nice; nor the lover’s, which is all these; but it is a melancholy of mine own, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects, and indeed the sundry contemplation of my travels, in which my often rumination wraps me in a most humorous sadness. (4.1.10-8)

His observation that he does not possess the “fantastical” melancholy of a musician is especially odd considering he is the most musical character in the play. He performs three songs while Touchstone sings only two. Unfortunately, it is incredibly difficult to pin down a definitive meaning for his descriptor, “fantastical,” as the word had multiple definitions in the period. The *Oxford*

⁵⁸ Marshall, Cynthia. "The Doubled Jaques and Constructions of Negation in *As You Like It*." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 49, no. 4 (1998): 375-92. p. 378.

English Dictionary provides nine different nuances of the word that were somewhat common at the time, including: one who has fanciful ideas; pertaining to passion or love; heretical; irrational; as well as the modern usage, wonderful. Thus, it is challenging to determine whether Jaques is praising musicians or insulting them as irrational heretics. At this juncture, where he has given up performance and embraced his melancholy, Jaques appears to have difficulty identifying these types of ideological positions as well as his role in the world. He is also, without doubt, an unreliable narrator in his own life. Clearly, he wants to be part of the pastoral festivities--he hounds the other characters and interjects himself unnecessarily into their various predicaments, but his belief in his own righteousness allows him to speak only words of censure to everyone. Agnes Latham suggests, "his railing against the wicked ways of the world keeps before us the truth that, outside the charmed circle, the ways of the world are wicked. It is only in Arden that his cynicism looks ridiculous. At Elsinore it would be a different matter."⁵⁹ With that in mind, perhaps Jaques is simply a relic of tradition, a man who must adapt to the changing landscape or ultimately be left behind to brood on his idealistic vision for society--a solitary fate that he eventually embraces.

⁵⁹ Latham, Agnes. "Introduction." *The Arden Shakespeare: As You Like It*. New York: Bloomsbury, 1977. p. lxxvi.

Jaques's penultimate appearance in *AYLI* occurs in Act 4 scene 2, which contains as many musical lyrics as it does dialogue, and which serves as his final invective against any happiness the exiles may have mustered during their banishment. He enters the scene among a number of unnamed lords who have just killed a deer, but unlike his distressed response to the first felled deer in Act 2, Jaques is exuberant. It is unlikely that his attitude about killing the creatures of the forest could change so drastically in such a short time, so the sole purpose of this incredibly brief scene (19 lines in total) must be to allow Jaques his final act of ridicule. The slain animal is important to him only insofar as he is able to use its horns as a metaphor for cuckoldry--a weapon against the 'ill-advised' love that has sprouted all around him. He excitedly offers: "Let's present him to the Duke like a Roman conqueror. And it would do well to set the deer's horns upon his head for a branch of victory," then calls for a song to memorialize the occasion (4.2.3-5). The subsequent ballad that they sing, "What Shall He Have," is an ode to men who have been forced to wear the cuckold's horns--presumably all men who have ventured to love a woman. The lord's sing:

What shall he have that killed the deer?
His leather skin and horns to wear.
Then sing him home; the rest shall bear his burden.
Take thou no scorn to wear the horn;
It was a crest ere thou wast born
 Thy father's father wore it,
 And thy father bore it.
The horn, the horn, the lusty horn
Is not a thing to laugh and scorn. (4.2.10-9)

The Folio does not assign this song to anyone specifically, as the stage direction simply states: “Music, Song,” but the tune was intended as a round, and so even if Jaques did not initiate the song, he undoubtedly participated in its verses. Ross Duffin even contends that the third line of the tune was invented by Jaques; he reports: “[The song’s] appearance in a source closer to the time of the First Folio confirms the omission of line 3 from the song lyric, which makes that line seem likely to be an invitation by Jaques to join in the round...”⁶⁰ The lyric in question, “Then sing him home; the rest shall bear his burden,” not only invites the surrounding lords to join him in singing the cuckold home, but assures the audience that every man bears the same burden. He views the romantic relationships in the play not as pure manifestations of love, but as a way to have some sort of bestial sexual arrangement condoned by society. He utilizes animal imagery (in this case, the deer) on more than one occasion to insult the coupling of the other characters. When he returns in the final scene of the play, for example, he tells Orlando: “There is sure another flood toward, and these couples are coming to the ark. Here comes a pair of very strange beasts, which in all tongues are called fools” (5.4.35-7). Here, he alludes to the Bible, mocks romantic love, and insults fools all in the same breath. Act 4 scene 2 ends on the final line of the cuckold song, “Is not a thing to laugh and scorn,” which is apt for

⁶⁰ Duffin, p. 434.

Jaques's final musical performance, because nothing could be more appropriate for him than to state that he, himself is not a thing to laugh at or scorn.

Jaques's final act is to leave the company, reject court, and to self-exile in an abandoned cave where he has plans to eventually join Duke Frederick at a monastery, finally eschewing any hope for happiness or normalcy for himself, but accepting the life choices of his compatriots. Here, Shakespeare appears to make his most absolute connection between melancholy and religious service, an opinion that was not entirely accepted in the period. Judy Kronenfeld explains perceptions of melancholy as they evolved through the medieval and early modern eras:

The pastoral melancholy that is associated with solitude enters Renaissance pastoral mainly via Petrarch. It is related to a new sensibility which, in Christian and Stoic contexts, is most likely to be interpreted as unhealthy egoism. This new mood involves explicitly cultivated introspection, an introspection unrelated to medieval contemplation which is justified by its God-directedness. It involves as well a self-nourishing grief, which is, paradoxically, a source of joy.⁶¹

⁶¹ Kronenfeld, Judy Z. "Shakespeare's Jaques and the Pastoral Cult of Solitude." *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 18, no. 3 (1976): 451-73. p. 451.

So, while Kronenfeld's argument regarding melancholy implies that Jaques's decision to adopt a solitary life is a direct result of his egoism, I contend that there is undoubtedly some "God-directedness" in his decision. He does state, "To [Duke Frederick] will I. Out of these convertites / There is much matter to be heard and learned," emphasizing a desire to know God better through communion with religious men (5.4.173-4). This Christian-centric ending to the play was entirely invented by Shakespeare; the source piece, *Rosalynde*, is not only absent the Jaques character, but also delivers a much different finale for Duke Frederick. The Frederick-equivalent, Torismond, dies at the end of Lodge's play after raising an army to attack his brother, Gerismond. The true French King and his accompanying exiles in the forest are able to fend off Torismond's offensive, and there is no pious acceptance of God's will that restores order to the kingdom—only absolute retribution against the antagonistic usurper. *AYLI*'s Duke Frederick's decision to abdicate his position, and Jaques's subsequent determination to join him in his religious studies once again point to the differences between Lodge's approach and Shakespeare's: While *Rosalynde* begins and ends with obvious pointed warnings toward their detractors, *AYLI* allows its antagonists to quietly and respectfully disappear. Upon his departure, Jaques's ego dissipates as he leaves kind words and advice for the company, his first and only earnest utterances to them. He urges the crowd of happy couples: "So, to your pleasures; / I am for other than for dancing measures," excusing

himself from the frivolity that will inevitably ensue once the natural order is restored to the Duchy in France, but no longer deriding it (5.4.181-2).

As You Like It is undoubtedly one of the most religiously nuanced plays of the canon, as it encompasses a multitude of Christian allegory, Puritan principles, Pagan ideas of nature as religion, and even Greek and Roman Mythology that often seem contradictory, but all serve the mutually beneficial idea of religious tolerance, culminating in Act 5's marriage scene. The final moments of the play are a hodgepodge of differing beliefs, conflating doctrines and characters from Christianity, Greek Mythology, and Roman Mythology. The play is rife with Biblical allusion; however, the message of the Christian faith is muddled when it is not the vicar, Sir Oliver, who returns to perform the wedding ceremonies, but Hymen, the Greek God of Marriage. To further complicate the scene, Hymen gives a speech that also contains snippets of Christian language—most notably the words: “Cross,” “Lord,” and “Hymn”—before performing a ballad about Juno, the *Roman* Goddess of Marriage and Childbirth (5.4.120, 123, 127). The mixed religious messages of the play's end mirror the confusion experienced by Jaques in his quest for sanctity. Though at one time he wished to be a fool himself, his final words on the role of performing artists in society are pointed at Touchstone when he exasperatedly muses: “Is not this a rare fellow, my lord? He's as good at anything, and yet a fool,” as if to say that he genuinely cannot

understand why a man of such intelligence and insight would choose such a career, with the underlying message that the fool must truly be foolish (5.4.93-4).

While the use of music in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* can be seen as an affront and retaliation to the writings of Puritan leaders such as Stephen Gosson and Phillip Stubbs, *As You Like It* is a more gentle and introspective study of the tensions between performing artists and their naysayers. *AYLI* boasts more instances of the use of songs than any other of Shakespeare's comedies, and coupled with its numerous religious allusions, clearly highlights the unavoidable connections between musicians, poets, playwrights, and Puritans at the turn of the seventeenth century in London.⁶² While most of *AYLI*'s characters dot the scenes with innocent love, frolicking, and feasts, Jaques alone broods and criticizes any attempt at merriment. He represents what men can become when unable to slough off the judgmental pressures of the church, but ultimately demonstrates every man's capacity to 'live and let live.' The play leaves all the characters, regardless of their levels of piousness, with respectful and pleasant exits, an ending that perfectly suits the title of the play: everyone is invited to have things just as they like them.

⁶² Jean E. Howard notes that *AYLI* "contains more songs than any other Shakespearean drama" in her introduction to the work in *The Norton Shakespeare*, 2nd ed. p. 1616

Chapter 3

Puritans, Tramps, and Thieves

Autolycus's Final Defense of Performing Artists in *The Winter's Tale*

In the romance *The Winter's Tale*, popular songs mirror the action of the drama, at times purposely mislead the audience, establish the moods of scenes, provide useful information about the settings, and hold the key to unlocking the motives behind the characters' actions. Autolycus, as a thief and a ballad monger, serves as a pop culture icon, working to draw Shakespeare's own intended audience—which would have been quite familiar with the tunes he sings and peddles—into the action on the stage. Some of the most well-known ballads of the era—including “Packington's Pound,” which chronicles the unfortunate yet fun-filled life of a thief—describe the actions of notorious criminals, creating from Autolycus a multi-layered character who only *appears* to be proffered solely for the amusement of Shakespeare's audience. This self-promoting former courtier seems to be marginal to the story, unimportant save the comedic relief he provides following the tragedies that mark the first half of the play. Autolycus's status as a thief in his community does not allow for the rest of the characters to admire his clearly muddled morality, yet juxtaposed with the abominable actions of Leontes, who assures the audience over and over again that he is sovereign and infallible through his divine right of kings, Autolycus does appear to be a true

standard of humanity. Flawed though he may be, by conversing directly with the audience on several occasions through dialogue and his ballad performances, he not only provides an ample supply of background information for his play, but also serves as the strongest connection to the audience. I argue that he becomes an illustration of the criminalization of artists under the omnipresent scrutiny of Puritanism, subsequently proving to be the strongest defense of the ethics of performing artists in the Shakespearean canon.

This connection is extremely important as Shakespeare sets up this character as a representation of all performing artists and utilizes him as a defense against the moral attacks of Puritans. With Autolycus's statement concerning the difficulty he has in performing his ballad with "one puritan amongst them, [who only] sings psalms to hornpipes," he places himself within the debate concerning the heathenry that this early modern Christian group associated with popular music, and by extension, to the supposed debauchery of theaters as well (4.3.43-4). As a seller of ballads, Shakespeare assigns Autolycus what the Puritans would deem the most unsuitable of occupations, more so perhaps than even thievery, as David Lindley notes:

The most frequent target of Puritan objection was the circulation of ballads in printed form, [most notably] the 'broadside' ballads issued in huge quantity in the latter half of the sixteenth century... Nicholas Bownd in 1595 lamented that the psalms were being

pushed to one side, even in the houses of great persons, for what he saw as a new spate of ballads, and complained: “For as when the light of the Gospell came first in, the singing of ballades (that was rife in Poperie) began to cease, and in time was cleane banished away in many places: so now the sudden renewing of them, and hastie receiving of them every where, maketh me to suspect, least they should drive away the singing of Psalmes againe.”⁶³

The replacement of psalms with ballads was an enormous point of contention for Puritans as this is a theme that Shakespeare also brings to the forefront in the earlier comedy, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, when the country parson begins to confuse the words of a psalm he is singing to comfort himself with the lyrics from a broadside ballad by Christopher Marlowe. Autolycus, then, is established as the lowest of archetypal characters, and his baseness is, perhaps, augmented by the fact that he once lived at the court in Bohemia and knows very well the standards for the proper behavior of the citizenry. The role of the musician in the early modern period was often hard to pinpoint in terms of a respectable position in society. The nineteenth century scholar Horace Furness, however, contends that: "If a true geniality as to Music be allowed to Autolycus, and likewise a certain amount of faculty for enjoying the beauties of external nature in birds and flowers, it would be hard to say that these qualities do not imply some small germ

⁶³ Lindley, David. *Shakespeare and Music*. New York. Bloomsbury, 2006. p 72.

of possible good in him," and it is this genial nature and love of life that endear Autolycus to his audience despite his deviant status in the community.⁶⁴

The only other character to invoke music in the play is Leontes, and his choice of ballads in Act 1 initiates the religious debate taken up more obviously later in the play. The first ballad mentioned in *The Winter's Tale* is "The Glass Doth Run," the only song not introduced by Autolycus in some way, and its condemning and melancholic tone set the mood for the first acts of the play in direct contrast to the more pastoral and pleasant world of Autolycus's Bohemia. Not without coincidence, it is Leontes who invokes this sole accusatory tune: "were my wife's liver / Infected as her life, she would not live / The running of one glass," or hourglass (1.2.306-8). The corresponding ballad was registered May 3, 1591 and elicits a similar theme: "The glass doth run / the clock doth go. / Awake from sin: / Why sleep ye so?" and is also the only song in the play with a Christian message, asserting in its opening verse: "All careful Christians, mark my song; / consider death must end our days. / This earthly life it is not long; / and Christ shall come to judge our ways."⁶⁵ As Leontes's only musical accompaniment, "The Glass Doth Run" casts the king as an overbearing and overtly judgmental character, but perhaps more importantly, it introduces Christianity into a pagan play. Autolycus's songs are decidedly more nature-

⁶⁴ Furness, Horace. "Criticisms—Autolycus [Appendix]." *The Winter's Tale*. London: JB Lippincott Co, 1898. 369-73. p. 371.

⁶⁵ Duffin, p. 168.

centric, and he performs them from the lush Bohemian countryside, creating a staunch division between his world and that of Leontes. Taken symbolically, Shakespeare is making his first stand against fundamental Christianity by aligning performing artists with a far more likeable character and portraying their detractors as rigid, tyrannical fools.

The play remains appropriately free, not only of lively tunes, but of any type of music, in the aftermath of Hermione's supposed death and the loss of Perdita, until Act 4 when Autolycus enters the scene and effectively ends the mourning period for the audience. His first lines are a song about daffodils, eliciting images of buttery yellow sunshine and happiness, introducing (though Time has already accomplished the task) the new setting for the second half of the romance. He erupts into the ballad "But Shall I Go Mourn:"

But shall I go mourn for that, my dear?
The pale moon shines by night,
And when I wander here and there
I then do most go right.
If tinkers may have leave to live,
And bear the sow-skin budget,
Then my account I well may give,
And in the stocks avouch it. (4.3.15-22)

Through this broadside, Autolycus asserts that he mostly "goes right," but that if he does someday find himself detained against his will, he will acknowledge his crimes and, one could postulate, repent for them. The idea that a character knows he is dishonorable but admits it freely to the audience seems to be an endearing

one, softening even the inhuman character of Richard III in Shakespeare's history play of the same name. Autolycus's hope that he can confess his sins after they have been committed and perhaps still receive forgiveness most likely mirrors the thoughts of many Christians who had disregarded the pleas of the protesting Puritans outside the theaters and defiantly sat down (or stood) for their entertainment despite the dangers of debauchery and heathenry on the stage. Ross Duffin contends that this ballad is "apparently a part of [Autolycus's] routine for loosening up potential customers," in a similar fashion to the thief in Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (1614) who sings the knaves' theme song, "Packington's Pound," as he empties the pockets of his audience.⁶⁶ Jonson uses ballads quite differently from Shakespeare as the former generally associates them only with base characters as a way to illustrate their lacks of sophistication; David Fuller notes this differentiation:

Unlike Shakespeare, who in many plays makes use of popular song, Jonson almost always calls for the composed [ayre], and though various modern scholars have traced elements of the popular drama among the sources of Jonson's work...this difference in approach to the use of music is perhaps typical of a general difference between what Milton described as Jonson's 'learned stock' and Shakespeare's 'native woodnotes wild.' Here Jonson

⁶⁶ Duffin, p. 85

uses the ballad melody to add to the air of authenticity of his scenes of London low-life.⁶⁷

Duffin, then, argues that Shakespeare has assigned “But Shall I Go Mourn” to Autolycus for the same somewhat elitist reasons that Fuller ascribes to Jonson. I, however, believe this ballad to be a song of confession and apology on behalf of Autolycus, and that it is a far more meaningful selection than simply a random popular song hastily chosen to accompany a routine designed to lull the pastoral townsfolk. From his earliest entrance, then, Autolycus is honest with himself and the viewers, and by admitting his shortcomings, he becomes the character with whom it is most easy to relate.

Autolycus’s genial attitude continues as he exits the stage following his first scene, and the ballad he sings, “Jog On,” depicts one overriding theme of the play: the life of the rogue is much more enjoyable and even favorable to that of the pious. He sings:

Jog on, jog on, the footpath way,
And merrily hent the stile –a
A merry heart goes all the day,
Your sad tires in a mile –a,

exuding pleasantness and assuring that all troubles can be forgotten in time

(4.3.13-6). Further lyrics for this ballad can be found in a 1661 songbook titled

⁶⁷ Fuller, David. “Ben Jonson’s Plays and Their Contemporary Music.” *Music & Letters* 58 no. 1 (1977): 60-75. p. 71

An Antidote Against Melancholy, which relate Autolycus's melody back to his trade and the fun associated with behaving badly:

Your paltry money-bags of gold
what need have we to care for,
When little or nothing soon is told,
and we have the less to care for?
Cast care away, let sorrow cease,
a fig for melancholy,
Let's laugh and sing, or if you please
We'll frolic with sweet Molly.⁶⁸

Though these lines were omitted from Shakespeare's production, the audience would have been aware of their existence and could infer that through "Jog On," Autolycus is asserting that he would rather be free from the shackles of earthly possessions and associate with *sweet Molls* than to conform to the life of the wealthy and/or virtuous nobility. The name *Molly* has significant meaning in the early modern period as it is the longer form of *Moll*, "a woman's name [that] can also signify a pickpocket, prostitute, or a thief's girlfriend."⁶⁹ Here, through his rejection of courtly, morally upright behavior, he is surely rallying the audience (or at least those on the ground) to his side and further aligns himself against the supposed necessity of honorableness, questions what happiness can be found from living a dutiful life, and ultimately claims a *carpe diem* attitude toward the world.

⁶⁸ Duffin, p 230

⁶⁹ Brown, Meg Lota, and Kari Boyd McBride. *Women's Roles in the Renaissance*. Santa Barbara: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005. p. 82.

Autolycus's only ensemble piece, "Get You Hence," performed with Dorcas and Mopsa in Act 4 scene 4, does not appear to have any purpose in the play other than that it was possibly a platform for the introduction of a newly composed tune by a friend of the troupe. An original manuscript for the ballad has not survived; however, many modern scholars attribute it to Robert Johnson who was an indentured servant in the household of George Carey, the Lord Chamberlain, from 1596 to 1603. It appears that he later had an association with the King's Men, and his father, John, was a leading Elizabethan lute player, so it could be surmised that Robert Johnson composed the piece and was able to have it performed in Shakespeare's *Romance*.⁷⁰ Textually, its story of a love triangle in which a male lover leaves town without disclosing his whereabouts to his two ladies, has no real significance to the narrative or its themes, but it is the last of Autolycus's ballad performances.

The final song alluded to in *The Winter's Tale* is "Rogero," and is called for by one of the gentlemen who is reconstructing the play's climax for Autolycus in Act 5, but its addition exists only to confound and mislead the audience. The song begins as an instruction for men in regard to good husbandry:

All such as lead a jealous life,
as bad as pains of hell,
Bend down attentive ears to this
which I shall briefly tell...
Unto all married men I write,

⁷⁰ Duffin, p. 166.

the which doth lead their lives
With proper women, fair and fine,
their loyal wedded wives;
Bear not a bad conceit in them;
suspect not without cause;
And, through a furious jealousy,
break not true lovers' laws.⁷¹

The referent of these lines is obviously found in Leontes who has unjustly accused his chaste wife of adultery and has then been forced by his own self-hatred to suffer “as bad as pains of hell,” but these lines are somewhat wasted coming from the lips of an unnamed and unimportant character. Perhaps Shakespeare felt that having Autolycus deliver a speech on morality to another character in the play would be a stretch and ultimately decided to have the thief participate in the conversation but not perform the line himself. Regardless of the method of its delivery, the use of “Rogero” deliberately misleads the audience with false foreshadowing. Following the aforementioned introduction, which asks jealous men for their attentions, the ballad goes on to weave the tale of a jealous man who accuses his wife of adultery, much in the same manner as Leontes. The man asserts that he will kill his wife lest she admit to her alleged misdeed. Fearing for her life, she acquiesces, and the man forgives her but swears he will have vengeance on her accused young lover. The wife sends her servant to bring the young man to her so that she can warn him, but upon his arrival, the

⁷¹ Ibid, p. 342

husband shoots them both from his tower window and then runs down to their barely breathing bodies to stab them to death, hoping to end their lives with his bare hands. Following this heinous act, the husband returns to his tower and throws himself out of the window, joining the others in death. In the second scene of Act 5, the audience still believes Hermione to be dead and is unsure of the outcome awaiting Florizel and Perdita; therefore, alluding to this particular ballad at such a pivotal moment in the narrative could obviously cause apprehensions in an audience familiar with such tunes.

More important to the narrative, however, are the ways in which this final ballad and its tragic story remind the audience of the pre-mourning period Leontes, and how it cycles back to the first ballad of the play, his judgmental “The Glass Doth Run.” This moment in the romance, when Leontes has repented and will soon be reunited with his forgiving wife, should be a cathartic moment, but the invocation of “Rogero” reminds the audience of his former immovable disposition coupled with his incredulous and unfounded accusations. Mentioning the ballad here, at the end of things, can only operate to inform the audience that Leontes should not really be forgiven; after all, Mamillius and Antigonus are dead, Perdita does not know her family, and Hermione has been forced into hiding for 16 years.

Autolycus's attempts at redemption are much more easily digestible, and Horace Furness attributes the ease with which he is able to regain his moral foothold to a sort of harmony with the world that Autolycus is able to maintain:

He celebrates his vagabond life and thievish disposition in verse; it is a theme for Art with him. Such a person stands in contrast with the simple honest shepherds; but, still, he is of them, and harmoniously blends with their world. He furnishes the intrigue and disguise of this little realm, and is, hence, the source of its comic situations... He will assist in breaking up the pastoral world and transferring it to Sicilia, where he will repent.⁷²

Autolycus begins to work toward his redemption while he is still in his pastoral setting; he exchanges his clothing for Florizel's, allowing the young lord and his betrothed to escape. In that moment, he blurs the line between peasant and noble through his costume, symbolizing the triviality of social class and defined religious affiliation when he—the ballad monger in borrowed finery—genially accelerates the charming young couple to their happy end.

Autolycus, though self-consciously flawed and at times morally bankrupt, does exude a kind of harmonious 'every man' persona due to his ability to move effortlessly through classes and settings, eliciting laughter and merriment wherever he goes. Simon Smith notes the unique capacity for musicians to

⁷² Furness, p. 372

transcend social strata: “The knowledge required for musical performance was simultaneously a central component of elite education and part of the beggar’s toolbox; music was both the private refuge of the lord and the language of his fool. This tension generated concerns about the status of the musician visible in early modern accounts of musical skill.”⁷³ Autolycus, as an exiled courtier, embodies this idea of the contentious musician, but also proves to be the most natural and likeable of all of *The Winter’s Tale* characters. As a representative of performing artists everywhere, he is effective as a defense against Shakespeare’s detractors, the condemnatory, Leontes-like Puritans.

⁷³ Smith, Simon. *Musical Response in the Early Modern Playhouse, 1603-1625*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. p. 149.

Conclusion

Addressing matters of religion in Tudor England required a certain amount of nuance in order to escape accusations of heresy and appease the censors of the period. Historian Alison Sim notes that restrictions on representations of religion were tightened some thirty years before Shakespeare even began his career as a playwright:

Queen Elizabeth was perfectly aware that her religious settlement was fragile, and so she felt it best to steer entertainments at court away from religious themes. She did allow some anti-Catholic drama at the beginning of her reign. In 1558 she saw an entertainment which showed crows in the habits of cardinals, asses dressed as bishops, and wolves dressed as abbots, but this type of entertainment wasn't something she encouraged. She certainly did not want any of her subjects stirring up religious tension either, so she tightened up the procedure for licensing drama by a proclamation on 16 May 1559.⁷⁴

Thus, Comedies such as *Twelfth Night*, with their blatantly negative stereotypes of pious characters, could be considered dangerous treatments of such a solemn subject as the role of religion in society. Generally, Shakespeare tends to

⁷⁴ Sim, from Chapter 8, "Theater," of *Pleasures and Pastimes in Tudor England*. Stroud, Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2014. Pagination unavailable (ebook).

sufficiently shroud his commentary on Puritans through allusion and innuendo. Popular ballads allowed him to convey volumes of criticism through, at times, only a handful of words or a snippet of a tune. His use of music was prolific, despite the distrust of secular compositions by many in Renaissance London. Not everyone, however, believed that music was detrimental to the soul. In 1621, Oxford scholar Robert Burton published his *The Anatomy of Melancholy* where he spoke of music's medicinal properties:

Musica est mentis medicina [affecting] the very arteries, the vital and animal spirits; it erects the mind, and makes it nimble. . . This it will effect in the most dull, severe, and sorrowful souls, expel grief with mirth, and if there be any clouds, dust, or dregs of care yet lurking in our thoughts, most powerfully it wipes them all away. . .⁷⁵

This interpretation for the use of music adds another layer of sorrow onto Ophelia's crazed ballad singing following the death of her father in *Hamlet*, as perhaps she is not merely unable to control her emotions, but is also attempting to self-soothe through her grief. It also provides an ironic air of believability to the musical Jaques's promise to "Cleanse the foul body of th'infected world / If they will patiently receive [his] medicine" in *As You Like It* (2.7.60-1). Music even

⁷⁵ Burton, Robert. *The Anatomy of Melancholy*. London, 1621. Pagination unavailable (eebo database).

feeds the soul in *Twelfth Night*, which begins with Orsino's iconic line, "If music be the food of love, play on" (1.1.1). Despite its specific purpose in each play, whether for social commentary or simply festive entertainment, music works to help shape the narrative in many of Shakespeare's plays. Musician Percy Scholes, who wrote the first edition of *The Oxford Companion to Music*, notes that for Shakespeare, "Music and madness went together, music and love, music and medicine, music and moral feeling, music and death," highlighting the playwright's ability to weave song throughout the lives of his characters, in much the same way that music surrounds everyone's lives beyond the periphery of the theater.⁷⁶ From those who stood on the floor of the Globe to the elite circles that were able to enjoy private performances at court, the marriage of drama and music infused the Elizabethans' lighthearted diversions with an emotional language that was to be experienced at a more supraliminal and affective level than the recitation of mere words from the page.

⁷⁶ Scholes, Percy A. "The Purpose behind Shakespeare's Use of Music." *Proceedings of the Musical Association* 43 (1916): 1–15. p. 2.

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Biographical Information

LaTisha Fletcher Rehn earned an MA in English from the University of Texas at Arlington in 2018 with foci in the English early modern period and Lacanian psychoanalytic criticism. She also graduated Summa Cum Laude with a BA in English from UTA with a minor in Psychology in 2008. During the course of her undergraduate work, she served as the treasurer for the honors' organization, Sigma Tau Delta.

While working toward her graduate degree, she was twice selected to present at the university's A.C.E.S. Symposium. In 2009, she delivered "Domesticating the Amazon Queen in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*," and in 2011 laid the groundwork for her master's thesis with the presentation of her paper, "Religious Resistance through Popular Music in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*." Rehn had a journalistic piece, "The Innocence Network," published in the *College of Liberal Arts Annual Review*, and then composed the stage notes in *The Bard Report* for Shakespeare Dallas's production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, both in 2009.

Rehn currently works at Midland Lee High School in Midland, TX, where she has been a secondary English teacher for 5 years. At present, she teaches the AP Language and Composition course, which focuses on studies in American Rhetoric, but has previously taught British Literature, World Literature, College Readiness and Study Skills, and remedial writing. In addition to teaching English, she is the yearbook advisor, leading her student-team to publish a 240 page annual each year. In 2018, Mrs. Rehn was recognized with an honorable mention in the *Yearbook of Yearbooks* for Lee's 2017 volume, only her second year at the helm. Rehn serves in many other capacities for Midland ISD, including: Summer Reading Committee, Revision Committee for the Approved Reading List, Attendance Committee, and Individual Graduation Committee. She has also been the PLC leader for the AP English teaching team for 2 years, organizing the annual holiday talent show for the school, and works as the school's official photographer.

Rehn lives in Midland, TX with her husband, Magnus Rehn, and their beloved Yorkie, Lulu. Since marrying a European in 2014, she has spent extensive time in his "fatherland," Finland, and from that home base has had the opportunity to travel to numerous countries. Through her passion for travel, Rehn discovered her love for photography and is now growing a budding portrait photography business in the deserts of west Texas.

Rehn will likely utilize her MA in English to begin teaching dual credit English courses through Midland College in the fall of 2018. Due to the extensive time she has spent in the castles, churches, fortresses, and museums of Finland and Sweden, as well as her continued interest and discipline in learning her husband's first language, Swedish, she is considering applying for a PhD program in English to study Shakespeare's contemporaries in Scandinavia, but is yet undecided.