A Midsummer Night's Dream: "Jack shall have Jill;/Nought shall go ill"†

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Jack shall have Jill;
Nought shall go ill;
The man shall have his mare again,
and all shall be well.[1]

MORE THAN ANY of Shakespeare's comedies, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* resembles a fertility rite, for the sterile world that Titania depicts at the beginning of Act II is transformed and the play concludes with high celebration, ritual blessing, and the promise of regeneration.[2] Though this pattern is easily apparent and has often been observed, the social and sexual implications of the return of the green world have gone unnoticed. What has not been so clearly seen is that the renewal at the end of the play affirms partiarchal order and hierarchy, insisting that the power of women must be circumscribed, and that it recognizes the tenuousness of heterosexuality as well.[3] The movement of the play toward ordering the fairy, human, and natural worlds is also a movement toward satisfying men's psychological needs, as Shakespeare perceived them, but its cost is the disruption of women's bonds with each other.

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I

Regeneration finally depends on the amity between Titania and Oberon. As she tells him, their quarrel over possession of an Indian boy has brought chaos, disease, and sterility to the natural world:

> And this same progeny of evils comes
> From our debate, from our dissension;
> We are their parents and original.
> (II.i.115-17)

The story of the "lovely boy" is told from two points of view, Puck's and Titania's. Puck tells a companion fairy that Oberon is "passing fell and wrath" because Titania has taken as her attendant "a lovely boy, stolen from an Indian king"; he continues:

> She never had so sweet a changeling.
> And jealous Oberon would have the child
> Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild.
> But she perforce withholds the lovéd boy,
> Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy.
> And now they never meet in grove or green,
> By fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen,
> But they do square, that all the elves for fear
> Creep into acorn cups and hide them there.
> (II.i.18-31)

Shortly afterward, when Oberon tells Titania that it is up to her to amend their quarrel and that he merely begs "a little changeling boy" to be his "henchman," she retorts, "Set your heart at rest./ The fairy land buys not the child of me." Then she explains the child's origin, arguing her loyalty to the child's mother to be the reason for keeping him:

> His mother was a vot'ress of my order,
> And, in the spicèd Indian air, by night,
> Full often hath she gossiped by my side,
> And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
> Marking th' embarkèd traders on the flood;
> When we have laughed to see the sails conceive
> And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind;
> Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait

> Following – her womb then rich with my young squire –
> Would imitate, and sail upon the land,
> To fetch me trifles, and return again,
> As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.
> But she, being mortal, of that boy did die;
> And for her sake do I rear up her boy,
> And for her sake I will not part with him.
>
> (II.i.121-37)

Both accounts affirm that the child has become the object of Titania's love, but the shift in emphasis from one point of view to the other is significant. Puck describes the child as "stolen from an Indian king," whereas Titania emphasizes the child's link with his mother, her votaress. Puck's perspective, undoubtedly close to Oberon's, ignores or suppresses the connection between Titania and the Indian queen, which, in its exclusion of men and suggestion of love between women, threatens patriarchal and heterosexual values.[4]

Titania's attachment to the boy is clearly erotic. She "crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy," according him the same attentions as those she bestows on Bottom when, under the spell of Oberon's love potion, she falls in love with the rustic-turned-ass. She has "forsworn" Oberon's "bed and company" (II.i.62). Whatever the child is to her as a "lovely boy" and a "sweet" changeling, he is ultimately her link with a mortal woman whom she loved. Oberon's passionate determination to have the child for himself suggests that he is both attracted to and jealous of him. He would have not only the boy but also the exclusive love of Titania.[5] He needs to cut her off from the child because she is attracted to him not only as boy and child, but also as his mother's son. Oberon's need to humiliate Titania in attaining the boy suggests that her love for the child poses a severe threat to the fairy king.

Puck's statement that Oberon wants the child to be "knight of his train" and Oberon's that he wants him to be his "henchman" have led some critics to argue that the fairy king's desires to have the boy are more appropriate than the fairy queen's. Oberon's wish to have the boy is consistent with the practice of taking boys from the nursery to the father's realm so that they can acquire

the character and skills appropriate to manhood.[6] But Puck describes Oberon as "jealous," and his emphasis on the "lovely boy," the "sweet" changeling, and the "lovèd boy" (II.ii.20-7) suggests that Oberon, like Titania, is attracted to the child. There is no suggestion that Oberon wants to groom the child for manhood; he wants him rather "to trace the forests wild" (l.25) with his fairy band. Those critics who attribute moral intentions to Oberon, arguing for his benevolent motives in taking the boy from Titania, overlook that Oberon has no intention of returning him to his father, with whom he, as a human child, might be most properly reared. When we last hear of the boy, Titania's fairy has carried him to Oberon's "bower" (IV.i.62).

Oberon's winning the boy from Titania is at the center of the play, for his victory is the price of amity between them, which in turn restores the green world. At the beginning, Oberon and Titania would seem to have equal magical powers, but Oberon's power proves the greater. Since he cannot persuade Titania to turn over the boy to him, he humiliates her and torments her until she does so. He uses the love potion not simply to divert her attention from the child, so that he can have him, but to punish her as well.[7] As he squeezes the love flower on Titania's eyes, he speaks a charm – or rather a curse – revealing his intention:

> What thou see'st when thou dost wake,
> Do it for thy truelove take;
> Love and languish for his sake.
> Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,
> Pard, or boar with bristled hair,
> In thy eye that shall appear
> When thou wak'st, it is thy dear.
> Wake when some vile thing is near.
> (II.ii.27-34)

When Puck tells him that Titania is "with a monster in love" (III.ii.6), he is obviously pleased: "This falls out better than I could devise" (1.35).

Though the scenes between Titania and Bottom are charming and hilarious, Titania is made ridiculous. Whereas her opening speech is remarkable for its lyric beauty, and her defense of

keeping the Indian boy has quiet and dignified emotion power, now she is reduced to admiring Bottom's truisms and his monstrous shape: "Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful" (III.i.147). However enjoyable the scenes between her and Bottom, however thematically satisfying in their representation of the marriage of our animal and spiritual natures, Titania, free of the influence of Oberon's love potion, says of Bottom, "O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now!" (V.i.80). By his own account, Oberon taunts Titania into obedience; he tells Puck:

> See'st thou this sweet sight?
> Her dotage now I do begin to pity:
> For, meeting her of late behind the wood,
> Seeking sweet favors for this hateful fool,
> I did upbraid her, and fall out with her.
> For she his hairy temples then had rounded
> With coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers;
> And that same dew, which sometime on the buds
> Was wont to swell, like round and orient pearls,
> Stood now within the pretty flouriet's eyes,
> Like tears, that did their own disgrace bewail.
> When I had at my pleasure taunted her,
> And she in mild terms begged my patience,
> I then did ask of her her changeling child;
> Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent
> To bear him to my bower in fairy land.
> And now I have the boy, I will undo
> This hateful imperfection of her eyes.
>
> (IV.i.47-64)

Oberon gains the exclusive love of Titania and also possession of the boy to whom he is attracted. But his gain is Titania's loss: she is separated from the boy and, in that separation, further severed from the woman whom she had loved. Oberon can offer ritual blessing at the play's end because he has what he wanted from the beginning: Titania obedient and under his control and the beautiful Indian boy in his bower.

II

Like the fairy king, the two men in power in the human world, Theseus and Egeus, want to attain the exclusive love of a woman and, also, to accommodate their homoerotic desires.[8] In order to do so, they, like Oberon, attempt to limit women's power, and their success or failure to do so affects their participation in the comic world.

The opening of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* puts Hippolyta's subjugation in bold relief as Theseus reminds his bride-to-be:

> Hippolyta, I wooed thee with my sword,
> And won thy love, doing thee injuries;
> But I will wed thee in another key,
> With pomp, with triumph, and with reveling.
> (I.i.16-19)

Capturing Hippolyta when he defeated the Amazons, Theseus has abducted her from her Amazon sisters to bring her to Athens and marry her. Though most directors play Hippolyta as a willing bride, I once saw San Francisco's Actors' Workshop, following the cues of Ian Kott, bring her on stage clothed in skins and imprisoned in a cage.[9] The text invites such a rendering, for almost immediately it sets her apart from Theseus by implying that she sides with Hermia and Lysander against Egeus and Theseus, when he sanctions Egeus's authority. After Theseus tells Hermia to prepare to marry Demetrius or "on Diana's altar to protest/For aye austerity and single life" (I.i.89-90) and then beckons Hippolyta to follow him offstage, he undoubtedly notices her frowning, for he asks, "What cheer, my love?" (I.i.122). Shakespeare heightens her isolation by presenting her without any Amazon attendants.

Though Theseus is less severe than Egeus, he is, from the outset, unsympathetic toward women. The first words he speaks, voicing the play's first lines and first image, must be taken as a sign: the moon "lingers" his desires, he tells Hippolyta, "Like a stepdame, or a dowager,/Long withering out a young man's revenue." He utterly supports Egeus as patriarch, telling Hermia:

> To you your father should be as a god,
> One that composed your beauties; yea, and one
> To whom you are but as a form in wax
> By him imprinted and within his power
> To leave the figure or disfigure it.
>
> (I.i.47-51)

As a ruler, he will enforce the law, which gives Egeus control over Hermia's sexuality and embodies patriarchal order. Though he has heard that Demetrius has won Helena's heart but now scorns her, and has meant to speak to him about it, "My mind did lose it" (I.i.114). A lover-and-leaver of women himself, he undoubtedly identifies with Demetrius and forgets his duty toward Helena. He exits inviting Egeus and Demetrius to follow and talk confidentially with him, suggesting his spiritual kinship with them.

Whatever other associations Theseus had for Shakespeare's audience, he was notorious as the first seducer of Helen.[10] As early as Act II, Oberon recalls Theseus's reputation as a deserter of women.[11] When Titania accuses Oberon of infidelity, asking rhetorically why he was in Athens if not to see Hippolyta, "the bouncing Amazon,/Your buskined mistress and your warrior love" (II.i.70-71), he accuses her of loving Theseus:

> Didst not thou lead him through the glimmering night
> From Perigenia, whom he ravishèd?
> And make him with fair Aegles break his faith,
> With Ariadne and Antiopa?
>
> (II.i.77-80)

It is significant that the woman whom he at last will marry is not traditionally feminine. She has been a warrior, and in her new role as the fiancée of the Athenian Duke, we see her as a hunter. Nostalgically, she recalls her past experiences:

> I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
> When in a wood of Crete they bayed the bear
> With hounds of Sparta. Never did I hear
> Such gallant chiding; for, besides the groves,
> The skies, the fountains, every region near
> Seemed all one mutual cry. I never heard
> So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.
>
> (IV.i.113-119)

Her androgynous character appears to resolve for Theseus the apparent dissociation of his romantic life, the sign of which is his continual desertion of women who love him.[12]

Having found an androgynous woman, Theseus captures her and brings her home to be his wife. By conquering and marrying this extraordinarily powerful woman, he fulfills his need for the exclusive love of a woman while gratifying his homoerotic desires.[13] Unlike Oberon, however, he finds satisfaction for his desires merged in one person. If we imagine Hippolyta played by a male actor who, though cast as a woman, dresses and walks like a man ("buskined mistress," "bouncing Amazon"), Hippolyta and Theseus must have looked more like homosexual than heterosexual lovers. Hippolyta's androgynous appearance is further confirmed by the fact that in Renaissance fiction and drama men were occasionally disguised as Amazons, e.g., lovers, like Sidney's Zelmane, in the *Arcadia*, who wished to be near his lady.[14] Hippolyta, like Viola and Rosalind in disguise, fulfills a male fantasy, and more happily so since she is not in disguise. Because Theseus's romantic life is fortunately resolved once the young lovers have paired themselves off anew, with Demetrius loving Helena, he can sanction their preferences and ignore Egeus's persistent demand that Hermia marry Demetrius.[15]

By insisting that Hermia marry Demetrius, Egeus hopes to keep his daughter rather than lose her and to have Demetrius near him as well. Shakespeare makes Egeus's motives suspect by creating him foolishly comic, treating him more harshly than he does his other controlling and possessive fathers – Lear, Capulet, Brabantio, Shylock, Prospero. Unable to make his daughter marry where he wishes, Egeus turns to the law to enforce his will. More outrageous than Brabantio, he turns Lysander's courtship of his daughter into a series of crimes: Lysander has "bewitched the bosom" of Hermia, "stol'n the impression of her fantasy," "filched" her heart (I.i.26-38). As Shakespeare depicts the two lovers who compete over Hermia, he is careful to draw them so that Egeus's choice is irrational and not in Hermia's best interests. Lysander states his case before Theseus:

> I am, my lord, as well derived as he [Demetrius],
> As well possessed; my love is more than his;
> My fortunes every way as fairly ranked
> (If not with vantage) as Demetrius';
> And, which is more than all these boasts can be,
> I am beloved of beauteous Hermia.
> (I.i.99-104)

Lysander continues to accuse Demetrius of making love to Helena, who now "dotes in idolatry,/Upon this spotted and inconstant man" (II.109-110). His accusation is evidently founded, for Theseus confesses that he has "heard so much" (I.111) and Demetrius does not deny it or defend himself. Later, Demetrius admits that he was betrothed to Helena before he saw Hermia (IV.i.172-73). Egeus chooses badly for his daughter unless he wishes to keep her for himself, as I think he does. By insisting that she marry a man whom she does not love and one who may be unfaithful to her besides, if his present conduct is a gauge, Egeus assures that she will always love her father; that she will never really leave him.

There are suggestions, as well, that Egeus has a particular affection for Demetrius. Shakespeare does not leave us to assume that Egeus's preference for Demetrius is simply proprietary, i.e., since Hermia is his, he may give her as he chooses; or that it is simply an affirmation of male bonding, like Capulet's demand that Juliet marry Paris, "And you be mine, I'll give you to my friend" (*Rom.* III.v.193). Lysander's sarcasm defines Egeus's feeling for Demetrius:

> You have her father's love, Demetrius;
> Let me have Hermia's: do you marry him.
> (I.i.93-94)

And Egeus immediately affirms:

> True, he hath my love,
> And what is mine, my love shall render him.

Even after Demetrius has fallen in love with Helena, Egeus continues to pair himself with him. When the lovers are discovered

asleep in the forest coupled "right" at last and Lysander begins to explain what Theseus calls their "gentle concord," Egeus urges:

> Enough, enough, my lord; you have enough.
> I beg the law, the law, upon his head.
> They would have stol'n away; they would, Demetrius,
> Thereby to have defeated you and me,
> You of your wife and me of my consent,
> Of my consent that she should be your wife.
> (IV.i.55-60)

Egeus would draw Demetrius back to him, realigning the original *we* against *them*.

Egeus, then, has hoped to have the exclusive love of Hermia and to accommodate his homoerotic feelings by binding Demetrius to him. To give up Hermia and accept that Demetrius loves Helena would defeat him doubly. Consequently, he leaves the stage unreconciled. Had it been left to him to affirm the comic resolution, we would have none.

III

Whereas the separation of Hippolyta and Titania from other women is implied or kept in the background, the breaking of women's bonds is central in the plot involving the four young lovers.[16] Demetrius and Lysander are divided at the outset, but the play dramatizes the division of Hermia and Helena. Furthermore, their quarreling is more demeaning than the men's. And once Demetrius and Lysander are no longer in competition for the same woman, their enmity is gone. Hermia and Helena, on the contrary, seem permanently separated and apparently give over their power to the men they will marry. Once their friendship is undermined and their power diminished, they are presumably "ready" for marriage.

Hermia's fond recollection of her long-standing and intimate friendship with Helena calls attention to Helena's disloyalty, occasioned by the latter's desire to win Demetrius's thanks and to

be near him. Telling her friend that she intends to run away with Lysander, Hermia recalls:

> And in the wood, where often you and I
> Upon faint primrose beds were wont to lie,
> Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,
> There my Lysander and myself shall meet.
> (I.i.214-217)

Just as Helena breaks her faith with Hermia to ingratiate herself with Demetrius, so later she will believe that Hermia has joined with men against her. Deeply hurt, Helena chastizes Hermia:

> Is all the counsel that we two have shared,
> The sister's vows, the hours that we have spent,
> When we have chid the hasty-footed time
> For parting us – O, is all forgot?
> All school days friendship, childhood innocence?
> We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
> Have with our needles created both one flower,
> Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
> Both warbling of one song, both in one key;
> As if our hands, our sides, voices, and minds,
> Had been incorporate. So we grew together,
> Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
> But yet an union in partition,
> Two lovely berries molded on one stem;
> So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart;
> Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,
> Due but to one, and crownèd with one crest.
> And will you rent our ancient love asunder,
> To join with men in scorning your poor friend?
> It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly.
> Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it,
> Though I alone do feel the injury.
> (III.ii.198-219)

In a scene that parallels in its central position Titania's wooing of Bottom, the rupture of their friendship becomes final. They accuse and insult each other, with Hermia calling Helena a "juggler," "canker blossom," "thief of love," "painted maypole"; and Helena naming her a "counterfeit" and a "puppet" (III.ii.282-296). Their quarrel becomes absurd as it turns on Hermia's obsession,

taken up by both Lysander and Helena, that Lysander has come to prefer Helena because she is taller. Though no other women characters in Shakespeare's plays come close to fighting physically, Hermia threatens to scratch out Helena's eyes (III.ii.297-98). Her threat is serious enough to make Helena flee (||.340-43). Lysander is made equally ridiculous in his abrupt change of heart; yet he and Demetrius are spared the indignity of a demeaning quarrel and leave the stage to settle their disagreement in a "manly" fashion, with swords. Even though Puck makes a mockery of their combat through his teasing, they are not so thoroughly diminished as Hermia and Helena.

In the course of the play, both Hermia and Helena suffer at the hands of their lovers. Betrothed to Helena, Demetrius deserts her for Hermia. When she pursues him, he tells her that she makes him sick (II.i.212) and threatens to rape her (||.214-219). By doggedly following him, she maintains a kind of desperate power over him. She will not play Dido to his Aeneas. Consequently, he cannot sustain the image of the romantic rake, whose women pine and die, commit suicide, or burn themselves on pyres when he leaves them. Disappointed in his love for Hermia, he cannot get loose from Helena. Yet her masochism undercuts her power:

> I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,
> The more you beat me, I will fawn on you.
> Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,
> Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,
> Unworthy as I am, to follow you.
> What worser place can I beg in your love —
> And yet a place of high respect with me —
> Than to be usèd as you use your dog?
> (II.1.202-210)

When Helena is in a position of positive power with both Lysander and Demetrius in love with her, she cannot take advantage of it because she assumes that she is the butt of a joke. And of course, in a sense, she is right: she is the victim of either Puck's prank or his mistake. Hermia must also bear Lysander's contempt. In the forest, he insists that he "hates" her (III.ii.270, 281) and calls her outrageous names: "cat," "burr," "vile thing," "tawny Tartar,"

"loathèd med'cine," "hated potion," "dwarf," "minimus, of hind'ring knotgrass made," "bead," "acorn" (II.260-64, 328-330). While both women protest their lovers' treatment of them, neither can play Beatrice to her Benedick. Both more or less bear their lovers' abuses.

After the four lovers sleep and awaken coupled as they will marry, Hermia and Helena do not reconcile. Once they leave the forest, they lose their voices. Neither of them speaks again. Recognizing that it is difficult for an actor to be on stage without any lines, as Helena and Hermia are for almost all of Act V, Shakespeare was undoubtedly aware that he was creating a portentous silence. Since Helena and Hermia are evidently married between Acts IV and V, their silence suggests that in their new roles as wives they will be obedient, allowing their husbands dominance.

IV

The end of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is as fully joyous as the conclusion of any of Shakespeare's comedies. No longer angry with each other, Oberon and Titania bring blessing to the human world:

> Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
> Will we sing, and bless this place.
> (V.i.398-99)

Though Oberon calls up dark possibilities, he offers a charm against them. The prospect of love, peace, safety, prosperity is as promising as it ever will be. The cost of this harmony, however, is the restoration of patriarchal hierarchy, so threatened at the beginning of the play. This return to the old order depends on the breaking of women's bonds with each other and the submission of women, which the play relentlessly exacts. Puck's verse provides the paradigm:

> Jack shall have Jill;
> Nought shall go ill;
> The man shall have his mare again,
> and all shall be well.

If we turn to some of Shakespeare's comedies in which women's bonds with each other are unbroken and their power is left intact or even dominates, the tone of the ending is less harmonious or even discordant.[17] In *The Merchant of Venice*, for example, where Portia is in control and she and Nerissa triumph over Gratiano and Bassanio, there is no ritual celebration. Portia directs the scene and carefully circumscribes her marriage with Bassanio to close out Antonio. When she and Nerissa reveal their identities as the doctor and the clerk, they make clear their extraordinary power to outwit and deceive, calling up women's ultimate destructive power in marriage and love – to cuckold. The final moments of the play move toward reconciliation, but not celebration. The last line, a bawdy joke, is spoken by Gratiano, the most hate-filled character in the play, and reminds us of men's fear of women and their need to control them: "While I live I'll fear no other thing/So sore, as keeping safe Nerissa's ring" (V.i.306-307).

In *Love's Labor's Lost*, where the women remain together and in control, there is no comic ending.[18] Echoing Puck, Berowne makes the point as he speaks to the King of Navarre:

> Our wooing doth not end like an old play;
> Jack hath not Jill. These ladies' courtesy
> Might well have made our sport a comedy.

When the King replies, "Come, sir, it wants a twelvemonth and a day,/And then 'twill end," Berowne answers, "That's too long for a play" (V.ii.872-76). The refrains of the closing songs call forth images of cuckolding and of "greasy Joan" stirring the pot.

The pattern of these comic endings suggests that heterosexual bonding is tenuous at best. In order to be secure, to enjoy, to love – to participate in the celebration that comedy invites – men need to maintain their ties with other men and to sever

women's bonds with each other. The implication is that men fear that if women join with each other, they will not need men, will possibly exclude them or prefer the friendship and love of women. This is precisely the threat of the beautiful scene that Titania describes between herself and her votaress. This fear may be based partially on reality, but it is also partially caused by projection: since men have traditionally had stronger bonds with other men than with women and have excluded women from participation in things about which they cared most, they may assume that women, granted the opportunity, will do the same. Given this possibility or likelihood, Shakespeare's male characters act out of a fear of women's bonding with each other and a feeling of sexual powerlessness. The male characters think they can keep their women only if they divide and conquer them. Only then will Jack have Jill; only then will their world flourish.

Notes

1. William Shakespeare, *The Complete Signet Classic Shakespeare*, ed., Sylvan Barnet (New York: Harcourt, 1972), *MND*, III.ii.461-64. Subsequent quotations from Shakespeare are from this edition.
2. C.L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and Its Relation to Social Custom*, 2nd ed. (1959; rpt. Cleveland, Ohio: World, 1963), pp. 119-124, 127.
3. In "Hermia's Dream: Royal Road to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*" (*Literature and Psychology*, 22 [1972], 188-89), M.D. Faber has observed that "the order for which the play strives is a severely patriarchal one which, by its very nature, engenders ambivalence and hostility in women and thus produces a constant straining toward disorder." Yet Faber's insistence that Theseus, "a governor of strength and understanding," has transcended rigid patriarchal attitudes and his suggestion that women are responsible for disorder make clear that our arguments are substantially different.
4. Describing Titania's lines as "one of the most beautiful bravura speeches," Barber remarks that the moment is "a glimpse of women who gossip alone, apart from men and feeling now no need of them, rejoicing in their own special part of life's power" (pp. 136-37).
5. Some male critics regard Titania's love as Oberon's right; Melvin Goldstein writes: "We know also that Titania violates natural order by making the changeling child 'all her joy', when all her joy should be Oberon" ("Identity Crises in a Midsummer Nightmare: Comedy as Terror in Disguise," *Psychoanalytic Review*, 60 [1973], 189).

6. Goldstein argues, for example, that Titania "needs to give up the boy not only for Oberon's and for her sake, but for the boy's sake. The danger is that in her company and that of her women friends she will feminize him" (p. 189). In his introduction to the new Arden edition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (London: Methuen, 1979), Harold F. Brooks states, "It is perhaps (Puck may imply this) high time the boy was weaned from maternal dandling to be bred a knight and huntsman" (p. cvi).
7. Ian Kott, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary*, trans., Boleslaw Taborski (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1966), p. 227.
8. I use "homoerotic desires" to mean unconsummated homosexual feelings, which may or may not be recognized.
9. Allan Lewis describes John Hancock's even more extreme presentation of Hippolyta in his production of the play in Greenwich Village in 1967: she was "brought back in captivity, robed in leopard skins, was caged and guarded" ("*A Midsummer Night's Dream* — Fairy Fantasy or Erotic Nightmare?," *Educational Theatre Journal*, 21 [1969], 251).
10. References to Theseus and Helen are commonplace in the Renaissance. George Gascoigne, who uses the most ordinary classical allusions, addresses Paris in "Dan Bartholmew his first Triumpe," one of the poems from *Dan Bartholmew of Bathe*:

> "Alas, shee made of thee, a noddye for the nonce,
> For *Menelaus* lost hir twise, though thou hir foundst but once.
> But yet if in thine eye, shee seemde a peerelesse peece,
> Aske *Theseus* the mighty Duke, what towns she knew in *Greece*?
> Aske him what made hir leave hir wofull aged sire,
> And steale to *Athens* gyglot like: what? what but foule desire?"

(*The Posies*, ed., John W. Cunliffe [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, [1907], I.101).

11. In an excellent article, " 'Unkinde' Theseus: A Study in Renaissance Mythography" (*ELR*, 4 [1973], 276-98), D'Orsay W. Pearson outlines classical and Renaissance traditions that depict Theseus's darker side, particularly his treacherous and abusive treatment of women. Shakespeare's audience would have been familiar with these traditions. If in remembering Theseus's heroic exploits, they forgot his "unkindness," Shakespeare was careful to remind them by recalling women Theseus had loved and left. Pearson also analyzes Theseus's opening speech, describing ways in which it suggests his negative Renaissance stereotype (p. 292).
12. In his frequent desertion of women, Theseus acts similarly to men Freud describes as evincing a dissociated erotic life. See "A Special Type of Choice of Object Made by Men" and "On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans., James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1957), XI, 166-67, 182-83.

13. In "The Sexual Aberrations," the first of his *Three Contributions on the Theory of Sex*, Freud comments that a large proportion of male homosexuals "retain the mental quality of masculinity . . . and that what they look for in their real sexual object are in fact feminine mental traits." Their "sexual object is not someone of the same sex, but someone who combines the characters of both sexes . . . a union of both sex characteristics, a compromise between an impulse that seeks for a man and one that seeks for a woman" (VII, 144-45).
14. Celeste Turner Wright, "The Amazons in Elizabethan Literature," (*SP*, 37 [1940], 439).
15. E.K. Chambers notices that Theseus's marriage to Hippolyta evinces a change in character: "Theseus has had his wayward youth; . . . Moreover, in his passion for Hippolyta he has approached her through deeds of violence; he has 'won her love, doing her injuries.' But now, like Henry the Fifth of whom he is the prototype, he has put away childish things; he stands forth as the serene law-abiding king, no less than the still loving and tender husband" (*Shakespeare: A Survey* [London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1925], pp. 84-85). Chambers is right in observing that Theseus has changed. I suggest that the change is not one of character but a result of altered situation: i.e., he has captured a woman who at last can fulfill his romantic needs, which until now have been disparate.
16. In considering the modification Shakespeare made in his construction of the plot involving the Athenian lovers, Chambers points especially to his "making the broken friendship that of women, not that of men" (p. 82). In Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, which Shakespeare drew on, Palomon's and Arcite's common love of Emilia breaks their friendship. In the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, in which the relation of Proteus and Valentine corresponds to that of Palomon and Arcite, the friendship between the two men is disrupted though two women, rather than one, are involved. Shakespeare's alteration of Chaucer's tale and variation of his former pattern in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* suggest that the disruption of women's bonds was a significant theme.
17. In a fine essay, "Sexual Politics and the Social Structure in *As You Like It*," Peter B. Erickson has argued similarly in comparing the endings of *As You Like It* and *Love's Labor's Lost*: "The ending of *As You Like It* works smoothly because male control is affirmed and women are rendered nonthreatening, whereas in *Love's Labor's Lost* women do not surrender their independence and the status of patriarchy remains in doubt." In *As You Like It*, he writes, "Festive celebration is now possible because a dependable, that is patriarchal, social order is securely in place" (unpublished paper delivered at the session on "Marriage and the Family in Shakespeare," sponsored by the Shakespeare Division, at the annual meeting of the MLA, 1979; pp. 3, 15; forthcoming in the *Massachusetts Review*).
18. See Peter Erickson, "The Failure of Relationship Between Men and Women in *Love's Labor's Lost*, this issue, *Women's Studies*.