

## Chapter 2: Exploring the Other Side: The Performance of Gender in *Twelfth Night*

And what was myself? Was this breeches and  
boots self any less real than my garters?

(Jeanette Winterson, *The Passion*, 1987)

**Cordelia:** Are you a man or a woman?

**Fool:** Depends on whose asking

(Women's Theatre Group & Elaine Feinstein, *Lear's Daughters*, 1987)<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

Writing about cross-dressing has functioned as something of a rite of passage for Shakespeareans, especially those interested in sexual politics. This is so much the case that Carol Rutter felt moved to announce explicitly that “the body that’s been so excitingly, if alarmingly, man-handled by certain new historicist and feminist materialist critics”, in other words, “the body (...) of the cross-dressed professional player on the all-male Elizabethan stage”, does not interest her at all.<sup>2</sup> There has certainly been intense critical debate on how early modern audiences perceived the boy actor playing women’s roles.<sup>3</sup> There has also been a glut of textual analyses of the recuperative or subversive function of the cross-dressed heroines in Shakespearean comedy. However, there has been much less critical attention given to representations of

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<sup>1</sup> Printed in Lizbeth Goodman (selection and introduction), *Mythic Women/Real Women: Plays and Performance Pieces for Women*, (London: Faber & Faber, 2000), p. 354.

<sup>2</sup> Carol Chillington Rutter, “Preface” to *Enter the Body: Women and Representation on Shakespeare’s Stage*, (London & New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. xiii.

<sup>3</sup> To credit all the work done in these areas would be a bibliography in itself. Contributions I have found particularly useful include Catherine Belsey’s essay “Disrupting Sexual Difference: Meaning and Gender in the Comedies” in Jonathan Dollimore & Alan Sinfield (eds.), *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1985), pp. 166-90, Stephen Orgel’s *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare’s England*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Laura Levine’s *Men in Women’s Clothing: Anti-theatricality and Effeminization 1579-1642*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) and Marjorie Garber’s *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*, (New York: Routledge, 1992). My own first piece of writing on cross-dressing was “Beauty Provoketh Thieves Sooner than Gold: Cross Dressing as Sexual Performance in Shakespearean Comedy” in Ana Gabriela Macedo (ed.), *A Mulher, O Louco e a Máquina: Entre a Margem e a Norma*, (Centro de Estudos Humanísticos da Universidade do Minho, 1998), pp. 41-67.

cross-dressing in contemporary productions of Shakespeare, about which, I would argue, there still remains much to say.<sup>4</sup>

The chapter looks at two particular features of contemporary representation. The first concerns how actresses negotiate the role of Viola, a role that was originally written for a boy actor. It analyses the performance texts constructed by particular productions so that Viola's cross-dressing as Cesario has a resonance for present-day audiences.<sup>5</sup> The second is what I have called extra-textual cross-dressing. This is a wide and diverse category whose only common feature is that the apparent gender coherence of characters in the dramatic text is disrupted by some form of cross-dressing in performance.

Theoretically, discussion of these cross-dressed performances is informed by Judith Butler's influential notion of gender roles as performative.<sup>6</sup> For Butler, the 'masculine' and the 'feminine' are no more than compulsory citations of sexual norms which then, retrospectively, provide an illusion of their own substance. Thus, no originary sex or gender exists, despite the fact that the enforced assumption of gender roles makes it seem as if divisions of sex and gender are themselves natural and essential. In some ways, Butler's analysis is similar to feminist notions of gender as a cultural rather than a natural construct, where the 'masculine' and 'feminine' are created differentially through processes of socialisation. Yet whereas feminist notions of identity, agency, and community base themselves on the essentialist category 'woman',

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<sup>4</sup> Exceptions here include Penny Gay's chapter on productions of *Twelfth Night* in *As She Likes It: Shakespeare's Unruly Women* (London & New York: Routledge, 1994), critical discussion surrounding Cheek by Jowl's all-male *As You Like It* (1991) and recent discussion of all-male and all-female performances at the Globe Theatre, London in the new millennium.

<sup>5</sup> In using the term 'actress' rather than a more gender-neutral term such as actor/performer throughout the thesis, I am following Penny Gay's suggestion that the use of the term "emphasises the physical difference between the two sexes as bodies in performance" and "foregrounds the way conventional theatre represents the culture with its entrenched ideology of two genders", *Op. Cit.* p. 181 note 6

<sup>6</sup> The two texts which have been most influential are her *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, (New York & London: Routledge, 1990) and *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*, (New York & London: Routledge, 1993).

Butler's queer analysis sees the elevation of the category of 'woman' in opposition to that of 'man' as part of the problem rather than the solution. This is because the idea of 'woman', for Butler, is as much a regulatory fiction as that of 'man'. The introductory chapter of this thesis discussed Butler's notion of the "enabling disruption", where this compulsory citation of sexual norms is not repeated exactly and thus creates some form of sexual incoherence. The Shakespearean cross-dresser can be positioned as just such an enabling disruption, for they challenge notions of absolute difference between 'man' and 'woman' or the 'masculine' and the 'feminine' through their embodiment of sexual hybridity.

Butler's post-structuralist view of gender as performative, as an enforced "stylised repetition of acts" which provides "the appearance of substance", is also, I would argue, more productive for performance analysis than the categories of sexual identity she argues against. The use of identity categories in performance analysis tends to reinforce literary-based notions of coherent, stable character. It thus leans towards what Valerie Traub has labelled "the anthromorphic fallacy" in its tendency to treat dramatic characters as if they were real people. Against such a view, Anne Ubersfeld defines theatrical character as "an ensemble of scenic *propositions*" (author's emphasis), which emphasises instead the specifically theatrical mechanisms that construct character.<sup>7</sup> This formulation has evident points of intersection with Butler's notion of gender identity as the after-effect of a stylised repetition of gender norms.

Butler lays great stress on the fact that her notion of performativity should not be seen as synonymous with performance, for this downplays the element of compulsion in

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<sup>7</sup> Anne Ubersfeld, *Lire le Théâtre II : L'École du Spectateur*, (Paris, Belin, 1996. First published Paris: Messidor, 1981), p.150. My translation from the French.

the assumption of gender roles as well as their historicity.<sup>8</sup> Yet her vocabulary does suggest close parallels between the assumption of gendered identity and performance.<sup>9</sup> She refers, for instance, to “the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movements and enactments constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self”, in a way that is reminiscent of actors and actresses creating characters on stage.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, in her discussion of drag, Butler foregrounds the ways in which such “hyperbolic” performances expose the ordinary processes of the construction of gender:

Drag constitutes the mundane way in which genders are appropriated, theatricalized, worn and done; it implies that all gendering is a kind of impersonation and approximation. If this is true, it seems, there is no original or primary gender that drag imitates, but *gender is a kind of imitation for which there is no original*; in fact, it is a kind of imitation that produces the very notion of the original as an *effect* and consequence of the imitation itself.<sup>11</sup> (author’s emphasis)

It might be expected, then, that performance would be a privileged site for the denaturalisation of gender norms because of its emphasis on their theatrical

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<sup>8</sup> She argues that “(t)he reduction of performativity to performance would be a mistake”, (Butler, 1993, *Op. Cit.*, p. 234) because performativity is not an act but a reiteration or citation which performance as act often obscures.. However, Elin Diamond has challenged Butler’s separation of the two terms, arguing in *Unmaking Mimesis: Essays on Feminism and Theater*, (New York: Routledge, 1997) that “(p)erformance, (...), is the site in which performativity materializes in concentrated form, where the “concealed or dissimulated conventions” of which acts are mere repetitions might be reinvestigated and reimaged” (pp. 46-7). Shannon Jackson has recently published a stimulating essay which argues that this disparagement of performance in favour of performativity reflects an institutional struggle for the legitimacy of studies of performativity. C.f. Shannon Jackson, “Theatricality’s Proper Objects: Genealogies of Performance and Gender Theory” in Tracy C. Davis & Thomas Postlewait (eds.), *Theatricality*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 186-213.

<sup>9</sup> It is interesting in this respect that Butler’s work has appeared regularly in critical work on performance. Examples include “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory” in Sue-Ellen Case (ed.), *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*, (Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), pp. 270–282 and “Burning Acts: Injurious Speech” in Andrew Parker & Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (eds.), *Performativity and Performance*, (New York & London, 1995), pp. 197-227.

<sup>10</sup> Judith Butler, (1990) *Op. Cit.* p.270.

<sup>11</sup> Judith Butler, excerpt from “Imitation and Gender Insubordination”, in Henry Abelove *et al* (eds.), *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, (New York & London: Routledge, 1993), p. 313. In his *Outros Destinos: Ensaios de Antropologia e Cidadania*, (Porto: Campo das Letras, 2004) Miguel Vale de Almeida distinguishes between drag and cross-dressing, arguing that whereas drag confuses linear correlations between sex and gender, cross-dressing maintains at least the appearance of such correspondences (p. 219). Yet I would argue that this depends on individual performances and does not function as a hard and fast distinction.

construction. Cross-dressing could be viewed as central to this process, for it challenges the intense political investment in an absolute difference between the sexes by showing that at least the surface appearance of another gender can be created effectively through theatrical means. As such, the markers of gender identity are shown to be not only superficial but also transferable. However, as Butler herself recognises, a denaturalisation of gender norms does not always function as a *critique* of those norms. It can, indeed, sometimes end up reinforcing them. In an outline of a “bad reading” of her work, for instance, she illustrates how notions of gender performativity might be used to benefit market forces rather than radical critique:

The bad reading goes something like this: I can get up in the morning, look in my closet, and decide which gender I want to be today. I can take out a piece of clothing and change my gender, stylize it, and then that evening I can change it again and be something radically other, so that what you get is something like the commodification of gender, and the understanding of taking on a gender as a kind of consumerism.<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, as the performance of cross-dressing is inevitably greatly concerned with costume, voice and movement, it can end up fetishizing these elements of character construction into the marks of gender difference *per se*. Most importantly, what becomes clear is that the particular form of sexual transgression that the hybridisation of the cross-dresser represents is as much about the *constraints* of gendered identity as evidence of a liberated alternative to them.

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<sup>12</sup> Quoted by Donald E. Hall in *Queer Theories*, (Basingstoke & New York: Macmillan, 2003), p. 74.

## I. Representations of Viola as Cesario

### I. I. The Textual Performative and its Limits

What role might the dramatic text of *Twelfth Night* play in creating the cross-dressed figure of Viola as Cesario in performance? Just by including such a character in the text, it forces even the most literal of performances to stage a character who at different moments of the play embodies elements of both the masculine and the feminine. The fact that Viola as Cesario is empathetic, resourceful and able to generate diverse desires in various characters means that the representation of the cross-dresser in this instance is a positive one. Moreover, the use of dramatic irony and *double entendre* give the character a privileged relationship with audiences.

Nevertheless, the Shakespearean text was written for a theatre where all women's roles were played by young men. The part of Viola, therefore, was written to help in the illusion of creating *femininity* onstage in order to compensate for any perceived failing in a boy actor's creation of the role. Consequently, while an actor need only represent femininity in the first scene of the play before Viola becomes Cesario, an actress has to maintain an illusion of *masculinity* throughout most of the play. Moreover, the instances of dramatic irony are most often reminders to the audience of the character's underlying femininity. Comments like "A little thing would make me tell them how much I lack of a man" (III, IV, 255-6), for instance, reoccur throughout the role.<sup>13</sup> Whilst this would undoubtedly have helped the boy actor create the character of Viola dressed as Cesario, it presents difficulties for an actress, as it becomes more

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<sup>13</sup> William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, The New Cambridge Shakespeare, Elizabeth Story Donno (ed.), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. First published 1985). All subsequent quotes are from this edition. Valerie Traub suggests that Viola's "lack" "simultaneously reinscribes a binary code of gender into the action, and suggests the extent to which gender is prosthetic" C.f. Valerie Traub, *Desire and Anxiety: Circulations of Sexuality in Shakespearean Drama* (London & New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 132.

difficult for her to sustain a representation of masculinity. The text invariably undercuts the skill of the actress's performance as Cesario with reminders to an audience that the character remains, essentially, a woman.

In other Shakespearean comedies where a woman character temporarily dresses as a man, textual attention is focused upon the type of male character she will become. The plays include speeches where the heroine announces her intention to cross-dress and details the physical appearance of her male character-to-be. Such speeches have a performative quality to them, as they mediate the transition from female to male character. In *As You Like It* (1599), for example, Rosalind describes in great detail the masculine *persona* she will take on, which also includes a series of gender 'accessories'. She specifies that the gender *accoutrements* of "a gallant curtle axe" and a "boar spear" will signal her transformation to the audience.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, in *The Merchant of Venice*, (1596-7), Portia's assembles with relish the different elements that will transform her into a "bragging Jack":

I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,  
And wear my dagger with the braver grace"  
(III, IV, 63-5)<sup>15</sup>

In *Cymbeline* (1609-10), Pisanio's "You must forget to be a woman" speech to Imogen precipitates her metamorphosis into the page Fidele *as if the language itself were performing the transformation*. Indeed Imogen's enthusiastic response indicates language might be almost *too* effective:

**Imogen:**

Nay, be brief:

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<sup>14</sup> William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, The Arden Shakespeare, Agnes Latham (ed.), (London & New York: Routledge, 1996. First published in 1975 by Methuen & Co.) Act I, Scene III, lines 110 – 118.

<sup>15</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, The New Penguin Shakespeare, W. Moelywyn Merchant (ed.) First published by Penguin in 1967.

I see into thy end, and *am almost*  
*A man already.*

**Pisanio:** First, make yourself *but like one.*  
 (III, IV, 167–170, my emphasis) <sup>16</sup>

Such speeches not only *describe* the cross-dressed character, they *perform* the cross-dressing so that the audience is prepared for the subsequent appearance of the woman character in men's clothes. These instances of the textual performative, however, rarely correspond to the characters they become. Rosalind as Ganymede remains an essentially pastoral character rather than the soldier she has set out to be. Portia imagines herself as a "bragging Jack" who breaks women's hearts, which bears little resemblance to the rather serious and measured Balthasar. Thus, although the text helps to create the masculine role in these speeches, the masculine role that is actually performed bears little resemblance to that outlined in the speech.

Viola has no such detailed speech to help in her transformation. She announces her intention to present herself as a eunuch, and she suggests this because she can sing and play music. Yet, there is nothing like the same degree of detail about her masculine role that women characters in other plays have. Moreover, the eunuch has none of the gender prosthetics relished by other characters and that would signal her masculine transformation to the audience. Nevertheless, like the characters in the other plays, Viola also fails to perform her imagined masculine role. It is Feste rather than Viola who sings for Orsino. The role is conceived as one which will put her beyond sexual desire, but Cesario seems to attract it almost effortlessly. Her failure to perform her envisaged masculine role might, indeed, be seen as positive in this instance, for her actual masculine role is more diverse and multi-faceted than that outlined briefly in her speech to the Captain.

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<sup>16</sup> William Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, The Arden Shakespeare, J.M. Nosworthy (ed.), (London: Methuen & Co., 1980. First published 1955).



Yet despite this suggestion of a potentially more interesting masculine role, the dramatic text maintains quite strict demarcations between the femininity of the character of Viola and her masculine role as Cesario. It underlines, for example, the distance between *desiring* a man and *being* one in Viola's wish for a beard "though I would not have it grow on my chin" (III, I, 40). Such demarcations also uphold a distinction between heterosexual and homosexual desire. After her encounter with Olivia, Viola posits a distinction between herself as *desiring subject*, (i.e. a 'woman') when she says she is "desperate for my master's love", and as *inappropriately desired object*, (i.e. a 'man') of Olivia's "thrifless sighs" (II, II, 33-36) The text thus proposes absolute distinctions between man and woman and heterosexual and homosexual desire at the same time as it makes use of the possibility of the failure to distinguish clearly between them to create dramatic interest.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, the more it insists on the demarcations between them, particularly in the first half of the play, the more those demarcations are transgressed.

Other dramatic characters in *Twelfth Night* also have an important role in creating the stage figure of Viola as Cesario. Orsino outlines the female contours he finds in his male page on Cesario's first appearance to the audience:

**Orsino:** Dear lad, believe it.  
 For they shall yet belie thy happy years  
 That say thou art a man. Diana's lip  
 Is not more smooth and rubious. Thy small pipe  
 Is as the maiden's organ, shrill and sound,  
 And all is semblative of a woman's part.  
 (I, IV, 28-33)

Before Cesario comes face to face with Olivia, the person at the gate is spoken about by Maria, Sir Toby and Malvolio. These comments suggest to the audience how the

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<sup>17</sup> I deal in more detail with the erotics of the Viola/Cesario/Olivia/Orsino encounters in Chapter Five.

different characters 'read' Cesario. At first, Malvolio merely notes that the "young fellow" is "of mankind", but when pressed by Olivia elaborates on this in a careful description:

**Malvolio:** Not yet old enough for a man, nor young enough for a boy; as a squash is before 'tis a peascod, or a codling when 'tis almost an apple. 'Tis with him in standing water between boy and man. He is very *well-favoured* and he speaks very *shrewishly*. (I, V, 130-33) (my emphasis).<sup>18</sup>

The main characteristic of both speeches is their indeterminacy. The first speech emphasises that Cesario looks as much like a woman as a man. The second locates the indeterminacy in terms of age at the beginning of the speech (somewhere between a boy and a man) but at the end of the speech it returns to that of gender (he looks like a handsome man but speaks with the shrill voice of a woman). It was a description that carefully prepared Shakespearean audiences for a young man playing a woman temporarily dressed as a man, but one that can work equally well for an actress' performance of masculinity.

In one sense, the use of twins aids the actress's performance of masculinity, and this might explain why there is no detailed description of Cesario as Viola assumes her disguise. While Sebastian and Viola are separated, the glimpses of Sebastian help to give a masculine reference for Cesario without dwelling for too long on the differences between the two. However, the more consistently Sebastian appears, the less important Viola's performance as Cesario tends to become. This process continues until the ending of the play when Orsino demands she appear before him in women's clothes.

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<sup>18</sup> The connection between 'shrewish' behaviour, i.e. a person given to scolding or railing, and femininity dates only from Chaucer's Epilogue to *The Merchant's Tale*. Beforehand, it was associated with diabolical behaviour in males. By the sixteenth century, it had become a commonplace to associate shrewishness exclusively with femininity, the most famous example being Shakespeare's own *The Taming of the Shrew* (1593-1594).

The textual ending, therefore, reinforces an idea of absolute difference between the sexes in the separate bodies of the twins, whereas other cross-dressed comedies such as *As You Like It* maintain a certain transvestite presence beyond the play's ending. It also endorses heterosexual closure through the marriages that end the play, even if this seems a somewhat fortuitous process. This suggests to Valerie Traub that "the final value" of the play "is one of boundary setting, of marginalising others along lines of exclusion".<sup>19</sup>

The dramatic text thus creates possibilities for the actress playing the role, but also establishes limits to their performance. How do contemporary productions negotiate these possibilities and limits? The next section examines two performance texts of *Twelfth Night* and their implications for an actress's construction of the role of Cesario. The TNSJ production emphasised the positive qualities of the feminine amid a general emphasis on the performative construction of all characters onstage. This strategy reshaped the con(text) in which Viola performed her masculine role. The BBC/Renaissance Films production, on the other hand, emphasised the difficulties a woman encountered in a world of men and how she dealt with these difficulties dressed as a man. This meant that the text's continual references to 'the woman underneath' could be used to create a contemporary point about the exclusion of women from male society.

## **I. II. Negotiating "The Feminine Principle": Micaela Cardoso as Viola/Cesario in the Teatro Nacional São João (TNSJ) *Noite de Reis* (1998)**

Before discussing Micaela Cardoso's performance of Viola/Cesario in the TNSJ production of *Noite de Reis*, it might be useful to provide some background to the city

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<sup>19</sup> Valerie Traub, (1992), *Op. Cit.*, p. 142.

and the theatre where she performed the role. The Teatro Nacional São João (TNSJ) is located in the city of Porto and is Portugal's second national theatre.<sup>20</sup> Porto has its own distinctive theatrical history, with a wide variety of different theatrical groups having operated there.<sup>21</sup> Fernando Mora Ramos has described the city as having “a theatrical reality which is potentially perfect”, because of the coordination between theatres, schools and other professional production structures within a limited geographical area.<sup>22</sup> Mora Ramos also labels the TNSJ during the 1990's “an exceptional and truly European project”. From among its distinguishing features, he points to the coherence of its repertoire, the quality of its technical and artistic staff and the extent to which it was self-financing.<sup>23</sup> Paulo Eduardo Carvalho also refers to the “model (and challenging) role taken on by the TNSJ” in the 1990's. He offers an initial assessment of the TNSJ in this period:

There is not yet sufficient historical distance from which to evaluate the model impact of productions by the TNSJ, under the direction of Ricardo Pais, on the theatrical practice of the city. Factors to take into account would include the logic of its repertoire, elocutionary rigour, and the demands made on production itself. They would also include the articulation of different languages, the demonstration of an ideal of professionalism, the coherence between its intentions and actions, and its creative imagination. Lacking such historical distance, I merely wish to register a presentiment that various forms of prejudice should not allow the local (and national) theatrical community to forget.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> It was given the status of a national theatre in 1997.

<sup>21</sup> For more information on the recent theatrical scene in Porto, see Paulo Eduardo Carvalho, “Entre a Contração e a Expansão: Esboço Crítico de Algumas Convulsões do Teatro no Porto e no Norte de Portugal”, which is available on the Centro de Estudos de Teatro website at [www.fl.ul.pt/centro-estudos-teatro.htm](http://www.fl.ul.pt/centro-estudos-teatro.htm). See also João Teixeira Lopes, *A Cidade e a Cultura: Um Estudo sobre Práticas Culturais*, (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 2000) for a discussion of cultural practices in the city and Maria de Lourdes Lima dos Santos *et al* (eds.), *Públicos do Teatro S. João*, (Lisboa: Observatório das Actividades Culturais, 2001), which provides useful breakdowns of the TNSJ audience.

<sup>22</sup> Fernando Mora Ramos, “Editorial” in *Teatro Escritos 2: Está Tudo Bem com o Teatro em Portugal ?*, (Lisboa: IPAE & Cotovia, 1999) p. 9.

<sup>23</sup> Fernando Mora Ramos, “Editorial” in *Teatro Escritos 3: Teatro Português: ‘Pera Onde Is’*, (Lisboa: IPAE & Cotovia, 2000), pp. 7, 11.

<sup>24</sup> “Não existirá ainda a distância histórica suficiente para avaliar do efeito modalizador desencadeado pela produção do Teatro Nacional S. João, sob a direcção de Ricardo Pais, na prática teatral da cidade, a nível da exigência colocada na lógica de repertório, no rigor elocutório, na execução, na articulação das linguagens, e na demonstração consequente de um ideal de profissionalismo e de coerência entre

Ricardo Pais had already been Artistic Director of the TNDM in Lisbon before coming to the TNSJ as Artistic Director in the 1990's. Despite initial local opposition to his appointment from those who felt that this Lisbon appointee did not know enough about the local reality of Porto, the period in which Pais took charge of the theatre has come to be seen as something of a 'golden age' in terms of the theatre's history.<sup>25</sup> Micaela Cardoso, who worked on several plays with Pais at the TNSJ, also noted how sustained attempts to build a regular audience for the TNSJ's theatre work reached a peak around the late 1990's with productions attracting younger audiences in particular.<sup>26</sup> In 1998, Pais bought together a highly qualified team of actors, technical staff and translators from around the country to work on *Noite de Reis*, the first Shakespeare play he had directed himself. Some of them were well-known within the Porto theatrical scene, like António Durães, while others like translator António M. Feijó and the comic actors Miguel Guilherme and Adriano Luz came from Lisbon. Most were actors and technical staff with whom Pais had already established a professional relationship, such as the musician Vitor Rua and the scenographer António Lagarto. The play was part of a season at the theatre exploring "theatrical unreality" and "the historical mechanisms of disguise in the theatre" in connection with "the great dramatic repertoires" and ran from the 15<sup>th</sup> October, 1998 to 7<sup>th</sup> November, 1998.

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propósitos e concretizações, e, por último, de imaginação criativa. À falta dessa referida distância histórica, fica aqui o registo de um pressentimento, que preconceitos vários não devem permitir à comunidade teatral local (e nacional) esquecer". Paulo Eduardo Carvalho, "Auto-revisitação Precoce de uma Ficção: Três Anos de ASSÉDIO", *Ibid.* p. 33. note 8.

<sup>25</sup> Pais later resigned his post in July 2000 when the Socialist Minister for Culture, Manuel Maria Carrilho, resigned his. However, he is now once more Artistic Director of the TNSJ, having resumed his post in October 2002.

<sup>26</sup> Personal interview with Micaela Cardoso, (17/3/2004). Figures provided by the theatre suggest that *Noite de Reis* was something of a highpoint in this respect. 8, 337 people attended the 21 performances of the play, which meant that the theatre was 88% full every night. Cardoso also noted, however, that by 2003/4 audiences were falling once more.

According to the ‘Centro de Estudos de Teatro’ chart of productions of Shakespeare in Portugal, there had been only five previous productions of the play in Portugal since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Apart from the ‘Teatro Popular’ production in 1957, all of these were by groups outside mainland Portugal, including two from English companies, one by a Spanish company and one from Madeira. In this sense, *Noite de Reis* represented a good choice of play by the TNSJ in its role as a national theatre, for it brought to contemporary audiences a play that was surprisingly little known and which had rarely been performed in Portuguese.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, director Ricardo Pais also made clear that his choice of play was influenced by Giorgio Barbieri Corsetti’s Italian staging of the play as *La Dodicesima Notte* earlier in the 1990’s.

In his comments on the play, Ricardo Pais notes that the equality or even superiority of the feminine was a central concern in his staging of the play. He locates the play historically in a transition from matriarchy to patriarchy and attributes to Viola a certain prominence in the debunking of patriarchal power:

Who better than a human being with *a healthily feminine nature* to overcome a resistance to betray the memory of the dead males of the family that is Olivia’s formal obsession? (my emphasis)<sup>28</sup>

Moreover, he justifies a substantial cut in Viola’s Act V speech to Orsino on the grounds that:

(a)ll the vocation it expresses concerning the subjection of women

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<sup>27</sup> Pais also commissioned an excellent new translation of the play for the production from the academic António M. Feijó.

<sup>28</sup> “Quem melhor do que um ser de natureza saudavelmente feminina para vencer a resistência a trair a memória dos machos mortos da família que é a obsessão formal da Olivia?” “A Próposito de *Noite de Reis*”, “Fabricated” Interview with Ricardo Pais conducted by Rodrigo Affreixo and printed in the *Noite de Reis ou como lhe queiram chamar* Programme, (TNSJ/Ministério da Cultura, 1998), p. 5 The pages are not numbered, but I include page numbers to give an idea of where they appear in the texts.

to men goes against everything I believe to be most stimulating in the work.<sup>29</sup>

In the context of these remarks, it seems productive to examine how this elevation of the feminine interacted with representations of femininity and masculinity in the production. In the introduction to his translation of the play, Antonio M. Feijó seems to echo Pais' stress on the importance of the feminine. He contrasts Shakespearean comedy, which is ruled "by the inclusivity of a feminine principle which has little love of power", with Shakespearean tragedy, which is ruled "by typical masculine furies and the psychosis of the master". For Feijó, these are "natural" principles. The feminine principle represents "harmony, the solidarity of equal partnerships and a sceptical disregard of any hierarchical principle".<sup>30</sup> A question which Feijó does not address, however, is the relationship of these masculine and feminine principles to the gendered characters in the plays. In *Twelfth Night*, it is Viola who seems most closely associated with the "feminine" principle of comedy. Yet can the same be said of Olivia or Maria? Olivia is not averse to exercising a little power as mistress of her household. Indeed, it is this power that allows her to choose Sebastian as her husband. Her careful questions about Cesario's parentage show that "equal partnerships" for her are defined as much by status as by personal qualities. Equally, Maria's upwardly mobile marriage to Sir Toby suggests that the notion of "equal partnerships" would represent a dashing of her hopes rather than a consolidation of them. In relation to the male characters in the play, Orsino could be seen as representative of the "masculine" principle, even though this is seen as more often characteristic of tragedy. Feste, though strictly a male role, seems more closely aligned with the feminine than the masculine principle. I raise these points in

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<sup>29</sup> "Toda a vocação que ela anuncia de sujeição da mulher ao homem vem contra tudo aquilo que acredito ser mais estimulante na obra". *Ibid* p. 3.

<sup>30</sup> António M. Feijó, Preface to translation *Noite de Reis ou como lhe queiram chamar*, (Lisboa: Cotovia, 1998), p.12. This Preface was also included in the production programme.

order to question Feijó's rather uncritical use of the terms "masculine" and "feminine" here, especially when they are posited as "natural" principles. In fact, these terms carry with them the weight of gender association attributed to them by the culture in which they appear rather than a transhistorical, essential charge. The value given to the feminine principle does, however, invert traditional ascriptions of value to the masculine and lack of value to the feminine.

Feijó's notion of the superiority of the feminine principle also represented a potential problem for the actress playing Viola. This is because the lack of a corresponding positive value for the masculine could have inflected her performance as Cesario. However, Feijó's translation choices did not obstruct the actress' cross-dressed performance and, in one case, actually enabled it. In this instance, Feijó removed the gender ambiguity of Malvolio's description of Cesario to Olivia:

**Malvolio:** Ainda não tem a idade de homem feito, e já não é novo como um rapaz: é como vagem antes de ser ervilha, ou perico antes de pera. Ou como se, *indeciso entre rapaz e homem*, boiasse em maré morta. Tem bom aspecto e é muito bem falante. (my emphasis) <sup>31</sup>

Thus, Olivia and the audience were prepared more explicitly for the figure of a man *in the making*, a translation choice that created a sufficiently ambiguous space for the actress' appearance as Cesario. It also removed a negative reference to women in the idea of "shrewishness".

Micaela Cardoso herself felt that 'it made no sense' for a male actor to play the role of Viola nowadays as throughout the production "there is always the woman beneath". <sup>32</sup> She had worked with Ricardo Pais on previous productions at the TNSJ,

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<sup>31</sup> António M. Feijó, (1998), *Op. Cit*, p.41 The passage in italics translates as "undecided between a boy and a man".

<sup>32</sup> Personal interview with Micaela Cardoso, (17/3/2004). Subsequent comments from this interview are indicated in single quotation marks. 'Viola' was changed to 'Violeta' in performance.



and it was during the period 1996-8 that she began to play major theatrical roles like that of Viola.<sup>33</sup> This meant, as she stated in interview, that by the time she came to perform in *Noite de Reis*, her understanding with Pais was ‘almost intuitive’. This was particularly important in terms of adapting to Pais’ heavily visual style and preference for a more stylised form of acting. Cardoso commented that she had found it ‘very easy’ to act in this way because of her previous work with him. She added that, as an actress, she was ‘not (...) a fan’ of naturalism, preferring the ability of theatre to create different worlds to its ability to represent the world ‘realistically’. This emphasis on stylisation obviated the need for the actress to perform ‘like’ a recognisable man or woman in a conventionally mimetic sense. Moments of dramatic tension were indicated through scenic features such as music or by a minor change in the actor’s bodily position rather than through the naturalistic, psychologically-based conventions associated with the expression of emotion. In the first encounter with Olivia, for example, after Cesario had finally persuaded Olivia to dismiss her servants, music accompanied the moment the two were left alone. Cesario moved closer to Olivia, but delivered much of the subsequent speech facing the audience rather than Olivia. Only occasionally did Cesario turn to look at Olivia and when the “willow cabin” speech began, the actress moved a little closer still. The focus, therefore, became the importance of the *performance*, both of Cardoso as Viola and Viola as Cesario. This stress on performance moved attention away from concerns about gender naturalism into a pleasurable acknowledgement of the scene’s theatricality.

A stress on theatricality also informed the representation of the relationship between the twins. Nuno M. Cardoso (Sebastião) was more or less the same age and build as Micaela Cardoso. He wore the same costume onstage and had the same long,

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<sup>33</sup> This was taken one step further in 2003 when she took over the role of the iconic Inês de Castro from Maria de Medeiros in the TNSJ production of *A Castro* by António Ferreira.

dark hair. He spoke in interview of both actors doing their make-up together and of a shared complicity between them. Micaela Cardoso also commented on the way in which they had picked up on and mimicked each other's movements during the rehearsal period. Moreover, Nuno Cardoso played Sebastian with an element of gender hybridity which complemented Micaela Cardoso's masculine performance as Cesario. Whilst his scenes with Olivia were characterised by a certain 'delicacy', his fight scenes were played as highly 'aggressive'.<sup>34</sup> There were some obvious differences between the two actors in terms of height and tone of voice. However, beautifully conceived scenes used theatrical 'trickery' to suggest that even 'natural' resemblances can be (re)created effectively through staging.<sup>35</sup> In the reconciliation scene, for instance, Sebastian appeared behind a white gauze curtain and Viola moved away from her position downstage to approach Sebastian from the audience's side of the curtain. (see photograph no. 1 at the end of this chapter). Sebastian was lit in outline only behind the curtain and as Viola had her back to the audience as she moved, a very effective illusion of physical similarity was created. When they were facing one another on opposite sides of the curtain, they each extended an arm outwards in a way that suggested they were mirror images of each other. Their voices were scrambled electronically as they checked the details of their parentage so that even their voices appeared similar.

As Feste began his final song, the twins re-appeared naked upstage. They stood back to back against a pole with water flowing down over them.<sup>36</sup> In this startling

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<sup>34</sup> Personal interview with Nuno M. Cardoso, (29/1/2004).

<sup>35</sup> In interview, Nuno M. Cardoso stated that neither Pais nor the actors were interested primarily in the extent to which Viola and Sebastian were the same/different. They were more concerned with the theatrical mechanisms used to create and sustain the illusion of their similarity.

<sup>36</sup> In discussing the famous swimming pool scene in Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo and Juliet*, Celia R. Daileader suggests that "wetness is more 'naked' or nakedly sexual in suggesting the sweat and fluids of coitus, and yet it is also curiously ornamental, its luminosity transforming the banal facts of biology." C.f. Celia R. Daileader, "Nude Shakespeare in Film and Nineties Popular Feminism" in Catherine Alexander & Stanley Wells (eds.), *Shakespeare and Sexuality*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 190. This ability of water to subject "the banal facts of biology" to the "ornamental" was also a feature of the scene discussed here.

visual image, even biology seemed refashioned by theatrical artifice, for as the lighting was low and only the contours of the bodies were seen, little seemed to effectively separate the male and female bodies of the twins. The production's ending thus provided a tantalising glimpse of gender ambiguity at the moment the Shakespearean text explicitly distances such ambiguity.

The fact that Feste (Festa in the production) was also played with a certain gender hybridity created a further possibility of counterpointing Viola's masculine performance as Cesario with another male performance of femininity. The arrival of both characters onstage was invariably accompanied by music, whether offstage or played through the onstage tape recorder they brought on with them. The stage association of these two 'performers' with music helped to reinforce the sense of them complementing each other. Pais described Vitor Rua's musical score for the production as "a rigorous visit to the most diverse forms of music, whether classical, pop-jazz or ethnic. We were concerned to link together these forms of music by means that I know are imperceptible (melody, harmony or even just mood)" <sup>37</sup> and this diversity worked to underline the sexual diversity of both Feste and Viola through theatrical means. When Feste performed his song for Orsino, for instance, he was dressed as a female cabaret artiste, while the other onstage character who was "not what I play" sat next to Orsino discussing the nature of men and women's love. One performance tended to 'out' the other and Viola choked on her cigar lest Feste's performance expose her own.

The sense of complicity between the paid performer Feste and Viola as Cesario was strongest in a short extra-textual sequence which began the second half of the

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<sup>37</sup> "(...) um rigoroso visor das mais variadas escritas musicais, de referência erudita, *pop-jazz*, étnica, a preocupação de as ligar por mecanismos que sei imperceptíveis (linha melódica, harmonias ou, tão-só, ambiente). Interview with Ricardo Pais in Production Programme, *Op. Cit.* p.10. It should be remarked, however, that although the words to Bowie's "Time" were printed in English and Portuguese, and Anne Sophie von Otter's rendition of Saint-Saens' *Une Flute Invisible* was explicitly credited, the Indian "ethnic" music was left unattributed.

production. It preceded Act Three Scene I in the dramatic text, where Feste and Viola meet and exchange words, money and compliments. In the TNSJ production, before they began their exchange, Feste came upon Viola as she was performing some Indian dance movements to music behind the white gauze curtain. Cardoso stated that Feste thus “unmasked” Viola because he saw that she was dancing in secret as a woman.<sup>38</sup> Viola continued to dance, however, and Feste began to follow her steps. As the dance continued, the movements became slightly less stylised and slightly faster (see photograph no. 2 at the end of this chapter). Cardoso suggested that Viola then has to pay off Feste so that her femininity will not be revealed. The fact that this negotiation took place through dance suggested a different relationship for both performers to dance than to music. While music seemed connected with their need to perform for others, dance was linked with a desire to communicate with each other, however much that communication was itself constituted as a performance.<sup>39</sup> This communication metamorphosed into verbal communication as the scene began.

Yet if the production style and the extension of sexual hybridity to other characters in the play aided the actress’ performance as Cesario, there were also several factors that were potentially more problematic. Firstly, there is no dramatic tradition of female-male cross dressing in Portuguese theatre which Cardoso could refer to when constructing her representation of Cesario.<sup>40</sup> On the one hand, this does enable the

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<sup>38</sup> I have to admit that this reading of the scene completely passed me by. I did not think of Viola’s dance movements as illustrating an essential ‘femininity’ that would give her away as Cardoso suggested. My primary feeling as a member of the audience was of a sense of the interruption of a private moment which then led to a moment of complicity expressed through their joint performance.

<sup>39</sup> Cardoso pointed out that she had been allowed to work out this sequence for herself by the director, which may help to explain this stronger, more personal connection to the dance movements.

<sup>40</sup> Cardoso noted that the only other cross-dressed role she had performed was a very different role in Marivaux. On the CD-Rom *As Fronteiras do Travesti no Trabalho do Actor* (2001), which analysed male actors playing women’s roles and actresses playing male roles, Eugénia Vasques notes that no Portuguese actress came forward to work on the project. Examples she gives of Portuguese actresses playing male roles include Maria Henrique in Caryl Churchill’s *Sétimo Céu* (*Cloud Nine*, 1997) and two examples from the *revista* (revue) tradition: Zita Duarte in Vitor Pavão dos Santos’ *Mulheres de Calças*, (1987) and Cândida Vieira in *Zig Zag* (1985).

actress to construct a more individualised representation. However, this not only demands hard work on her part that is tantamount to the invention of a tradition, it also means that an audience may not recognise her particular representation of masculinity. In interview, Cardoso explained that she had wanted to distinguish Cesario from Viola through costume, voice and movement. However, she also commented that having watched the video recording of the production just before the interview, she felt that there had effectively been little difference between them.<sup>41</sup> There was only the briefest appearance as Viola, wrapped in a blanket, before her first appearance of Cesario. Her costume consisted of a white jacket with another short red and black striped plastic jacket worn over it and red bands around the lower arm. This was worn over a pair of white trousers which were looser at the top and then tapered around the lower part of the leg (see photograph no.1 at the end of the chapter). This costume was conceived of as a way of reinforcing the actress's performance of masculinity by playing down more visible signs of her femininity. However, because Cardoso herself is slightly built and, ironically, because contemporary audiences are quite used to the sight of women in trousers, the costume created a rather unisex feel overall rather than introducing an obvious distinction between masculine and feminine. Cardoso lowered her voice as Cesario and made use of what Pais had called her 'more masculine walk' to distinguish Cesario's movements from the smaller steps of Viola. Movements like holding her hands clasped behind her back and sitting cross-legged were also designed to distinguish the two characters. However, the fact that Cesario is in service to Orsino meant that each of these gestures could be interpreted as much as signs of that service as signs of masculinity. This reinforced the tendency towards not recognising Cardoso's masculine performance for audiences unused to representations of women playing men

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<sup>41</sup> As a member of the audience, I also have to endorse Cardoso's feeling that the distinction was not effectively conveyed.

onstage. A comparison between Cardoso's masculine performance as Cesario and the performance of João Reis as Feste is revealing here. Reis' female cabaret performance was instantly recognisable to the audience because of the tradition of male to female drag performances he invoked. It could also be argued that in terms of costume, men in dresses and make-up currently carry more shock value than women in trousers. It appears, therefore, that "the feminine principle" referred to by Feijó underwent its own form of cross-dressing in the production and gained its visibility as much through male actors bringing out their 'feminine' side as through Cardoso's performance as Viola. However, as Viola's exploration of her "masculine" side had no performance tradition upon which to base itself and, in Feijó's terms, had no positive value attributed to it, Cardoso's masculine performance as Cesario began from the outset from an unequal position that made it more difficult for her performance to succeed than those of the male actors performing femininity.

### **I. III. A Woman in a Man's World: BBCTV/Renaissance films 1996 *Twelfth Night***

A focus on gender performativity, which was central to the TNSJ production, was also highlighted in the 1996 BBCTV/Renaissance Films *Twelfth Night* prequel to the play.<sup>42</sup> Just before the shipwreck, the twins were performing a song to an audience on board a ship, both dressed as oriental women with veils over their faces. Sebastian drew attention to the male beneath the female costume by singing lower notes during the chorus. At the end of the song, Sebastian removed Viola's veil, to show a Viola with a false moustache. Viola snatched away Sebastian's veil and discovered a mirror image of

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<sup>42</sup> This production, directed by Trevor Nunn who was the Artistic Director of the National Theatre at the time, is discussed as a film version of the play because it was released first in the cinema. However, in the long term, it is more likely to be a video/DVD version. In Portugal, the film was shown by the Cineclubes do Norte during the run of the TNSJ production on 26<sup>th</sup> October, 1998 at the Carlos Alberto theatre.

her 'performance' self. Sebastian then ripped off Viola's moustache, to sounds of appreciation from the ship's audience. Just as Viola reached up to rip off Sebastian's moustache, the shipwreck began and the two twins were separated.

This prequel would have been difficult to stage because of the number of people involved and the difficulty of suggesting the effects of the shipwreck. Although this first scene was a theatrical performance, therefore, it also established quickly that these events were taking place in the very different medium of film. Almost immediately, there was another short extra-textual scene which has become a central convention of television and film renderings of the play. After Viola informed the Captain of her intention to disguise herself as Cesario, the viewers witnessed the different stages of Viola's physical transformation into Cesario.<sup>43</sup> In the first camera shot, the Captain was snipping off Viola's long hair as she held her face in her hands. At this moment, the initial film titles also appeared on the screen. As the credits continued, Viola's disguise as a man took shape, accompanied by jaunty orchestral music. First, the laces of her corset were undone and there was a sense of liberation as she took off the tight-fitting garment. Then, she buttoned up her trousers and, to disapproval from the Captain, put a handkerchief down her trousers to simulate a penis. After this, a long length of red cloth was wound round her breasts. This was accompanied by a sigh from her, which could have been either of pleasure or a new sense of restraint. After exchanging her shoes for some boots, the physical disguise was complete and the Captain nodded his approval. The viewers saw her shouting off a cliff, as the name of the actress (Imogen Stubbs) came up and the music ended.

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<sup>43</sup> In the Tim Supple television production discussed in Chapter 5, there is also a sequence where the actress Parminder Nagra "becomes" Cesario in front of the camera. Both productions suggest the taking on of the disguise to avoid danger. The Trevor Nunn production had shots of soldiers riding across the beach to suggest a wartime setting. However, the 19<sup>th</sup> century setting did distance the sense of threat somewhat and make the danger more remote. The Tim Supple production more clearly situated Viola's taking on of her disguise culturally within a narrative about Asian immigration into Britain. This contemporary setting made Viola's disguise more immediately a matter of life and death.

In the next shot, Viola/Cesario, dressed in military uniform, was playing the piano in Orsino's all-male court. The camera panned round several times, showing the extent to which the court was an all-male enclave. This notion of a woman coming into a man's world was highlighted in several brief scenes that followed. First, viewers saw the men of Orsino's court learning to fence. The instructor put his hand on Viola's breast in order to change her position and she coughed at this 'invasion' of her private space. Later, as Orsino teased Cesario about his feminine qualities, there was a certain amount of male physicality, which Viola obviously found uncomfortable. She coughed and tried to move away, before hurting Orsino's arm in the urgency to remove herself. There were also excerpts of other male activities within the court such as hunting, cigar-smoking, playing cards, drinking wine and playing snooker. At one point, Orsino leant across the table confidentially when talking about the different nature of men and women's love, as if talking man to man. Although these activities were portrayed as not completely natural to her, Viola gradually became more proficient at them. She even managed to get a snooker ball in the hole, much to her own amazement.

One of the ways in which an actress's masculine performance as Cesario can be reinforced is by the suggestion of a homoerotic attraction between Orsino and Cesario. This is because if the attraction is seen to be between two men, it reminds the audience of Viola's masculine disguise as Cesario. In one scene from the film, Orsino and Viola as Cesario took shelter from the rain in a barn where they discovered Feste. While Feste played for them, the two figures moved closer together in the darkness until Cesario's head was tilted up towards Orsino and they almost kissed. At this moment, Feste's raised eyebrow made it clear to the viewers that he had interpreted their intimacy specifically as homoerotic intimacy. This acted to frame the encounter as one between two men and thus helped to consolidate the actress' masculine performance as Cesario.



When Viola was reunited with her twin, she had her back to the other characters as Sebastian entered. The camera maintained the distance between the two actors and alternated between one twin and the other until they were facing each other directly. Sebastian removed Viola's moustache, thus returning viewers to the ship entertainment scene which was now being played out in 'reel life'. The use of film editing techniques, like the TNSJ's use of voice scrambling and white gauze curtain, sustained the illusion of similarity until Viola and Sebastian were reconciled. Yet whereas the TNSJ production ended with a powerful image of gender ambiguity, Nunn's production had Stubbs very visibly in an apricot wedding dress as the final credits came up.

The film illustrated some of the ways in which the techniques of the medium of film can help to create Viola's performance as Cesario. A large budget permitted scenes like that of the prequel. Editing allowed viewers to witness Viola's transformation into Cesario and a credible reconciliation scene between the two twins. The film used the fact that it was an actress playing Viola to its advantage, in that a performance text was created to illustrate the difficulties for a woman in having to make her way in a man's world. This performance text of a woman's progress in a man's world also obviated the need for an actress to be completely convincing as a man, for it focused attention on the experience of Viola *as a woman* rather than as the male Cesario. The prominence given to the all-male enclave that was Orsino's court and Viola's increased success in the rituals of masculinity made of this a coherent and sustained narrative for at least the first half of the production. Moreover, it has been pointed out that young women are in a majority as viewers of recent film adaptations of Shakespeare. The fact that there were several scenes which showed Viola triumphing in a male world thus represented an

adroit marketing strategy on the part of the film makers to appeal to this young female audience.<sup>44</sup>

However, there is much that is disingenuous here. Real obstacles for women were reduced to token situations of exclusion or embarrassment. The film suggested that male enclaves were remarkably easy to enter and that their power rested solely on decoding selected rituals. The atmosphere seemed more akin to a Victorian gentlemen's club than a military academy. In fact, it bore an uncanny resemblance to the gentleman's club that is English theatre. It told a story of women entering a male world relatively easily, which suited the image English theatre wished to give of itself. The fact that this all took place on film also bolstered a notion that those associated with productions of Shakespeare in England have been able to enter the modern world and create, in Alan Sinfield's memorable phrase "Shakespeare + relevance". Despite this, the film was hampered by much of the same narrow literalism and sense of nostalgic familiarity that has dogged contemporary productions of Shakespeare in the English theatre. Ironically, in fact, the parts of the film where this was less true were scenes like that of the prequel, in other words the ones that were most obviously theatrical.

## **II. Extra-textual Cross-dressers in *Twelfth Night*: Representations of Feste and Olivia**

Whereas the previous two representations of actresses playing Viola as Cesario were conditioned by the textual representation of the role, this second section examines two instances of extra-textual cross-dressing which involved male actors representing femininity. It discusses the cross-dressing of Feste in the TNSJ production and the Globe Theatre's all male *Twelfth Night*, where the roles of Olivia, Maria and Viola were

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<sup>44</sup> Celia R Daileader points to "the increasingly educated, increasingly sexually confident and increasingly salaried female audience" which have shaped attitudes to women in recent Shakespeare film productions". C.f. Celia R. Daileader (2001), *Op. Cit.*, p.187.

played by men. In both cases, the decision to cross-dress these characters represented a particular negotiation of the tradition-modernity continuum. The Globe's exploration of Shakespearean "authentic practices", for instance, determined the choice of an all-male cast as part of their (re)creation of early modern theatrical practice. It represented an ensemble decision, rather than a decision to cross-dress particular characters for specific reasons. The opportunities afforded by an all-male performance of the play are several. There are three very different women's roles which mean that there is a degree of variety in the cross-dressed performances. Productions can, for example, highlight differences of status between Maria and Olivia or differences in age between the three women characters. In the scene where Cesario first approaches Olivia with Maria in attendance, there is even a triangle of men playing women's roles which enables the audience to compare and contrast the performances. The modern context of the production offers an additional opportunity to highlight variety in the sense that the male actors playing the roles nowadays are of different ages, physical builds and theatrical backgrounds, unlike the boy actors who played women's roles in the early modern period. The cross-dressing of Feste in the TNSJ production, on the other hand, was part of a wider production choice to present Shakespeare in a (post)modern theatrical setting. Feste's status as a paid performer and the wide variety of interactions he has with other characters seem to have determined the decision to cross-dress this character in particular. However, the representations of Viola as Cesario and of a Sebastian with an element of femininity complemented this performance to form a triangle of sexually hybrid characters onstage.

## II. I. Cross-dressing and the Imprints of Service: João Reis as Feste in the TNSJ Production of *Noite de Reis*

Feste's outsider status has been translated for performance in diverse ways, ranging from a music hall comedian or a new age itinerant musician to a court jester. In the last two decades, he has taken an increasingly central role in defining the overall tone of a production, and with a contemporary tendency to emphasise the bleaker side of the play's comedy, his unhappy wisdom has been frequently at the heart of a production's concerns. His centrality in the TNSJ production was made clear in the production programme where Rodrigo Affreixo referred to him as the "guide and mediator" of the production.<sup>45</sup> This centrality was also sensed by the audience. After students at the Universidade do Minho went to see the play, there was general agreement among them that Feste had been the character they had enjoyed most. This was also partly because João Reis, the actor who played Feste, is well-known nationally as a stage and particularly television actor. His stage work has included plays by Barrie Keefe, Gil Vicente, Shakespeare and Beckett in Braga, Lisbon and Porto. At a later date, he went on to play Hamlet in another Ricardo Pais/TNSJ production.<sup>46</sup>

For Terry Eagleton, the character of Feste is "pure transgression" because he appears to lack a body. It is certainly true that although much of his wordplay is sexual, he seems singularly free from desire himself. However, this section illustrates through a focus on Feste's songs that the representation of the character in performance can be the site of an intense, but ambiguous erotics. Moreover, the section also argues that the TNSJ production's decision to cross-dress Feste created an onstage figure who far from

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<sup>45</sup> Interview with Ricardo Pais in Production Programme, *Op. Cit.* p. 9.

<sup>46</sup> Reis' performance was also singled out for praise by theatre critics who wrote reviews of the play, often in tandem with praise for Micaela Cardoso.

being free from desire, was overdetermined by the desires of others. He wore these desires on his cross-dressed body as the imprints of service.<sup>47</sup>

As John Russell Brown observes, in the absence of more obvious representations of desire, Shakespearean theatre relies heavily on the “music of sexual speech” to convey eroticism on stage:

The very ‘sound’ or music of utterance speaks directly to the senses of the hearer, and Shakespeare, skilfully used this to evoke the moods and rhythms of sexual activity.<sup>48</sup>

He adds that such effects are “not merely verbal and auditory” but also anchored in the body movements of the actor so that “the actor’s body must take part in a kind of dance which is the physical concomitant of speech, necessarily responsive to it as well as its cause”.<sup>49</sup> With the locus of sexual desire displaced from the ‘unshowable’ genitalia onto the “music of speech”, the voice in Shakespearean performance becomes something of a sexual organ in itself, and attention is often drawn to the sensual quality of the organ and the words it shapes. Orsino, for instance, praises the feminine qualities of the cross-dressed Cesario, marvelling that “...Diana’s lip/Is not more smooth and rubious; thy small pipe /Is as the maiden’s organ, shrill and sound” (I, IV, 30-32). Feste himself is said to have a “mellifluous voice” and to have “contagious breath” (II, III, 47, 48). Both these statements give a sexual valence to the act of singing.

Yet as Anne Ubersfeld notes, the mouth is also “the meeting place between the body and the word” and, as such, has a crucial role in mediating between text and

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<sup>47</sup> A modified version of this section appears in my “Cultural Inscription and Body Techniques in *Twelfth Night*” in Ana Gabriela Macedo & Orlando Grosse-gasse (eds.), *Representações do Corpo (Re-presenting the Body)*, (Centro de Estudos Humanísticos, Universidade do Minho, 2003), pp.67-78.

<sup>48</sup> John Russell Brown, “Representing Sexuality in Shakespeare’s Plays” in Catherine Alexander & Stanley Wells (eds.), *Shakespeare and Sexuality*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 176

<sup>49</sup> *Ibidem*.

performance.<sup>50</sup> This is particularly relevant in the case of Feste. Several of his verbal puns and parodies have become singularly unfunny over the years as their intelligibility decreases. Much of his wordplay is invariably cut in contemporary performance and replaced by physical action that audiences are more likely to appreciate. However, in this respect, foreign language productions of *Twelfth Night* often find themselves in an advantageous position, for the language of the translation is invariably more colloquial and more closely tied to the concerns of the particular production for which it has been commissioned. As Dennis Kennedy observes:

even the oldest of Shakespearean translations are infinitely closer to the language spoken on the street in Berlin or Zurich or Vienna than Shakespeare's language is to that of London or Los Angeles or Melbourne.<sup>51</sup>

Therefore, good foreign language translations of the play provide an opportunity to recreate Feste's speeches in a more contemporary verbal register. The TNSJ had the perspicacity and the budget to commission a new translation of *Twelfth Night* for this particular production and this enabled João Reis to rework Feste's role and his songs in particular.<sup>52</sup>

The first song is the love song that Feste sings at Sir Toby and Sir Andrew's request on the night of their merrymaking "Ah, Amada Minha (O, Mistress Mine)" (II, III). The scene involves several activities centred around the mouth, such as singing, eating, and drinking, whilst the song begins after Sir Andrew has complimented Feste on his vocal abilities and ends with more praise of Feste's "melliflous voice" and

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<sup>50</sup> Anne Ubersfeld, *Lire le Théâtre II – L'École du Spectateur*, (Paris: Belin, 1996. First published by Messidor in 1981), p. 186. My translation from the French.

<sup>51</sup> Dennis Kennedy, "Shakespeare Without his Language" in James C. Bulman (ed.), *Shakespeare, Theory and Performance*, (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 136-7.

<sup>52</sup> This may also have been something of a necessity as I have only been able to find a translation of the Charles and Mary Lamb version of the play.

“contagious breath”. In the TNSJ production, the song was self-consciously framed as a performance. This was suggested first of all by Feste’s initial reluctance to sing, which was only overcome by Sir Toby’s offer of money. In the song itself, Feste’s body movements and vocal phrasing were highly stylised, and this sense of deliberate exaggeration increased the sense of performance. The vocal style was curt, almost staccato, and Reis overstressed the syllable breaks in translated words such as “senso” and “paraíso” to heighten the dramatic effect. Additionally, the piano music that accompanied the song came from a modern looking tape recorder rather than a live instrument. This located the song in a modern rather than period setting and once more emphasised its status as performance.

Costume took on a fundamental role in this performance. Reis’s post-punk spiky haircut, make-up and white coat over white embroidered (night)dress introduced a note of gender hybridity from his first appearance (see photograph no.2 at the end of this chapter). He used his costume to tease the other characters and the audience with the promise of revelation of what lay underneath his various layers of clothing. Nevertheless, when he lay backwards in a position of *rigor mortis*, all that was revealed was yet another layer of costume in the form of white leggings. The same teasing reoccurred when he flapped the folds of the dress up and down to cool the heat in his blood (“ardor no sangue”), accompanied by a vocal trill. The performance illustrated the constraints involved in Feste’s vocal performance through the handing over of money and through its heightened performativity. It presented a Fool evidently bothered by passion, located somewhere between the masculine and the feminine.

The second song, “Morte, Leva-me Contigo” (“Come Away Death”), (II, IV) framed more directly the questions of gender hybridity that traverse the play. This was signalled mysteriously through an unidentified voice that came out of the darkness to

ask Orsino whether he was ready to hear the song. It was then embodied in the pink velvet coat, black veil and high heels of the cabaret artiste who was Feste's *persona* when he came onstage to perform the song. The same tendency to put performance 'in inverted commas' that inflected the first song also characterised the second. Indeed, it was framed even more deliberately as a performance in its use of microphone and tape recorder and the fact that Feste undressed on stage to return to his previous costume after the song was finished. The elongated vowel sounds in "corre" and "morre" allowed Reis once more to exaggerate the dramatic potential of the translated song.

How should this introduction of the feminine into the all-male environment of Orsino's court be read? For spectators, it functioned as a moment of metatheatrical irony, for Orsino's all-male court not only included the cross-dressed Viola, but also two actresses playing members of the court. Yet the feminine in this scene also had a wider significance. Ricardo Pais noted in interview that "even at the limits of his extortion, Feste seeks to make money an excuse for his compulsive need to transform himself".<sup>53</sup> This suggests a self-willed exploration of the feminine on the part of the male performer here. Yet to what extent does this transformation result from the performer's own agency and to what extent is it imposed by those for whom Feste performs? If the Fool's traditional role of mirroring back the fragilities of those he encounters is invoked, Feste's 'agency' here consists in revealing to Orsino how little effectively separates the masculine and the feminine in a scene where Orsino claims no comparison can be made between the love of women and the much greater love of men. As such, Feste's feminine performance is a theatrical equivalent of Viola's textual 'lesson' that there are no differences between men and women in love. However, to mirror back Orsino's masculine fragility also demands that Feste himself embody that

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<sup>53</sup> "Mesmo no limite da extorsão, Festa procura que o dinheiro o desculpe do seu compulsivo transformismo". Interview with Ricardo Pais in Production Programme, *Op. Cit.* p.6.



fragility. Consequently, the embodiment of the feminine by the paid performer is not only Feste's 'free choice', but also one more element of the sexually hybrid palimpsest that constitutes his dependent body.

This emphasis on constraint continued into the final song. The fact that it is Feste who has the last word in the text of *Twelfth Night* (V, I) means that there are two conflicting endings. In one, the potentially disastrous instances of mistaken identity are resolved through marriage. In the other, Feste's final weary song about the wind and the rain is a reminder that not everything can be resolved quite so neatly. The TNSJ production made the contradictions of this double ending the central statement of its *finale*.<sup>54</sup> Standing just to one side of the two naked twins, Reis removed his white coat at the beginning of the song and completed it in a dress. Like the image of the naked twins, this was an extra-textual sequence that introduced a moment of gender uncertainty as the text itself seemed to declare such uncertainty over. Yet this apparent continuation of sexual hybridity beyond the close was abruptly contradicted by the translation and scenography of the final moments of the play. Feste's "agradou" (pleased) rhymed tellingly with "acabou" (done) as if to signal the end of pleasure chiming with the end of performance. The two semi-circular objects left on stage were closed tightly together on the final "agradou" to reinforce this sense of closure.<sup>55</sup>

The question of voicing was fundamental to this final song. Reis used an overtly stylised, almost caricatured style for the first few verses in Portuguese, but the song then slid seamlessly into an offstage recording of David Bowie's 'Time'. This interruption was then itself brought to an abrupt halt by Feste who spoke, very theatrically, the final

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<sup>54</sup> In interview, Ricardo Pais suggests an interesting interrelationship between the two endings in his comment that music "expresses desire and death, which disrupts the final harmony between the masculine and the feminine." C. f. Cristina Pacheco, "Ser ou Não Ser – Homem ou Mulher" in *City*, October 1998, p.135. Feste's final song, therefore, has a central role in this disruption through music.

<sup>55</sup> See Chapter Five for more extended discussion of the theatrical and metaphorical uses made of these objects.

translated verse. Could it be that impatient with having to put on a series of voices and costumes in command performances, this is a tantalising glimpse of Feste's 'own' voice? Yet the swift return of Bowie, followed by closure, was a reminder that even if Feste had now gained momentary access to his voice, his employment remained conditional on adopting the voices and *personae* demanded of him by those who paid for his performances. The interweaving of the translated songs in Portuguese with Bowie's 'Time' widened the relevance of this individual constriction, for it illustrated the difficulties for Portuguese theatre in finding its own voice in a world where Anglo-American voices, whether Shakespeare or Bowie, predominate.

Cross-dressing for the Feste of this production was, therefore, somewhere between a choice and an imposition. Like the deliberate stylisation of his vocal performances, it was at once forced upon him by those who paid for his performances as well as a protest against these enforced performances. It emphasised the compulsion that lies behind the fraught assumption of gender roles *even when the gender role assumed is a hybrid one*. Yet its very theatricality also enabled it to function as critique. The performer could reflect back the underlying vulnerability of those like Orsino who would have gender roles essentialised. Additionally, cross-dressing made the compulsion involved in the assumption of gender immediately visible and legible on the performer's body. As such, the powerful theatrical charge associated with the transgression of cross-dressing was never divorced from a sense of cross-dressing as a living embodiment of oppression, whether sexual or in terms of status.

## **II. II. "Are You the Lady of the House?" The Comedy of Femininity in the Globe's All-male *Twelfth Night* (2002)**

The cross-dressing of Feste in the TNSJ production was an individual experiment, but exploration of cross-gender casting has formed a consistent part of the reconstructed

Globe's commitment to "authentic practices" productions since the theatre opened its doors in 1996.<sup>56</sup> Those involved in Globe productions have not conceived of this appeal to an English theatrical tradition of men playing women's roles in terms of a simple return. Firstly, they aim to produce representations of women that are not clichéd or offensive and that can be enjoyed by women as well as men. In the 2003 *Richard II* programme, for instance, Master of Movement Glynn MacDonald writes:

For those actors playing women, we have tried to find a natural way of moving. The last thing we wanted was to "demonstrate" femininity, which ends up looking either comic or embarrassing. The actors have, I hope, achieved *a level of subtle understanding of womanly grace* helped by precise attention to gesture and moving on released curves" (my emphasis).<sup>57</sup>

Moreover, more recent productions have experimented with all-female as well as all-male productions. In the 2003 'Regime Change' season, for instance, an all-female company performed *Richard III* and *The Taming of the Shrew*. In the programme for *Richard III*, MacDonald states that:

The company has come without preconceived ideas of manliness; neither has it sought to adopt male postures, but tried to find *the masculine within*" (my emphasis).<sup>58</sup>

In the same programme, the Master of Voice, Stewart Pearce, also details how he worked with the company to find each actress' "signature note", rather than attempting "to superimpose the notion of the maleness upon the sensitivity and colour within the female persona".

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<sup>56</sup> However, there is not really any clear sense of "authentic practices" to which the Globe can appeal. Although it is known that young male actors played all the women's parts in early modern Shakespeare, there is very little information about *how* they played those parts and *how* the audience reacted to them. In this sense, any such invocation is inevitably a *reinvention* of what constitutes the Shakespearean performance tradition.

<sup>57</sup> From the *Richard II* programme, Globe Theatre, 2003, p.22.

<sup>58</sup> From the *Richard III* programme, Globe Theatre, 2003, p.23.

Movement and voice work in rehearsals is considered an important part of the commitment to producing well-crafted performances of women. Paul Chahidi, who played Maria in the production of *Twelfth Night*, spoke of the importance of an early session with choreographer Sian Williams:

We watched her move, she watched us move and we noted the difference in how we use our bodies (...) I tried to introduce a *feminine side to my movement*, a greater sensuality to the hips (my emphasis).<sup>59</sup>

However, Chahidi notes that it was his costume which really defined the contours of his eventual performance. This included a corset, petticoat, farthingales (which give a man a more curvaceous rear) and a Queen of Hearts wig. For Chahidi, wearing this costume:

(...) was as good as weeks of movement practice. Because in the costume you have to take small steps, and if you need to move fast you have to glide. It told me so much about *feminine deportment* (my emphasis, 16).

Interspersed with such comments on the importance of costume, voice and movement in the creation of characters of the opposite sex are elements of a more psychological, philosophical approach to gender difference. This can be seen, for instance, in MacDonald's comments on helping the women performers to find "the masculine within" or in the connection posited by the Artistic Director of the Globe, Mark Rylance, between cross-gender experimentation and comedies like *Twelfth Night*:

All of the characters, male and female, are archetypes brought into harmony in the comedies. So having male actors *get in touch with the feminine side of themselves* is philosophically connected to the nature, form and content of the plays (my emphasis, 17).

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<sup>59</sup> Daniel Rosenthal, "Treading the Broads" in *The Independent Review*, (22/5/2002), p.16. All subsequent quotes from actors in the production are from this article. Page numbers are indicated in parentheses.

Thus, complementing the notion that there are a series of movements, tones of voice and forms of dress that can represent ‘femininity’, there is a claim that there are specific ways of feeling and behaving that represent ‘the feminine’ and that these are different from ‘the masculine’. However, cross-gender casting necessarily implies a certain degree of gender transitivity. These features of femininity, whether costume, voice or forms of behaviour, are thus seen to be available to male performers as, presumably, similar features of masculinity are available to women performers. Moreover, if ‘femininity’ is available to male performers, does this not also mean that no such thing as ‘femininity’ actually exists? Behind the carefully rehearsed, immensely sensitive attention to the details of the actors’ representations of women, therefore, there lies not an essential femininity to be captured and embodied but a void. Their performances can only be representations *of other representations of femininity* rather than representations of ‘femininity’ *per se*, because this has no tangible, separate existence. However, the very exaggeration of detail in the theatrical lexicon of these performances makes them “hyperbolic” to use Butler’s terminology. As such, they parody the day-to-day constitution of gender identities out of this void and the subsequent attempts to represent this ‘myth of origins’ as the substance of gender.

Just such a hyperbolic moment occurred before the production began. As the audience entered, in the words of one member of the audience, “we saw the actors being teased, strapped, pulled and bullied into their solid but very beautiful frocks”.<sup>60</sup> This immediately demystified the male actors’ subsequent representations of femininity onstage. In the production itself, there were a variety of male performances of women’s roles, from the delicate, gentle Viola, to a Maria who was ‘one of the boys’, to a

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<sup>60</sup> My thanks to Jonathan Weightman for this evocative comment.

wonderfully comic Olivia from Mark Rylance. Rylance has established quite a reputation for his performances of women's roles, having played a highly acclaimed Cleopatra before performing Olivia. To create his role in *Twelfth Night*, Rylance built upon the existing qualities of his own speaking voice:

I have a fairly soft voice and used sometimes to be mistaken for a woman when I rang up banks. For Olivia, I've listened to recordings of a few women whose voices have the right intonations for a countess (16).

From the Japanese onnagata, a tradition Rylance admires because of its respect for the women characters it creates, he learnt to make smaller movements with the feet and pull his arms in to make them shorter and more delicate.

From her entrance, Rylance's Olivia differed immediately from the way she is conventionally represented. Dressed in a stiff black dress with a white ruff and a little crown, she seemed very sober, aware of her position and rather daunting. She was played much older than in most productions, and appeared curiously repressed and disembodied. Rylance moved across the stage very quickly in his costume, almost gliding because of the lightness of his steps. Of the three male actors playing women's roles, Rylance's voice seemed to be the one which sounded most like it was theatrically contrived. It resonated as the voice of a male actor aiming for a very precise representation of femininity.

From the moment Cesario entered, however, Olivia became skittish in her movements and rather girlish in her behaviour. Thus, the transformation in Olivia brought about by love was represented in her transformation from sober adult to a light-hearted young woman who nevertheless adapted with a theatrical quick-wittedness to the situations she encountered. Her scenes were very much played for their comic

potential, another unusual feature for a character who is invariably represented as quite serious. Before Cesario entered, for instance, Olivia set Maria at the top of the table, so that Cesario mistakenly enquired of her whether she was “the lady of the house”. Thus, to a level of theatrical irony built upon recognition that there were *no* “ladies” in the theatrical house, an extra level of social irony was added by this confusion of the maid with the mistress. The comedy of the moment was sustained as Cesario addressed his speech in praise of Olivia’s beauty to the somewhat perplexed maid.

There were a series of such comic moments throughout the production. In the first encounter with Cesario, Olivia was visibly awkward, flustered and embarrassed about what to say. At the end of the scene, she tried desperately to dislodge the ring from her finger in order to send Malvolio after Cesario with it. Similarly, after their second encounter, Olivia pretended, not very adroitly, to lose her shoe so that she could call Cesario back to help her. Towards the end of the play, she flew across the stage with a large axe to break up the fight between Sir Toby and Sebastian before fainting at her own initiative. She was surprised and delighted as Sebastian then agreed to marry her. When he later explained how near she came to marrying “a man and a maid”, there was no reaction of shock or horror. She simply raised her arms in a gesture of mock-resignation.<sup>61</sup>

What is interesting about such moments is that they were enabled by the theatrical lexicon used by Rylance for his particular representation of femininity. Elements of the costume, such as the ring or the shoe, thus promoted theatrical action rather than just forming part of it. Conventional ascriptions to femininity were invoked and parodied, such as in the moment where Olivia fainted after her intervention with the exaggerated ‘phallus’ of the axe. The shrug of the shoulders after the revelation

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<sup>61</sup> I am contrasting this reaction, for instance, with the reaction of Helena Bonham Carter’s Olivia in Trevor Nunn’s film production, where she stares open-mouthed at those involved for at least two minutes.

dethroned heterosexuality as the obviously better option. Moreover, as the representation of femininity was so obviously theatricalised, attention was focused on the constituent elements of the performance, such as the movement under the costume, the carefully pitched voice and the exactness of the comic timing rather than on a judgement as to how convincing it was as a representation of a woman. Finally, the variety in the three performances enabled Rylance's performance to function as *one* representation of femininity rather than a representation of femininity *per se*.

However, there remains the problem of the essential 'nothingness' that is femininity. The more developed the theatrical vocabulary for representing femininity, the more it takes on an independent existence of its own and the more it suggests that there *is* something which can be identified as 'femininity' after all. Certainly, the very excesses of performances like Rylance's illustrate that gender is eminently performative. However, when this sense of performativity divorces such 'signs' of gender from the contexts in which they are assumed, it leaves the theatrical lexicon of this comedy of femininity curiously free-floating and lacking any sense of compulsion or historicity.

## **Conclusion**

Several questions have been raised in the course of this chapter on contemporary cross-dressed performance. Firstly, to what extent do male and female performers start from an equal position when they explore 'the other side' of gender? If we compare, for example, Micaela Cardoso's performance of Viola with João Reis' Feste, it appears that Reis' exuberant performance somewhat eclipsed Cardoso's competent but less flamboyant one. I have suggested that this might be explained to a certain extent by the



fact that whilst there is a tradition of male drag performances in Portugal, there is no real performance tradition of women playing men. If we compare Cardoso's performance with that of Imogen Stubbs, it also becomes clear that an English Shakespearean theatrical tradition of cross-dressed heroines has constituted a useful training ground for actresses in playing male roles.

The second question has to do with the possibilities and limits for cross-dressing engendered by the Shakespearean text in performance. It has been pointed out that while the character of Viola is an appealing one for an actress, the text also imposes certain limits on her cross-dressed performance as Cesario in that it makes a consistent performance of masculinity harder to sustain. This can be mitigated to a certain extent by translation and imaginative staging as it was with the TNSJ production, or a conception of a performance text that places the actress rather than the role at the centre of its concerns, as occurred with the BBCTV/Renaissance Films production. The performances analysed in the second part of this chapter represent two ways in which a decision to extend the cross-dressing in the drama can recast the limits of the Shakespearean text. In the TNSJ production, the excellent translation by António M. Feijó and the equally excellent work of João Reis and Ricardo Pais created something quite powerful out of the text's songs. The cross-dressing of Feste was central to this in that it stressed the exploitation as well as the initiative of the paid performer. The Globe's production of the play, although placing itself within a Shakespearean tradition, conceived of this as a tradition of performance rather than a textual tradition. Its denaturalised representations of femininity emphasised the specifically theatrical elements that create female character, such as costume, props and comic timing. This created a certain amount of autonomous space from the dramatic text for the representations of women characters by the male performers.

This leads to a third question, which is what these performances illustrate about the possibilities and limits of cross-dressing as a form of sexual transgression. It is interesting in this respect that out of all three productions, only Nunn's film version of the play gave any sort of reality to gender difference. Its notion of the different roles of men and women allowed it to make a point about the difficulties for women in a man's world. However, the same stress on gender difference also made the ending one which reinforced a conservative view of the eventual reestablishment of (hetero)sexuality. The other performances stressed the performativity of gender roles through their emphasis on theatricalisation, whether through a stylised form of performance which made natural gender characteristics unimportant or through an emphasis on the ease with which 'gender' can be (re)created in theatre. Though both denaturalise gender roles, the former has the disadvantage of not making any distinction between what it means to be a man and what it means to be a woman. The latter, on the other hand, runs the risk of suggesting a real existence to gender roles through the excess of surface details it accumulates. The emphasis on theatricality seems to be most effective in a context where cross-dressing is also positioned as *situational and relational*. In the performance of João Reis, for instance, the 'masculine' and the 'feminine' could not be divorced from a context of social dependency and this gave the representation much of its theatrical force.

A major distinction between the English productions and the TNSJ production was the extent to which they viewed cross-dressing as restrictive or liberating. Whilst the Nunn film placed great emphasis on the freedom Viola was allowed when dressed as Cesario, and the Globe production suggested that gender role-playing was effortless and fun, the TNSJ production laid more stress on the constrictions associated with cross-dressing. The stylisation of the acting tended to emphasise the constraint for Viola

when she played Cesario, and for Feste, cross-dressing was the mark he bore of his service to others, a performance in which his own agency was present but curtailed. However, this also meant that whereas the English cross-dressed performances contained little that seemed threatening or disturbing, the performance of João Reis as Feste showed there could still be a dangerous charge to theatrical cross-dressing when it is allied with a marginal character whose different relationship to power influences the meanings attached to it.

Another question is how film or theatrical productions of the play differ in their representation of cross-dressing. Ricardo Pais himself has stressed that the system of parallel narration in the play is “genuinely cinematographic”, whilst Nunn included several theatrical moments in his film production.<sup>62</sup> In terms of cross-dressing, film can use editing techniques to mitigate the differences between the twins and show Viola’s ‘offstage’ transformation into Cesario. However, as the TNSJ production illustrated, it is quite possible to use the possibilities of technology and the mechanisms of artifice in which theatre excels to create a surface similarity between the two twins, and as the Globe production illustrated, changes of costume can be foregrounded in the theatre as well as on film. Indeed, it might be suggested that rather than pursuing very different paths in their representation of cross-dressing, there is currently some quite extensive borrowing between the two artistic forms.

All three productions discussed in this chapter created moments of autonomy for the performance text in their representations of sexual transgression. In the Trevor Nunn production, this was noticeable in the sequence where the viewers ‘see’ Viola becoming Cesario and to a greater extent, in the series of scenes which emphasised Viola’s induction into the all-male world of Orsino’s court during the first half of the film. Such

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<sup>62</sup> P.D.A., “Os Travestis de Shakespeare” in *Visão*, (15/10/1998), p. 121.

autonomy was, however, noticeably absent from the second half of the film. In the Globe production, the constituent elements of the male actors' representations of femininity themselves created such moments of autonomy. They ranged from the simple theatrical device of creating comedy through Olivia's loss of her shoe, to more far-reaching representations of the 'comedy' of femininity which were enabled by having three varied male representations of femininity onstage. However, it was undoubtedly the TSNJ production which established the greatest space for the performance text as distinct from the Shakespearean text. Several elements aided the creation of this autonomy, from the translation choices to the director's concern to foreground theatricality to the two actors' representational skills. The different systems of staging worked together to create a wide-ranging representation of gender transgression which was not limited to one actor or actress or to one system of staging. Instead, music, costume, lighting, actors' performances and set combined together to create an extensive focus on gender performativity. W. C. Carroll has suggested that "(a)ll the paradoxes of cross-dressing (...) represent the constant resurrection and transgression of specifically *theatrical* boundaries".<sup>63</sup> Ricardo Pais' prescience was to have noted that each side of this equation could impact on the other. Thus, an extension of cross-dressing in performance encouraged reflection on theatricality and a deliberate focus on theatricality had a corresponding importance in extending the meanings of cross-dressing.

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<sup>63</sup> W. C. Carroll, *The Metamorphoses of Shakespearean Comedy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) p. 104.

1. Viola (Micaela Cardoso) and Sebastian (Nuno M. Cardoso) in the reconciliation scene of the Teatro Nacional São João (TNSJ) *Noite de Reis*. Copyright João Tuna. Courtesy of the TNSJ.

2. Feste (João Reis) and Viola (Micaela Cardoso) dance together in the TNSJ *Noite de Reis*. Copyright João Tuna. Courtesy of the TNSJ.