

KELLY, MAGGIE S., M.A. Mourning through Murder: The Role of Psychic Mimesis in Early Modern Revenge Tragedies (2018)
Directed by Dr. Jennifer Feather. 28 pp.

Numerous early modern revenge tragedies illustrate the protagonist's quest to memorialize a loved one who has been murdered. Although revenge tragedy has not always been thought of as serving this memorializing function, this essay will seek to explain the metatheatricality of three revenge tragedies through the psychoanalytic lens of Butler's theory of psychic mimesis. The theory of psychic mimesis is, at its core, about the preservation of memory and the construction of new identity after a loss. However, this theory fails to acknowledge the grieving process for the loss of someone through violent means. Death through murder requires those left behind, not only to internalize the memory of the victim, but also to externalize the memory of the crime done. My work offers a new perspective both for the psychoanalytic theory of psychic mimesis as well as for the literary analysis of early modern revenge tragedies.

KELLY, MAGGIE S., M.A. Shut Your Trap: Hunting Metaphors and Verbal Violence in *Twelfth Night* (2018)
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In *Twelfth Night*, characters like Maria and Sir Toby understand the power of verbal violence, and they utilize it to inflict pain on others. Through their use of animal and hunting metaphors in the play, these characters position themselves as predators and their victims as prey. These juxtapositions along with their sporty diction make their cruel behavior seem comical, because they are ridiculing characters who deserve it, or at least that is what the audience is meant to think. I will argue that the continual appearance of the hunting metaphors in *Twelfth Night* enables Maria and her friends-- the predators-- to behave cruelly toward Malvolio and Sir Andrew Aguecheek-- the prey-- because of their class-jumping ambitions, something that the tradition of the hunt facilitates, but ultimately prohibits. Furthermore, these metaphors create a paradox in the play, where some characters are rewarded for their lofty ambitions while others are punished.

MOURNING THROUGH MURDER: THE ROLE OF
PSYCHIC MIMESIS IN EARLY MODERN
REVENGE TRAGEDIES
AND
SHUT YOUR TRAP: HUNTING METAPHORS AND
VERBAL VIOLENCE IN *TWELFTH NIGHT*

by

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MOURNING THROUGH MURDER:
THE ROLE OF PSYCHIC MIMESIS IN EARLY MODERN REVENGE TRAGEDIES

Bleak granite tombstones carved with epithets; lonely ashen mausoleums casting shadows; ornate urns perched on dusty mantels; earnest, ardent lines entombed between reams of wrinkled paper; towering painted faces staring down gloomy hallways; monumental buildings, like the Taj Mahal and the Pyramids of Giza, beckon to be admired. Mourners have always sought to capture and reproduce the memory of dead loved ones-- to take what has been lost and make it tangible once again. Numerous early modern revenge tragedies illustrate the protagonist's quest to memorialize a loved one who has been murdered. These mourners-- or more importantly, these avengers-- are urging their peers and their audience to remember¹, to remember someone they have lost, and they do this through the performance and spectacle of their revenge. Although revenge tragedy has not always been thought of as serving this memorializing function, this essay will seek to explain the metatheatricity (and its purpose) of three revenge tragedies through the psychoanalytic lens of Judith Butler's theory of psychic mimesis, mimetic loss, and the "Other," which I will explain more in depth shortly.

In Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and Thomas Middleton's *The Revenger's Tragedy*, the plays' avengers are haunted by

¹ For another discussion of the revenge tragedy's focus on memory, see John Kerrigan's book *Revenge Tragedy: Aeschylus to Armageddon*, and more specifically the chapter entitled "'Remember Me!': Horestes, Hieronimo, and Hamlet." See also Thomas Rist's *Revenge Tragedy and the Drama of Commemoration in Reforming England*.

spectral, physical remembrance of their lost loved one, who then urges them to seek revenge for their murder. I will argue that this ghost, and more importantly its plea for vengeance, is a materialization of the “Other”-- the part of the lost loved one that the mourner absorbs in order to assuage his grief and to keep his loved one’s memory alive. From there, the griever/revenger perpetuate Butler’s psychic mimesis through their miming of the violence in which their loved one was lost (i.e. “an eye for an eye” justice). The avenger adds another layer of mimetism through their retribution by also miming the spectacle created by the practices of public punishment and justice. While Butler contends that “...performance allegorizes a loss it cannot grieve, allegorizes the incorporative fantasy of melancholia whereby an object is phantasmatically taken in or on as a way of refusing to let it go” (“Melancholy”, 176), I will add another element to her assertion by arguing that the revenger not only keeps the memory of the deceased alive through the internalization and performance of psychic mimesis, but also externalizes his grief by forcing others to remember through the creation of a spectacle-- turning grief from a private process to one dependent upon its publicity. In other words, in the eyes of the revenger, it is not enough for their grief to be felt by themselves personally (internally), they also want it to be seen by others in order to ensure that their enemy remembers the crime they have committed (externally). Ultimately, my thesis examines early modern avengers in a new context: studying them as mourners rather than murderers, using and expanding Butler’s theory of mimetic loss to do so.

Spectacle and performance are key components in the process of both forms of the avenger’s mimetism--the miming of the original violence and the miming of public

justice that has been denied them. Although *performance* and *spectacle* are arguably synonymous terms in everyday usage, for the sake of this essay, I will differentiate between the two. When I use *performance*, I will be referring to the avenger's absorption of an identity outside of themselves in order to carry out the revenge they have been called to. When I use *spectacle*, I will be referring to the actions carried out by the government and by avengers, which must have witnesses/audiences in order to hold consequence and power. Although both forms of retribution, justice and revenge², aim to create a memory for its audience, they memorialize different things. In the case of public justice, spectacle is key because the government is seeking to exhibit its authority and enforce its laws to the populace-- they want to remind their subjects who makes the rules and what happens when someone breaks those rules.³ With private revenge, spectacle is essential because the avenger wants to memorialize and honor their lost loved one and bring them justice, and in order to do so, the avengers need to make public the wrongs that have been done in private/secret (ergo their need for spectacle and their mimetism of public justice).

Spectacle is essential to the enactment of both public justice and private revenge. However, only private revenge also requires performance in these three revenge tragedies. Through their mimetism of Butler's "Other," the avengers absorb the request of the ghost's call for vengeance in an attempt to keep their loved one's memory alive. The

² Throughout this essay, when I speak of public punishments enforced by the government or through some legal avenue, I will refer to it as *justice*; when I speak of private revenge sought out by an individual for an affront done to their loved one, I will refer to it as *revenge*.

³ Michel Foucault discusses this idea at length in his chapter "The Spectacle of the Scaffold" in his book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*.

ghost's plea for revenge as well as the government's denial of public justice force the avengers to participate in a performance. They must take on a new role as both the private revenger and the public executioner, and in order to negotiate these new roles, they enact a performance. In this performance, they mime both the authority of the government as well as the violence of the original criminal, which ultimately leads to a transformative process that leaves the avenger equivalent to the villain they first sought to destroy.

Psychoanalytic Theory of Mimetic Loss

First, it is necessary to frame my argument with a brief discussion of the psychoanalytic theory of mimetic loss or psychic mimesis. I will be engaging in a discussion with both Freud and Butler's concepts of psychic mimesis, but mostly with Butler. I believe applying this theory to early modern revenge tragedies situates early modern revengers as mourners rather than murderers. That is to say, their actions serve to memorialize their lost loved one as an expression of their grief. Furthermore, I will argue that Freud and Butler's theories of psychic mimesis fall short in their analysis of grief in regards to the grief of someone lost by violent means. This type of loss necessitates an additional step, not included in previous discussions of this theory: the externalization of grief. Both Butler and Freud contend that psychic mimesis requires the internalization of the external loss, but I believe that for these avengers, it then requires the externalization of the internal as well.

Although it may seem anachronistic to apply a lens of psychoanalysis to an early modern text, the application is apposite in numerous ways. In fact, early modern scholar,

Cynthia Marshall, comments on this very concept in her article “Psychoanalyzing the Prepsychoanalytic Subject” by saying, “ Poststructural psychoanalytic criticism works in a framework that renders ‘pre-’ and ‘post-’ intellectually ambiguous positions, precisely because literary texts mediate complex relations among past, present, and future” (1211). Marshall also goes on to add that “Psychoanalytic theory provides tools for exploring the subject’s complexities...” despite the time in which a piece was written (1213). Although early modern literature pre-dates the works of psychoanalysts such as Freud and Butler, their ideas and theories are still relevant and applicable to an analysis of a diversity of early modern works.⁴ For the sake of my argument, I will be using Judith Butler’s concept of the “Other” as she describes it in several of her articles⁵: “Consider that identifications are always made in response to loss of some kind, and that they involve a certain *mimetic practice* that seeks to incorporate the lost love within the very ‘identity’ of the one who remains” (“Imitation,” 726, emphasis original) and she continues to define the Other in this same article by saying:

For psychoanalytic theorists Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen and Ruth Leys, however, identification and, in particular, identificatory mimetism *precedes* ‘identity’ and constitutes identity as that which is fundamentally ‘other to itself.’ The notion of this Other *in* the self, as it were, implies that the self/Other distinction is *not* primarily external... the self is from the start radically implicated in ‘Other.’ (727, emphasis original)

⁴ In her article “Psychoanalyzing the Prepsychoanalytic Subject,” Marshall responds to Lee Patterson’s assertion that because Freud’s theories have been disproved in the field of psychology, they are also no longer valid in the humanities as a tool to analyze literature. She goes on to name numerous other psychoanalysts, but her work is mainly centered around the various theories of Freud and Lacan.

⁵ See “Imitation and Gender Insubordination,” “Melancholy Gender- Refused Identification,” and “Violence, Mourning, Politics.”

These articles of Butler's respond to Freud's idea of the "object," which he articulates in his article "Mourning and Melancholia," and then again in his book *The Ego and Id*, which I will discuss first in order to properly introduce Butler's responsive theory.

In 1917, Sigmund Freud published the essay "Mourning and Melancholia" where he defined the two titular types of grief. Here, Freud argues that these two categories are both a response to a loss, but they differ in that "In mourning it is the world which has become poor and empty; in melancholia it is the ego itself" (246). In other words, a person who suffers from mourning views their loss as something outside of them, while the melancholic subject absorbs the thing that they have lost through a process he describes as the incorporation of an "object." To Freud, melancholia is an abnormal and unhealthy response to loss, because in this process, the identity of the grief-stricken person is lost in the object they have incorporated. He contends that in order to achieve healthy and productive mourning, one must "overcome the loss of the object" rather than absorbing it as the melancholic patient does (255). However, six years later, in 1923, Freud reversed this argument in his book *The Ego and the Id* and instead stated that the incorporation of the lost object was a healthy and necessary component of mourning, rather than a melancholic trait to be avoided (29-32). Freud's later assertion closely aligns with Butler's theory of mimetic loss, but both versions of his theory received responses from Butler.

In later years, Judith Butler repeatedly responds to Freud's theory of mimetic loss, but instead of describing the phenomena of the "object," she characterizes what she calls the "Other," which functions similarly to Freud's later description of the "object." She

uses Freud's theory of psychic mimesis to explain not only the process of mourning, but also the performance of gender and sexuality; this additional element of performance works to elucidate the performative behavior of the avengers in these three revenge tragedies.

Butler agrees with Freud's theory in the sense that grief is a "transformative" process that involves an incorporation of the lost loved one and some sort of alteration to the mourner's identity ("Violence", 11). Thus, her theory of psychic mimesis more closely aligns with Freud's later arguments on the topic. Butler's theory differs from Freud's in that she believes that the mourner must first accept that their grief will change them and then submit to the grief's control and its unpredictable course ("Violence," 11). The changes that take place during the mourning process, according to Butler, are due to the absorption of the "Other" and the psychic mimesis that occurs with said absorption. The mourner's identity is transformed in that they have lost someone they loved, and thus lose a piece of themselves, and also in that they take on the "Other" in an attempt to hold onto the person who has been lost. Butler further establishes her definition of psychic mimesis in several articles, such as "Imitation and Gender Insubordination," where she describes it as: "...the self only becomes a self on the condition that it has suffered a separation...a loss which is suspended and provisionally resolved through a melancholic incorporation of some 'Other'" (727). And, in "Melancholy Gender- Refused Identification," Butler advances this argument by claiming that "if the object can no longer exist in the external world, it will then exist internally; and that internalization will also be a way to disavow that loss, to keep it at bay, to stay or postpone the recognition

and suffering of loss” (167). And, it is with this internalization that the performance of grief begins in an attempt to maintain the memory of the deceased; this performance of grief also transforms the identity of the mourner in the process as they take on the “Other” of their grief.

In my essay, I will use Butler’s theory of psychic mimesis to shed new light on the actions of the early modern avengers as seen in these plays. I will argue that the foremost ambition of these revengers, is not to act out in rage or enmity⁶, but to uphold the memory of the loved one they have lost, and in order to memorialize the deceased, they must enact revenge. With this loss and their duty to avenge the deceased’s murder, the protagonists of these plays must negotiate their new identity as the play’s revenger, and this new identity is mediated and enabled through their performance. In addition, I will argue that Freud and Butler’s theories of loss fail to acknowledge loss through violent means, and such a loss requires not only the internalization of grief, but also the externalization of revenge, which mimics the public performance of justice of the time. Thus, the early modern avenger is not only called to personally remember the lost loved one, but also to make their murderer remember their crime. In doing so, they must create a spectacle, which not demands that the audience (both within and outside of the play) experience the same grief they themselves are going through, but also extorts the murderer to be held accountable for his crime. So, by making their revenge both a performance and a spectacle, the avengers in these plays urge their peers, and more

⁶ This is not to say that the avengers in these plays do not experience these emotions, but rather that their anger is not their key motivation in enacting revenge.

importantly themselves, to remember the public injustice and personal pain of the loss of their loved one, making grief a public and communal experience.

“Which now performed, my heart is satisfied”⁷: The Performance of Revenge

Butler’s theory of mimetic loss is beneficial in understanding the metatheatricality of these particular early modern revenge tragedies and the function that the *performance* of revenge plays in establishing and enforcing the memory of the deceased within the protagonist. Through her discussions of the “Other,” Butler conceptualizes the process of grieving around a mimetic performance. The mourner becomes consumed with his loss and begins to wonder who he is without that person or thing in his life; he sees the lost loved one as a key piece of his identity, or as Butler puts it, “When we lose some of these ties by which we are constituted, we do not know who we are or what to do” (“Violence,” 12) and “...identifications are always made in response to loss of some kind, and... they involve a certain *mimetic practice* that seeks to incorporate the lost love within the very ‘identity’ of the one who remains”⁸ (“Imitation,” 726, emphasis original). And so, according to Butler, not only does the mourner have to navigate the murky waters of grief, he must also discover and define his new identity without his lost loved one. And it is here, at the crossroads of discovery, that performance becomes key in the early modern revenge tragedy.

The process of psychic mimesis begins in each of these plays with the appearance of a wraith, which represents the deceased’s first entreaty to be remembered by the ones

⁷ *The Spanish Tragedy* (4.4.129)

⁸ Here, Butler is both agreeing with and refuting “Freud’s account of melancholic incorporation” as she discusses the theory of primary mimetism.

he left behind. The ghosts⁹ act, in theory, as the introduction of the “Other” to the protagonist. In each case, the deceased provokes the protagonist to avenge their death. In an attempt to keep their memory alive, as Butler suggests is a key part of psychic mimesis, the avengers take on the plea for revenge from the ghosts and mime the violence in which their loved one was lost. With this mimetism, the avengers begin a performance which enables them to enact several things. First, with the absorption of the “Other,” they work to memorialize the deceased. Secondly--and this is where the avenger as mourner begins to delineate themselves from other mourners-- their performance allows them to accommodate the new and unfamiliar role of avenger that the ghost has called them to. Thirdly, performance allows them to act outside of themselves in order to mimic the original violence that took their loved one, as well as to assert the judicial authority they personally cannot obtain outside of their performance. Butler describes mimetism as “the process of imitating and approximating its own phantasmatic idealization of itself” (“Imitation,” 722).¹⁰ In other words, the avenger in these plays, act as they think an avenger should. Ironically, through this imitation of the avenger, they eventually become a villain themselves¹¹, and begin to embody the traits of violence that

⁹ The skull of Gloriana, serves as the “ghost” in *The Revenger’s Tragedy*. Although she does not verbally incite Vindice to revenge, her murder, represented by the presence of her skull, is the key agitator for Vindice’s vengeful actions.

¹⁰ In this particular instance, Butler is actually discussing the mimetism of heterosexuality, but her observance is apt when discussing the avenger’s mimetism of the original violence as well as their mimetism of the justice system.

¹¹ See also Foucault’s discussion of the villainization of the executioner in *Discipline and Punish*.

they sought to destroy in the first place.¹² This makes the process of psychic mimesis for the avenger more layered and complex than that of the “average” mourner.

From the very beginning of *Hamlet*, we see that revenge is a performance intended to memorialize the deceased. In fact, before he is even visited by the ghost of his father, Hamlet’s rage is incited not only by his uncle and mother’s failure to *perform* grief properly, but even more so by their failure to honor his father’s memory. For instance, when Hamlet’s mother, Gertrude, asks Hamlet to cast off his mourning clothes, Hamlet responds that the state of mourning is simply not an appearance or a performance, but it is something felt deeply within (1.2.76-86). Here, we see that Hamlet views grief not just as the outer visage of loss, but also as the inner absorption and the continual honoring of the lost one’s memory. Butler calls this process of internalization “melancholic incorporation” and she defines it as “a transferring of the status of the object from external to internal” (“Melancholy”, 167). However, Claudius and Gertrude persist in their belief that grief is merely a filial duty to be performed and quickly cast aside. This conflict of views highlights the key role that Butler’s mimetic absorption plays in the motives of the avenger. Hamlet is angered by the Danish court’s dismissal of his father’s memory, and he repeatedly acts to call the late king’s memory back to them through his own melancholic incorporation of his father’s call for vengeance.

A few scenes later, Hamlet’s need to memorialize his father is reinforced with the appearance of Hamlet Sr.’s ghost. When Hamlet vehemently takes up his father’s appeal for vengeance, the ghost replies: “I find thee apt./And duller shouldst thou be than the fat

¹² I will discuss this last idea at more depth later on in this essay.

weed/That roots itself in ease on Lethe wharf/ Wouldst thou not stir in this” (1.5.31-33). With the mention of the mythical river of Lethe, whose water caused lethargy and forgetfulness, the ghost tells Hamlet that if he fails to enact revenge, it will be as though he has forgotten his father. Furthermore, the ghost’s parting words to his son are “remember me” (1.5.91), which again emphasize the memorializing effect of the ghost’s call for vengeance. From here, Hamlet decides to put on the mask of madness, or an “antic disposition,” in order to discover the truth about his uncle and mother (1.5.170). However, he becomes so consumed with the performance that it becomes unclear to many whether or not his sanity is still intact by the end of the play-- highlighting the transformative process that Butler insists is necessitated by grief.

There has been much debate about the sincerity and authenticity of Hamlet’s madness in this play. The primary objective of this essay is not to debate this issue, but rather to discuss how his madness, which I believe to be feigned, is a demonstration of psychic mimesis-- both with the memory it emphasizes and the performance it encourages. With this scope in mind, I want to discuss the work of two scholars who contend that Hamlet is not actually mad. The first article highlights the role that memory plays in the mimetic process of loss. In his article, “Madness and Memory: Shakespeare's ‘Hamlet’ and ‘King Lear’,” Jerome Mazzaro defines madness, in the realm of *Hamlet*, as the inability to remember and to express oneself clearly, or as he puts it “madness interrupts memory’s contact with both the sensitive soul and one’s will” (100). Therefore, following this logic, because Hamlet remembers what has happened within his family and repeatedly clearly expresses and articulates this remembrance, Mazzaro concludes

that Hamlet's madness is only a performance. In contrast, in Ophelia's last encounter with the queen and her brother, she seems unable to remember the recent events which have driven her to madness to begin with, and thus her madness is arguably authentic.

I agree with Mazzaro's argument about madness and memory. In fact, I believe that the closet scene in act 3, scene 4, which is often used as evidence for Hamlet's madness, substantiates the opposite contention. In this particular scene, the ghost of Hamlet Sr. appears to Hamlet and pleads with his son to "not forget," again highlighting the importance of memory in the avenger's actions (106). However, Gertrude cannot see this apparition, and so she believes that Hamlet is "mad" and talking to himself (102). I would argue that Hamlet's vision of his father does not prove his madness, but rather his sanity. Case in point: through the lens of psychic mimesis, the ghost of Hamlet can be seen as a physical specter and representation of Hamlet's *memory* of his dead father--proof according to Mazzaro's argument that Hamlet's sanity remains intact. The fact that Gertrude cannot see the ghost, does not prove that it is not there, but rather that she has forgotten her late husband, and therefore cannot see the physical semblance of memory that his ghost represents. This coincides with my argument from an earlier paragraph that Claudius and Gertrude are not properly performing grief because they are intent on forgetting the past of Hamlet Sr. and recreating their lives and their monarchy. In other words, the repeated appearance of the ghost and his recurrent pleas to be remembered, do not show that Hamlet is insane, but rather that he refuses to forget his father.

The second work I would like to mention in the debate on Hamlet's madness is Matthew Proser's "Madness, Revenge, and the Metaphor of the Theater in Shakespeare's

Hamlet and Pirandello's *Henry IV*," which argues that "Hamlet's process through the play is a slow, hazardous movement away from his old, lost roles [son, heir to the throne, etc.], through a number of experimental ones incited by the anguished demand that he act the 'revenger'..." (340). According to Proser, Hamlet performs madness in an attempt to negotiate a new identity (both the new identity without his father as well as the new imposed identity of avenger, which Proser argues does not fit Hamlet's natural disposition) while still enacting the revenge his father desires. That is, his performance of madness also allows him to also perform revenge. Furthermore, Proser argues that Hamlet's feigned madness acts as a coping mechanism for Hamlet to work through his grief (340). While Mazzaro's essay works to highlight the key role of memory in the revenger's process of mimetic loss, Proser's article elucidates the part that performance plays in psychic mimesis. In other words, because Hamlet is trying to memorialize his father through the enactment of revenge, he must perform in ways that he believes will enable him to do this task, which is outside of his realm of usual actions.

Vindice, like Hamlet, uses personas outside of himself to perform vengeance. The play begins with the protagonist speaking to the skull (notably reminiscent of Hamlet's scene with the skull of Yorick) of his slain lover who was poisoned by the duke (again, very similar to Claudius's use of poison in *Hamlet*). The presence of this skull acts as the spectral beacon in this play that cries out to the living and begs for the funeral rites of remembrance. Through his soliloquy, the audience quickly learns that Vindice intends to exact revenge on the duke for this murder. And, the opportunity to do so immediately presents itself when Hippolito, Vindice's brother, tells him of his meeting with the duke's

son who solicits Hippolito for a pandar of sorts; this solicitation not only affords Vindice the opportunity to avenge his lover's murder, but also encourages and enables the beginnings of his performance, thus catapulting Vindice into the process of psychic mimesis. However, the plot shifts gears rapidly, and we learn that Vindice has suffered an even more recent loss with the death of his father. This recent loss has ignited a new identity crisis that Vindice describes thus: "For since my worthy father's funeral,/My life's unnatural to me..." (1.1.118-119). And so, in order to assuage this loss of identity, as well as to exact revenge for both his lover's and his father's memory, he decides to "quickly turn into another" (1.1.133). Here, like in *Hamlet*, we see the process of psychic mimesis and the need for performance ignited with protagonist's desire for revenge as well as his need to remember his father.

Throughout *The Revenger's Tragedy*, disguise is a major motif-- Vindice disguises himself as Piato to trick Lussurioso, he disguises the skull of his former lover to trick the Duke, and he disguises the corpse of the Duke to trick Lussurioso. In fact, Vindice suggests that every man wears a mask and reveals his true self to few (1.3.67-69). And later on, Supervacuo remarks that "'Tis murder's best face when a vizard's on!" (5.1.179). These statements from the play highlight the freedom and agency that disguise and performance give the characters to act outside of their normal bounds-- namely with murder, violence and revenge. In addition, the play's focus on disguise illustrates the identity crisis that Butler depicts as a response to loss: "That 'Other' installed in the self thus establishes the permanent incapacity of that itself to achieve self-identity; it is as if we were always already disrupted by that Other, the disruption of the Other at the heart of

the self is the very condition of the self's possibility" ("Imitation", 727). In other words, in order for Vindice to enact revenge, for himself and for Lussurioso, he must put aside his own identity and absorb the "Other" of his call to revenge; and, his repeated use of disguise, which enables him to perform revenge, actually begins to constitute his identity (as the etymology of his name would suggest). So, as Butler suggests with her theory, Vindice's melancholic incorporation, and the nefarious deeds it incites, actually works to undo and incinerate his former identity, which has been "disrupted by that Other" of revenge and loss.

While Vindice and Hamlet arguably lose themselves in their performances, Hieronimo purposefully uses performance to his advantage and maintains control of his identity throughout the play. In order to discuss Hieronimo's performance in *The Spanish Tragedy*, it is critical to look at the play-within-the-play in act 4, scene 4. Here, Hieronimo performs revenge in the play he has created, while simultaneously achieving revenge in reality. Through this play-within-the-play, Hieronimo seeks to obtain retribution through artwork, a mode that allows him to carry out actions that would not usually be within his bounds of behavior (Hamilton 211). The plot of the play begins as story of a love triangle between Soliman, Perseda, and Erasto. The character of Soliman is driven by his unrequited love for Perseda to kill Erasto (just as Balthazar is driven to kill Bel-Imperia's love, Horatio). Again, both in the actual play and in the play-within-the-play, we see the relevance of Butler's argument that "loss... is... provisionally resolved through a melancholic incorporation of some 'Other'" ("Imitation" 747). In other words, Hieronimo's enactment of revenge and his performance of the avenger (both

in his play and in his reality) work to rectify the wrongs done to his son. In the climactic end of the tragedy, Hieronimo acts as if he is killing the people who have wronged him while literally killing them. Thus, the plot device of the play-within-the-play works to add an extra layer of mimetism to Hieronimo's act of retribution by both marking the act as a performance and making his revenge a memorial.

At the conclusion of the play-within-the play, Hieronimo explains his reasoning for the murders he has just committed by saying:

And here behold this *bloody handkercher*,
Which at Horatio's death I weeping dipped
Within the bloody river of his bleeding wounds:
...And never hath it left my bloody heart,
Soliciting *remembrance* of my vow...
Which now *performed*, my heart is satisfied.
And to this end the bashaw I became
That might revenge me on Lorenzo's life,
Who therefore was appointed to the part,
And was to *represent* the knight of Rhodes,
That I might kill him more conveniently...
And princes, now behold Hieronimo,
Author and *actor* in this tragedy. (4.4.122-147, emphasis added)

In this particular monologue, Hieronimo brings to light several key factors about his performance of revenge. First, he calls attention to the handkerchief covered with his son's blood. This piece represents a materialization of both Hieronimo's grief and the purpose for his performance of revenge. In other words, the handkerchief, is arguably a tangible token of Butler's "Other," especially since Hieronimo comments that this piece "solicit[ed] remembrance," which is the main goal of psychic mimesis. While the play, and especially Hieronimo's display of his son's corpse, makes his memorial a spectacle

(which I will discuss later), the bloody handkerchief represents something more personal - something that he has carried next to his heart, literally, and within his heart, metaphorically. Moreover, diction such as *performance* and *representation* in Hieronimo's monologue emphasize his awareness of the metatheatricity of his revenge as well as the quintessence of its performance, which enables him to embody his role as the avenger in the first place. Finally, as he names himself "author and actor in this tragedy," Hamilton argues that Hieronimo's explanation of his performance, "is his way of telling them that his play has presented them with a lively image of his own grief, which in turn is a product of his acquaintance with a cruel universe" (216). Furthermore, with this statement, Hieronimo acknowledges the agency that his performance has given him in his quest to right the wrongs done to his son. Essentially, this monologue serves to memorialize his son's wrongful death; Hieronimo forces himself and others to remember Horatio not only through the play he creates, but more importantly, through his explanation of his actions at the end of the play. While Hieronimo is the "author [,] actor," and active aggressor of his revenge, Hamlet is a passive and reluctant participant. Perhaps, because Hieronimo is the father avenging his son, while Hamlet is the son avenging his father, Hieronimo is the more dominant avenger of the two. Regardless of the reasons, each tragedy's play-within-the-play serves to highlight their roles as avengers.

Hamlet, like the other two plays, also uses the feature of the play-within-the-play. However, Hamlet does not use this performance to exact revenge, but rather to decide whether he should even seek vengeance in the first place. Hamlet, unlike Vindice and

Hieronimo, is reluctant to enact revenge, and the fact that he is a spectator, rather than a participant, in the play-within-the-play harkens to Hamlet's unique vacillation with his role as the play's avenger. Thus, the play-within-the-play functions differently here from the other two revenge tragedies because Hamlet functions differently as a revenger. In *Hamlet*, the play-within-the-play shows its mimetic nature in the sense that it depicts the "original sin" that first incites Hamlet to revenge-- the murder of his father. Through the use of the play-within-the-play, aptly named *The Mousetrap*, Hamlet tests the truth of his father's ghost's accusation. Although, the play-within-the-play leaves him with little doubt of Claudius' guilt, Hamlet still has some performances of his own to display before he carries out his revenge. Instead of revenge, the performance that consumes Hamlet throughout the majority of the play is his pretense of madness, which he uses as an instrument leading up to his final act of revenge. While Hieronimo's performance imitates his own assertiveness as an avenger, and vice versa, Hamlet's performance of madness mirrors his incapacity to act and decide.

Ultimately, performance is key to the act of mourning as well as to enacting revenge in these three revenge tragedies, because psychic mimesis requires the memory of the lost person or object to live on through the mimetic process (Butler "Melancholy," 167). That is to say that, in these revenge tragedies, performances of revenge make melancholic incorporation possible and vice versa. Finally, while Butler's theory of psychic mimesis helps to explain the avengers' internalization of grief through their performance, it does not include the externalization of their grief through the spectacle they create-- and this externalization of grief is also essential to the avenger's role.

“Be witnesses of a strange spectacle”¹³: The Spectacle of Justice

The denial of public justice is essential to revenge tragedy because it forces the avengers to take on the role of the executioner and to make their grief a public affair with this role. While their performance as an avenger is about ensuring their personal, intimate memory of one they have lost, their role as the executioner-- and the spectacle it elicits-- is about guaranteeing others, especially their loved one's murderer, remember as well. If the government had not failed to prosecute the murderer to begin with, the plays' avengers would not need to seek revenge-- thus keeping their grief internalized. However, because they must memorialize their loved one through revenge and murder, their grief must ultimately be externalized.

During the Renaissance, and arguably still to this day, public justice thrives off of spectacle. So, in many ways, public justice and revenge tragedies are akin in their theatricality (Kerrigan 25-29). The power of justice lies in the creation of the spectacle made out of the punishment doled out. Crowds gathered to see criminals beheaded-- criminals who literally knelt to the authority of the monarch and to the sword representing its ironclad sovereignty. The government's creation of this tableau of punishment instilled in the minds of its populace the relentless dominion of the crown. In the same way, the avengers of early modern revenge tragedies create a spectacle out of their revenge in order to remind the audience, and most importantly, the criminal, of the injustices done to their loved one. James Condon explains this performativity as “the revenger's turn to the theatrical...playing upon cultural understandings of dramatic frame

¹³ *The Revenger's Tragedy*, (5.1. 84)

and the passive role of audience spectatorship, the uniquely performative nature of the protagonist's final gambit allows him to momentarily fix his prey in place and appropriate his enemy's tyrannical control of space to seize the opportunity for vengeance" (64). In other words, the creation of a spectacle enables the avenger not only to exact revenge but also to take the audience captive by captivating them and forcing the criminal to acknowledge and remember his crimes-- making the crimes done in private public.

The avengers of *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Hamlet*, and *The Revenger's Tragedy* seek to have the same demonstration of justice and authority carried out for their lost loved ones. However, when justice is denied them, they attempt to mimic this spectacle in their enactment of private revenge. Revenge tragedies of the day served to highlight this contemporary conflict of public justice versus private revenge. During this time, execution was considered a public spectacle, and it attracted crowds who were drawn to the intrigue of the blood and punishment (Maus xvi-xvii). So, naturally, audiences were also enticed when this same spectacle was presented in revenge tragedies. However, revenge tragedies took this concept of public justice and execution and tore away the facade of impartiality that it presents.

The Revenger's Tragedy is hyper-aware of the importance of spectacle and is arguably a commentary on the genre of revenge tragedies and their signature metatheatricality. In her article "The Revenger's Tragedy: A Play on the Revenge Play," Leslie Sanders makes this same argument by contending that, "...the play emerges as both a black parody of that highly popular form of early modern entertainment, the revenge

play itself, and as a profound examination of the implications of the genre's immense popularity. *The Revenger's Tragedy* both burlesques the genre and examines its attraction" (25). Vindice's obsession with vision and spectacle throughout the play illustrates the play's awareness of the necessity of theatricality in revenge tragedies. Furthermore, these same obsessions, work to emphasize the avenger's requirement of spectatorship in order to memorialize the lost. While Vindice's performance of revenge ensures his own personal memories of the deceased, it is his creation of the spectacle that sets revenge tragedies and the avenger apart from the mourners of Freud and Butler's theories. Butler argues that psychic mimesis, and more specifically what she calls melancholic incorporation, consists of "a transferring of the status of the object from external to internal" ("Melancholy," 167). However, the early modern avenger takes this internalization of grief and makes it external again. In other words, my performance of revenge ensures that I personally remember the one I have lost, but the spectacle I create with that revenge ensures that you, the murderer, also remember them as well. I argue that this, the need to memorialize, is key to revenge--this is what sets vengeance apart from grief and takes Butler's theory a step further. That is to say that Butler's theory only works to explain the grief of someone lost by natural causes, and not someone lost violently and at the hands of another. When someone is murdered in early modern revenge tragedies, it mandates that grief not only be internalized by the avenger, but also externalized upon the murderer and the audience-- thus taking Butler's theory a step further. This additional step is key to my argument about the motives of early modern avengers, as well as my engagement with Butler's theory in this essay. The avenger's

need to externalize their grief reflects their desire to memorialize their lost loved one through murder, and shows their motivations for revenge to be largely driven by grief, much more so than malice.

In *The Revenger's Tragedy*, we see the motif of vision and spectacle repeatedly. For example, when Vindice and Hippolito trick the Duke with the skull of Gloriana (3.5), Vindice repeatedly demands that the Duke look at the skull to see and comprehend the evidence of the Duke's own murderous past. Vindice feels the need to make his revenge a spectacle in order to force his enemy to remember what he has done; he cannot simply poison the Duke, he must then make him stare into the source of his poison and the reason for Vindice's revenge. Furthermore, as the Duke is dying, Vindice further tortures him with the spectacle of the Duke's wife and bastard son participating in an illicit relationship. At this moment, the Duke begs for relief: "Oh kill me not with that sight," (3.5.186); his plea again serves to establish the importance in this play not only of enacting revenge but also forcing victims to become an audience to their own demise. Vindice recognizes the significance of this as he states that he intends to "kill his [the Duke's] eyes/ before we kill the rest of him" (3.5.23-24). With this statement, Vindice again emphasizes the significance and essentialness of the externalization of grief in the avenger's mimetic process.

Finally, at the end of the play, Vindice's last act of revenge is performed through a masque. In fact, Vindice is so obsessed with the idea of making his revenge a spectacle that he cannot let another get the credit for his performance, and he confesses to his crimes as soon as another man is charged with them. Vindice realizes that if someone else

is charged with the murders he committed, the true reason for these crimes will not be made public. So, Vindice sacrifices his freedom and his life in order to ensure that people know what these murderous men have done. If Vindice's revenge is not acknowledged for the spectacle that it is, people will not know why he did it and for whom. If Vindice does not confess, the memories of the deceased die with the men who murdered them. Lastly, Vindice's obsession with spectacle and vision highlights this common motif throughout other contemporary revenge tragedies. *The Revenger's Tragedy* serves to remind us that when revenge becomes a spectacle, it only holds power if the act has an audience to bear witness and if the criminal is forced to remember his crime. Finally, it enforces the idea that the avenger's grieving process is not complete until he externalizes his mourning through his acts of revenge and forces others to grieve, or at least to remember, with him.

Like Vindice, Hieronimo understands the importance of spectacle in the process of exacting revenge. In order to achieve the public justice denied him, and to ensure that the memory of his son lives on, Hieronimo mimes the spectacle of public execution with his creation of the play-within-a-play. Instead of silently and secretly avenging his son's death, he turns it into a spectacle, forcing the government to view him carrying out the law they refused to enforce, while also compelling them to remember the murder of his son. First, he performs a play, through which he allows himself to take on the role of executioner-- a role he plays as an officer of the law, but has been unable to perform for his own son's murder. At the end of his play and his performance, the spectacle has only really just begun as he reveals his son's corpse and the reality of his "performed"

murders. In a monologue, Hieronimo repeatedly calls attention to his son's dead body lying on the stage, and by doing so, he subverts the secrecy of the original crimes done by "night, the coverer of accursed crimes" (4.4.101). Moreover, he makes a spectacle of their private crime by speaking aloud to his audience the cruelty done to his son "with pitchy silence" and "in black dark night" (4.4.102-107). By bringing to light the crimes carried out in the darkness of night and secrecy, he is highlighting the injustice done to his son through the failure of the government, whose officials now sit in his audience. Furthermore, by locking his audience in, he forces them to partake in the spectacle he has created, again establishing his authority and ensuring that they remember his son. Here, we see that Hieronimo, like Vindice, feels compelled to accept responsibility for their crimes in order to memorialize their loved ones by accusing and punishing their murderers. Later, when they break down the doors and seize Hieronimo, they beg for an explanation (although he has already given them one), but he refuses to speak after that point. His silence may seem counterintuitive coming off of the winds of a long and detailed monologue; however, his refusal to speak further is his last assertion of his authority. It is also his last mimetic act-- for, as he used the play to mime the sovereignty of the government, he also uses his silence to mimic their failure to achieve justice for his son. Ultimately, it is the external acts of the murder and the external failure of the justice system that push the avenger to take their internal grief and make it external again, to take his personal loss and make others feel it as well.

Similarly in *Hamlet*, the titular character experiences the same frustration with the ineffective legal avenues presented to him in his pursuit of justice. In the first act of the

play, Hamlet is visited by the ghost of his father, the former king of Denmark, who urges his son to avenge his murder. However, this call to duty is complicated because it splits Hamlet's loyalty in several ways: Hamlet must decide whether to show his allegiance to his father and the former king or to the new king of Denmark, his uncle, Claudius. Here, familial ties and political duty clash in more than one way. This conflict is highlighted through the ghost's contradicting word choices. For example, the ghost of Hamlet appeals to his son through the personal and private claim of familial duty by saying things such as "If thou didst ever thy dear father love" (1.5.23) and referring to his murderers as "thy uncle", "[my] brother," and "thy mother." However, he also calls to Hamlet's patriotism by painting his murder not only as a personal betrayal but also as an act of treason by calling Gertrude "Queen" and repeatedly referring to the state of Denmark. So here, we see that Hamlet, both the ghost and the son, are torn by their desire for private revenge and their need for public justice; this also highlights the struggle of the grieving avengers who struggles internally with external factors. This scenario of revenge is further complicated by the fact that the outlet through which Hamlet would normally seek justice, the king, is also the source of the conflict to begin with. Therefore, Hamlet's only choice to do right by his father and by his country is to handle the matter personally. However, just as Hamlet faces a government that fails to act on his behalf, Hamlet also struggles with action, and in this way, he mimics the authority, or the lack of authority, present in Denmark at the moment. With his reluctance, he deviates from Hieronimo and Vindice, who never hesitate to exact revenge, and in fact, relish the opportunity. Hamlet's actions, or rather procrastination of action, is arguably mitigated through fear,

or as Butler puts it, “When grieving is something to be feared, our fears can give rise to the impulse to resolve it quickly, to banish it in the name of an action invested with the power to restore the loss or return the world to a former order, or to reinvigorate a fantasy that the world formerly was orderly” (“Violence,” 18). Thus, both Hamlet’s internal/emotional existence and his external/political world are in turmoil, and in order to “return the world to a former order,” he must enact revenge to assuage his grief and aright both his private and public worlds.

Throughout the play, Hamlet is a hesitant revenger. For instance, when given the perfect opportunity to kill Claudius in his bedroom, Hamlet decides to wait. He argues that killing Claudius while he is at his prayers would not be severe enough. Here, Hamlet’s denial of revenge reflects the avenger’s need to make a spectacle out of their vengeance. If he had killed Claudius in private, no one would have known of Claudius’ crimes. Finally, at the end of the play, when Hamlet is able to enact justice for his father’s murder, he is not the one who actually creates the spectacle, and this calls into question Hamlet’s authority as an avenger. The fencing duel that allows him to kill Claudius, as well as to create a spectacle, was all Claudius’s idea. Just as Hamlet remains the spectator in the play-within-the-play, he is passive until the very last act of the play. However, we begin to become aware of his newfound willingness to create violence at the outset of the final scene, when Hamlet informs Horatio that he has arranged for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to be killed. Just as Hamlet uses the duel incited by Claudius to exact his revenge, he also uses the letter written by Claudius to kill the men who were meant to have him killed. Finally, Hamlet has begun to subvert the power used

against his life to become proactive and take the lives of others. Proser argues that “Hamlet addresses reality by living through a structure of false identities, including his own ‘antic one,’ and finally lighting on the image that has his own name” (341). In other words, it is not until Hamlet fully incorporates the quest of his father, which is also a melancholic incorporation of his father’s authority, that he is able and/or willing to perform revenge.

Ultimately, the denial of public justice in these revenge plays forces the avengers to act out in private revenge instead. And, in order to feel as though they have achieved justice for their lost loved ones, they mimic the spectacle that public justice makes of punishment-- the power of this punishment lies in its visibility and its call for an audience to see the consequences of breaking the law. Through their miming of the judicial system’s mode of justice, they make revenge a spectacle-- something that must be seen by an audience to obtain power and equity for the avenger. Or as Foucault describes it, “...public execution and torture must be spectacular, it must be seen by all almost as its triumph. The very excess of the violence employed is one of the elements of its glory: the fact that the guilty man should moan and cry out under the blows is not a shameful side-effect, it is the very ceremonial of justice being expressed in all its force” (34). Finally, and most importantly, the creation of a spectacle is essential to the avenger’s mourning process as they take the internalization of mourning and make it external again, and they take their personal grief and make it felt publicly.

Conclusion

In a play that is consumed with performance and spectacle, it becomes difficult to distinguish the artists from their artwork, the revengers from their revenge. Butler and Freud's theories of psychic mimetism work to elucidate the role of the avengers in *Hamlet*, *The Spanish Tragedy*, and *The Revenger's Tragedy*. The theory of psychic mimesis is, at its core, about the preservation of memory and the construction of new identity after a loss. However, Butler and Freud's theories fail to acknowledge the grieving process for the loss of someone through violent means. My work offers a new perspective both for the psychoanalytic theory of psychic mimesis as well as for the literary analysis of early modern revenge tragedies in two ways: first, I depict early modern avengers as mourners rather than murderers, thus adding complexity to their psychological motivations for revenge; secondly, I incorporate an additional step to Butler and Freud's theories through the externalization of internal grief, which is essential to the avenger's quest. Death through murder requires those left behind, not only to internalize the memory of the victim, but also to externalize the memory of the crime done. In order for these memories to be validated, others must see and acknowledge the revenge the avengers are enacting in the name of their lost loved one. Unfortunately, once the avengers complete their cycle of revenge, they have become what they originally sought to destroy-- a murderer.

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SHUT YOUR TRAP:
HUNTING METAPHORS AND VERBAL VIOLENCE IN *TWELFTH NIGHT*

“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” a common adage that your mother or elementary school teacher may have shared with you at some point in your adolescence. They likely meant this as encouragement after a particularly harsh name-calling session on the playground. However, when this well-meaning adult told you this, they were not telling you the truth; words do hurt, and verbal abuse can leave scars that linger far longer than physical injuries. In *Twelfth Night*, characters like Maria and Sir Toby understand the power of verbal violence, and they utilize it to inflict pain on others. Through their use of animal and hunting metaphors in the play, these characters position themselves as predators and their victims as prey. These juxtapositions along with their sporty diction make their cruel behavior seem comical, because they are ridiculing characters who deserve it, or at least that is what the audience is meant to think. Furthermore, Shakespeare uses these metaphors to highlight the idiocy and contradiction of social expectations of his time, where rules of engagement are not consistent.

In both Classical and Renaissance literature, hunting was commonly used as a metaphor for love as well as for the “chase” that ensues in romantic relationships; the hunt could also be understood, during these periods, as an illustration of both the subversion and the reinforcement of traditional class and gender roles in the game of love

(Stephen 731-733). For example, the myth of Venus and Adonis (which I will discuss more in depth shortly), presented a goddess pursuing a mere mortal-- thus overturning both gender and status norms. Furthermore, at the end of the myth, Adonis embarks on a hunt for boar, but ends up the victim of his prey and is killed-- subverting the roles of predator and prey. Similarly, in the story of Actaeon and Artemis, Actaeon is punished for gazing at Artemis' naked body-- a vision forbidden to him, a mere mortal. As punishment, Actaeon is quite literally turned into prey, as Artemis transforms him into a hart, who is then attacked by his own hunting dogs. Both of these myths, as well as the tradition surrounding them, work to illustrate the subversion of social expectations, as well as the ensuing and unavoidable punishment that follows said subversion.

During the early modern period, animals were not posed as the opposite of humans, with a simple binary positioning the two against one another, as they often are today (Shannon 475). In fact, animals were often thought to represent various human characteristics and employed in literature to illustrate common tropes well known to the early modern audience (Raber 289). For example, the presence of an ass could represent stubbornness, and ravens could foreshadow impending death. All of these symbolic meanings attached to animals would have been widely acknowledged by an early modern audience, who were familiar with classical tales involving animals and the hunt as well as Medieval bestiaries, which explained in depth the symbolic and literary meanings of numerous animals. So, when Shakespeare uses animals to depict characters, he is not dehumanizing them, as such a binary did not exist at this time; but, rather, he is displaying the character's similar personality to said animal.

In Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, hunting references, as well as references to the animals commonly associated with the sport, are made repeatedly. I will argue that the continual appearance of the hunting metaphors in *Twelfth Night* enables Maria and her friends-- the predators-- to behave cruelly toward Malvolio and Sir Andrew Aguecheek-- the prey-- because of their class-jumping ambitions, something that the tradition of the hunt facilitates, but ultimately prohibits. Because the tradition of the hunt also allows the upheaval of traditional gender roles, characters such as Maria are allowed to jump social classes and to aggressively pursue men (just as Venus unabashedly pursues Adonis). Furthermore, these metaphors create a paradox in the play, when it comes to the social expectations in the pursuit of love, where some characters are rewarded for their lofty ambitions while others are punished.

Through their use of verbal violence, the predators of the play incite pain on their prey. In *Shakespeare and the Hunt*, Edward Berry argues that "hunting was thus not merely a physical but a verbal sport, and one in which the mastery of words implied both power over nature, and society" (11). This can be seen especially through Maria's cutting vocabulary and the wounds she creates with her sharp words, both written and spoken. Furthermore, the social implications implicit in the culture of the hunt were well known to Shakespeare, a man who unabashedly climbed the social ladders, while also presenting his plays before the royal court (Berry 11). So, Shakespeare's frequent use of the hunting trope is arguably his own conscious, and often snarky, commentary on the absurdity of the complex and contradictory rules of social status, as represented by the elaborate protocol of the hunt. Or as Berry contends, "...hunting served as a considerable source of

social tension, involving in various ways the complex and sometimes conflicting hierarchies of wealth, rank, and ownership of land” (10).

The symbolic tradition of the hunt stems back as far as the myth of Venus and Adonis, a story well known to Renaissance playwrights and readers alike (Allen 301-302). In this myth, roles are reversed, as Venus is “the hunter instead of the hunted and the reluctant Adonis the loved instead of the loving” (Allen 302). In Shakespeare’s version of the myth, he repeatedly uses predatory animals as well as animals of prey to illustrate the upheaval of gender roles, with Venus as the aggressor, or the predator, and Adonis, as her prey. For example, as Venus first encounters and kisses Adonis, her sexual advances are described as thus: “Even as an empty eagle, sharp by fast, tires with her beak on feathers, flesh and bone, shaking her wings, devouring all in haste, till either gorge be stuff’d or prey be gone; Even so she kissed his brow...” and the metaphor continues: “Forced to content, but never to obey, panting he lies and breatheth in her face; she feedeth on the steam as on a prey... Look, how a bird lies tangled in a net, so fasten’d in her arms Adonis lies” (55-68). As Venus advances on Adonis, her aggressive seduction is depicted by Shakespeare as an eagle attacking and devouring its prey, while Adonis, her victim, lies “panting” like a “bird lies tangled in a net.” These descriptors paint Adonis, a strapping young youth, as powerless to Venus’s, a woman, advances-- thus subverting the traditional gender roles of male dominance and female submission. In *Twelfth Night*, Maria will be depicted in the same way as Venus, a predator who pursues her male quarry.

And later in the poem, we see a literal instance of hunting as Adonis stalks a boar, but ultimately becomes the boar's prey, and is even castrated in the process. This depiction of an actual hunting scene serves two purposes in the poem: first, it reiterates the idea of the reversal of predator and prey, where the hunter actually becomes the hunted; secondly, it associates the hunt with its implied sexual connotation and punishes Adonis's romantic reluctance with impotence. Thus, with his depiction of Venus and Adonis as predator and prey, Shakespeare utilizes the trope of social upheaval and role reversal implied with the use of hunting metaphors in literature-- a tool he will use again in *Twelfth Night*.

The tradition of the hunt also "served as a potent ritual that reinforced visibly and symbolically the natural and social hierarchies" where members of the aristocracy would assert their authority through the ritualistic slaughter of their quarry (Stephen 731). Catherine Bates argues that the contemporary early modern work *Noble Arte of Venerie* by George Gascoigne "speaks to hunting as the acme of aristocratic privilege and masculine performance" and that Gascoigne depicts the trope of the chase as "ceremonial spectacle whose arcane rituals and specialized vocabulary had, from medieval times, insured that hunting remained the exclusive preserve of the social elite" (403-404). Thus, in the mind of Renaissance audiences, the hunt illustrated a paradox: one in which social upheaval was temporarily permitted, yet eventually punished. An example of this can be found in Ben Jonson's *Volpone, or the Fox*, a work contemporaneous to Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*.

In *Volpone, or the Fox* each of the main characters' names stands for an animal. The protagonist of the play, Volpone, is represented by the fox, an animal fitting for his sly and cunning trickery. Volpone is a wealthy man with no heirs to his fortune. So, he is preyed upon by money-hungry citizens who hope to fall in his good graces and be written into his will. Each of these predators is depicted as birds: Voltore, as a vulture; Corbaccio, as a raven; and Corvino, as a carrion crow. Interestingly enough, each of the birds chosen, are birds that do not kill prey themselves, but rather rely on others in order to get their food-- just as these characters do not want to work for wealth, but hope to receive Volpone's instead. (Also, it is interesting to note that carrion crows are known for following foxes in hopes of stealing their kills-- just as Corvino hangs around Volpone, wanting his leftovers.) Furthermore, Mosca, Volpone's servant and compatriot in his trickery, is named after a parasitic fly. Here, we again see the use of animals to represent the character's leech-like behavior toward the wealthy Volpone.

Throughout the play, Volpone plays tricks on these blood-sucking leeches in order to punish them for their avarice as well as their shameless and obsequious attempts at social climbing. In fact, Volpone's descriptions of his greedy suitors as scavenger birds permits and even excuses his cruel behavior towards them. For example, when Volpone remarks, "Vulture, kite, raven, and gorcrow, all my birds of prey that think me turning carcass" (1.2.88-90), it seems as though his pursuers are the despicable ones, and not himself, despite his unkind schemes towards them. That is to say, by depicting himself as the prey of these scavengers, a carcass, he makes himself the victim and not the aggressor. However, the fact that Volpone is represented by a fox, another predatory

animal, and one which is higher on the predatory food chain than scavenger birds, makes his claim to victimhood problematic.

Just as Shakespeare does in *Twelfth Night*, Jonson utilizes the language of hunting and prey, in *Volpone, or the Fox*, to illustrate the trope of social upheaval and class jumping. However, he differs from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* in that he has the prankster and his victims both illustrated as predators of sorts, rather than using the predator/prey binary. While Malvolio and Sir Andrew aspire to climb socially through a romantic match with Olivia, Volpone's pursuers shamelessly seek out Volpone for his wealth and the pleasures such wealth could afford them. These scavenger birds are circling around Volpone, waiting for his death so they can take over his possessions-- a desire more despicable than simply hoping to marry up (a practice commonly considered acceptable for women of this time). The lack of the predator/prey binary in the play makes all of the characters unsympathetic, whereas we can feel sorry for Malvolio and Sir Andrew in *Twelfth Night* (even as we laugh at them). So, if all of the characters in *Volpone, or the Fox* are predators, then they are also all arguably prey. Thus, making them all open to ridicule and laughter from the audience and bringing to the forefront the comedic reality of contemporary social expectations.

In the end, Volpone's tricks catch up with him and he is punished for his misdeeds, unlike Maria, who leaves *Twelfth Night* unscathed. This inequity of social justice can be attributed to several factors. First, Volpone is a man and Maria is a woman. Therefore, Maria's social climbing is not a punishable offense, but rather one laudable for woman of her time. Secondly, Maria is of a lower social class than Volpone. That is to

say, uncivilized behavior can only be expected of someone of her stature, while someone like Volpone, “by blood and rank a gentleman” (5.12.117), is meant to set the example and display nobler qualities to his inferiors. So, while Volpone and Maria both act cruelly towards those attempting to climb the social ladder, only Volpone’s actions are socially reprehensible, thus explaining his punishment and the lack thereof for Maria. However, even in his punishment, Volpone’s higher social status affords him a less severe punishment than his inferiors, whom he has shamelessly tricked. Ultimately, this play leads to the question of who is the predator and who is the prey and highlights the social paradox the trope of the hunt reflects.

This same social conundrum, where the hunt both allows and disables social climbing, can be seen in Shakespeare’s *Twelfth Night* where Maria’s exploitation of the hunting trope allows her to marry above her status, while simultaneously permitting her to debase Malvolio and Sir Andrew for attempting to do the exact same thing. Or, as Allison Hobgood describes it in “Notorious Abuses in *Twelfth Night*”:

... Malvolio’s shame... is driven not entirely by his own baseness but by the weakness, fear, and shame of other characters in the drama... While the play certainly establishes motivation for this trio of pranksters [Maria, Sir Toby, and Fabian] to disgrace Malvolio, their actions are blatantly hypocritical and serve as a method of stigmatizing him as something they are not. The vindictive tricks they play work to exclude and separate Malvolio from others in the drama, making it appear as if he is the only one who dreams of an elevation in status and prestige. (147)

Unlike in *Volpone, or the Fox*, the main predator, Maria, seeks to social climb and to punish others for doing the same, whereas Volpone, a member of nobility, wants to punish those who would replace him socially after his death. So, as Hobgood argues,

Maria wants to draw attention to others in order to draw attention away from herself; and, Volpone wants to draw attention to others while simultaneously drawing attention to himself, seeking praise for his cunning, and sympathy for his victimhood. Either way, both plays demonstrate the ridiculousness and hypocrisy of the rules of social mobility.

Twelfth Night begins with an immediate reference to hunting when Orsino calls himself a hart and then likens his desires for Olivia to hounds chasing him (1.1.17-22). Orsino's metaphor here does two things. First, Orsino purposely draws on the double meaning of hart/heart in his speech, and in doing so, recalls to the audience's mind the traditional likeness drawn between hunting and love, as well as the likeness between Orsino and both Actaeon and Adonis, two hunters who fall victim to animals (Allen 303).

Secondly, Orsino uses this metaphor to place himself as the prey, rather than the predator, thus subverting the traditional gender roles of the man as the pursuer in romantic liaisons-- or, in other words, the hunter becomes the hunted (Stephen 731-732). This idea of love turning men into prey continues throughout the play as both Sir Andrew Aguecheek and Malvolio also fall victim to their attraction for Olivia. However, even though Orsino claims to be Olivia's prey in the opening lines, it is Aguecheek and Malvolio who will be verbally assaulted throughout the play for their interest in Olivia. The reason these two are targeted for Maria and Sir Toby's cruelty, and not Duke Orsino, is because they seek to engage in a romantic relationship with someone outside of their class, while Orsino, a duke, is socially justified in his interest in Olivia. Orsino's elevated social standing can be seen in his reference to himself as a hart, a deer who was considered superior and nobler than all other classes of deer (Berry 17). Ultimately, the

predator's choice of prey in this play is motivated by their desire to ridicule those who disrupt their perception of the the natural order of things; furthermore, their use of hunting and animal metaphors enables the aforementioned cruel behavior as well as its contradictory nature, which reflects the paradox created by social expectations where some are allowed to social climb and others are not.

The Prey

Following the play's first reference to hunting and animals, *Twelfth Night* goes on to include a menagerie of creatures. However, the most frequent appearances are made by animals commonly associated with hunting: birds (with 34 references) and dogs (with 11 references). It is salient that these species of animals are mentioned the most, because they are illustrated in the play as both predators and prey, again reiterating the cycle of subversion of social roles in *Twelfth Night*. More specifically, birds such as falcons and hawks are mentioned in the play as predators (2.3.57, 3.1.62), while there are also numerous mentionings of birds being killed and eaten (1.2.34-36, 1.5.88-89, 1.5.117). Similarly, dogs are painted as both the aggressor, chasing after prey, and as the aggressed upon, such as when Sir Andrew says he would "beat him [Malvolio] like a dog" (2.3.137). This contradictory representation of the prey/predator animals serves to illustrate the repeated flip-flopping between social roles-- with the servant class pursuing nobility and nobility pursuing the servant class-- that creates the chaotic, hypocritical, and often comical, atmosphere in the play. Furthermore, the play acts as a reflection of these same social expectations in actual early modern society, and highlights the inanity of such traditions by turning them into comical scenarios for an audience to enjoy.

The use of animal descriptors in *Twelfth Night* emphasizes the upheaval of class norms, particularly with Malvolio's aspirations to marry above his lot. On multiple occasions, Malvolio is referred to as an ass, an animal described in medieval bestiaries¹⁴ as one slow, dumb, and obstinate to commands. This would fit Maria and Sir Toby's perceptions of Malvolio, a man whom they see as easily tricked (i.e. slow and dumb) as well as one who refuses to follow the social etiquette of the time, thereby disobeying commands as an ass would. To illustrate, Maria calls Malvolio "an affectioned ass that cons state without book and utters it by great swathes" (2.3.143-144). Here, by naming him an ass, Maria labels Malvolio as a lowly beast of burden, a member of the working class, and even worse, one who pretends to be of a higher rank than he is-- like a donkey pretending to be a horse. A few lines later, Sir Andrew remarks that "your [Maria's] horse now would make him an ass" (2.3.164). The depiction of Maria as an horse, further establishes her position as a predator since horses were known for their fierceness on the battlefield; whereas, donkeys were relegated to performing menial, laborious tasks, much like Malvolio's position as a servant. In addition, in this same scene, Maria also tells Malvolio to "go shake [his] ears," again depicting him as a lowly and laughable donkey. The repeated comparison of Malvolio to animals lower on the totem pole of zoology, such as donkeys, emphasizes his disruption of the "natural" social order through his aspirations to improve his social standing through romantic liaisons.

Even though Sir Andrew participates in the gulling of Malvolio, he is also targeted for trickery for the same reasons as Malvolio: his intention to woo Olivia, a

¹⁴ This description was gathered from The Medieval Bestiary website, which compiles information from various bestiary manuscripts.

woman unsuited for him, both in class and countenance. As Maria describes him, Sir Andrew is “a foolish knight...brought in one night to be [Olivia’s] wooer” (1.3.14-15). Although Sir Toby defends his friend to Maria by listing off his healthy salary and other noteworthy attributes, Maria quickly dismisses Sir Andrew’s eligibility due to his dim-witted demeanor and inferiority as a knight. Sir Toby acquiesces to Maria’s disdain for his friend, and with Sir Andrew’s appearance, he persuades Andrew to try his hand at wooing Maria-- a task he knows will demonstrate Andrew’s shortcomings as a suitor as well as provide enjoyment for himself and Maria.

As with Malvolio, animal metaphors are also used with Sir Andrew to highlight his inadequacy as a lover for Olivia. Just as Malvolio is called an ass, an animal of lowly and laughable stature, Sir Andrew defends his character to Maria as he exclaims that he is not an ass (1.3.71). Later in the play, Sir Toby greets his friend by saying “Welcome, ass” (2.3.16), again establishing Sir Andrew’s position as a beast of burden, or rather a member of a less respectable social class. Although Sir Andrew recognizes that he does not have a chance of romance with Olivia (1.3.100-110), Sir Toby urges him to stay, giving him hope that something may come of his wooing, but again this trickery is for the intent of providing himself and Maria more revelry (Labriola 14). Finally, at the end of the play, once Sir Toby is tired of tricking Sir Andrew, he lets the insults fly, debasing his so-called friend as “an ass-head and a coxcomb and a knave, a thin-faced knave, a gull” (5.1.201-202). This string of animal insults works to highlight Sir Andrew’s inferior attributes, labeling him both as foolish and impotent, traits which mark him as prey to bellicose characters like Sir Toby. Again, hypocrisy is highlighted here, as Toby, a

gluttonous, slothful drunk, ridicules someone else's character-- a concession he is allowed for his superior social standing to Andrew.

Not only do the animal and hunting references in *Twelfth Night* work to stress the upheaval of social norms, they also enable some characters to act as aggressive predators who prey upon the weaker personalities as well as to punish them for behaviors they themselves are also guilty of. In the play, many of the references to dogs as predators are used to describe Maria as she plays her trick on Malvolio, while he is illustrated as various types of birds that are typically preyed upon. For example, Sir Toby calls Maria a beagle (2.3.174), a dog known for its hunting abilities, and later when Maria describes the prank she is playing on Malvolio, she says "I have dogged him like his murderer" (3.2.66). Additionally, when the play's group of tricksters repeatedly compare Malvolio to various types of birds (gull, woodcock, turkeycock, etc.) as well as to the ass, they demean him and thus make their predatory cruelty to him justifiable in their minds, because they see him as weak and worthy of being preyed upon. In fact, one of the few times that Malvolio is referred to as a predator is when he is compared to a defective hunting dog, who lost the scent of its prey (2.5.120-126). Here, Malvolio's supposed ineffectiveness as a predator further cements his role as the prey of Maria and her gang of tricksters. Furthermore, the portrayal of a female as the predator of her male prey asserts the hunt's tradition of gender subversion.

Malvolio and Andrew's role as prey is also marked by comparing them to animals that are easily trapped or castrated-- this works to emphasize both their gullibility and their impotence, traits that justify the tricks played on them by Maria, the cunning

huntress, and her friends. Malvolio is repeatedly compared to a gull and is described as being gulled or tricked. His gullibility is one of the characteristics that make cruel behavior towards him both possible and humorous (in the eyes of the characters, as well as perhaps the audience). Malvolio's ability to be easily tricked is best demonstrated in act 2, scene 5, when Malvolio finds the letter planted by Maria and her friends. This scene, perhaps more than any other in the play, is infiltrated with hunting metaphors and puns, which likens Malvolio to prey being led to a trap laid by the predatory Maria. For example, as Malvolio draws close to the counterfeit letter, Fabian remarks, "Now is the woodcock near the gin," (2.5.81) thus illustrating both Malvolio's idiocy, making him equatable to a bird known for its stupidity, as well as emphasizing the cruelty of the trick laid out for him, through its comparison to a deadly trap. Then, shortly after, as Malvolio tries to decipher the meaning of the enigmatic acronym left in the letter, he is first compared to a predatory bird, but then described as an ineffective hunting dog (2.5.112-125). First, by calling Malvolio a falcon here, Sir Toby is not demonstrating Malvolio's cunning or strength, but rather his ability to quickly find and fall into the trap that the tricksters have laid for him. Then again, as they compare him to a hound, Sir Toby and Fabian, are not complimenting his intelligence, but rather demonstrating his ineffectiveness as a hunting dog unable to perform his job properly. So, even when Malvolio is described as predatory animals, these descriptions are used to further highlight his inadequacy and imbecility, and more importantly, to further project him as prey.

The use of bird metaphors with Malvolio not only illustrates his gullibility, but these metaphors also work to symbolically castrate him, again emphasizing the emasculating effects of hunting metaphors. Castration was commonly associated with the tropes of the hunt and the chase in Renaissance literature; for example, in Ovid's, as well as Shakespeare's, version of the Venus and Adonis myth, Adonis is not only wounded by a boar, but castrated as well, further emasculating him as he is pursued by Venus (Allen 302). Of the thirty plus references to birds in *Twelfth Night*, the majority of them are cocks-- woodcock, turkey-cock, bawcock, cockatrice (a mythical snake, but nonetheless, the phallic imagery remains), cockney, and coxcomb; and of these cock references, four of them are addressed towards Malvolio.¹⁵ The double-meaning of the name cock would not have gone unnoticed by a Renaissance audience. According to The Aberdeen Bestiary, "The cock, gallus, gets its name from the act of castration. For alone among other birds its testicles are removed..." (Folio 38v). These birds chosen to name Malvolio not only emphasize his gullibility and frivolity, they also work to assault his masculinity verbally. For example, when Fabian calls Malvolio "a rare turkey-cock" who "jets under his advanced plumes," he is emasculating him by referring to him as a castrated bird while simultaneously feminizing Malvolio by emphasizing his vanity (2.5.28-29). In other words, Maria and her friends metaphorically castrate Malvolio with their name calling, enacting another form of violence on him through their bird metaphors and using his alleged impotence to further illustrate his role as prey.

¹⁵ Several of these cock references are also used in regards to Sir Andrew, whose "castration" I will discuss shortly.

Another way in which Malvolio is compared to Classical characters, such as Actaeon and Adonis, can be seen through the letter scene, where Malvolio receives a letter he believes to be from Olivia. He verifies its seeming authenticity by remarking “By my life, this is my lady’s hand. These be her very c’s, her u’s and her t’s, and thus makes she her great P’s” (2.5.85-87). Malvolio’s response to the letter does several things. First, it depicts his presumed intimacy with Olivia, because he not only recognizes her handwriting, but the puns in his statement work to insinuate a sexual familiarity between the two. Secondly, the sexual innuendos of both Olivia’s “cut” as well as her “P’s” directly aligns Malvolio with the mythical character of Actaeon who is punished for seeing Diana bathing naked-- a breach of the social limitations which prohibit him from having such an intimate relationship with one above his status. In *The Body Embarrassed*, Gail Kern Paster comments on this likeness by saying,

No longer a unique individual known by the personal sign of scriptive identity, her handwriting, not even a member of the class of literate gentlewomen, Olivia is reduced to the lowly status of generic female by that specifically shameful female signifier-- the “cut.” The pun opens out contextually to transform the mediation of the letters into something very like a transgressive encounter, Malvolio becoming a parody of Actaeon and Olivia of the naked Diana...That Malvolio should be trapped into an Actaeon-like transgressive intrusion adds mythological motive to his punishment. (33-34)

So, not only does this scene relate Malvolio to another story of the hunt, it also works to further establish and justify Maria’s punishment and emasculation of Malvolio for his inappropriate social aspirations.

In the same way as Malvolio, Sir Andrew is repeatedly depicted as a lesser being through the use of predator and prey metaphors. This can perhaps be best seen in his tete-

a-tete with Maria in act 1, scene 3, where Maria repeatedly underscores Sir Andrew's position as prey as she highlights his lack of intelligence and virility, while simultaneously emphasizing her own cunning and dominance. Like Malvolio, who is constantly being "gulled" by Maria and her trickster friends, Sir Andrew's gullibility and ignorance make him the perfect prey for Maria and Sir Toby's cruel and witty verbal snares. For example, in the aforementioned scene, Maria repeatedly uses double entendres, none of which Sir Andrew comprehends, and this highlights both his inept wit as well as his lack of sexual prowess-- making him an inadequate suitor as well as the ideal victim for their verbal assaults and trickery. In addition, Maria's comments on the dryness of Andrew's hand (1.3.70) work to illustrate both of these inadequacies-- sexual and intellectual (Labriola 9-10). Not much later, Sir Toby continues this line of abuse by comparing Sir Andrew's hair to "flax on a distaff" and stating that he hopes a housewife will "spin it off" (1.3.98-100). This pun emasculates Sir Andrew in several ways: first it associates Sir Andrew with domesticity, a traditionally feminine realm, and secondly, it metaphorically castrates him (Labriola 13-14). Moreover, Sir Toby's joke also demonstrates Sir Andrew's ignorance, since he does not pick up on the verbal game being played on him and foolishly participates in his own verbal assault. So, not only does Sir Andrew's inanity give Sir Toby ammunition for ridicule, it also makes it more comical to the audience, as they laugh at a joke that Sir Andrew is not in on.

Later in the play, Sir Toby continues to exploit Sir Andrew's stupidity by tricking him into fighting Cesario. This duel also serves to emasculate Sir Andrew, whose cowardice doubly becomes apparent in this interaction, not only through his reluctance to

fight but also in the fact that he is matched against a woman. Here, we again see the comedic effect of current social guidelines, as Sir Andrew is forced, by social expectations, to defend his standing as a knight as well as his masculinity by fighting for no actual good reason except pride and reputation. Sir Toby uses this ploy to keep Sir Andrew from abandoning his pursuit of Olivia in order to continue to provide Sir Toby a means of entertainment. For their own enjoyment, Sir Toby and Fabian call on the use of animal metaphors to continue to highlight Sir Andrew's inadequacy as a lover and a knight. First, Fabian compares Sir Andrew to a "dormouse" (3.2.18), a diminutive creature; then, Sir Toby claims that Andrew writes with a "'goose-pen," (47) with the goose being a symbol of cowardice; and finally, Sir Toby claims that Sir Andrew has as "much blood in his liver as will clog the foot of a flea," again highlighting his cowardice, as blood in the liver was a contemporary signifier of this trait (59-60).¹⁶ All of this animal imagery continues to establish Andrew's cowardice and thus his duly placed position as Sir Toby's prey. So, just as Malvolio is made impotent and incompetent by his predators through their use of hunting metaphors, these same metaphors also metaphorically castrate and quite literally humiliate Andrew, all unbeknownst to his foolhardy naive.

Finally, the repeated use of trapped-bird and baited-bear imagery in the play, in reference to both Malvolio and Sir Andrew, exhibits the motif of confinement seen throughout *Twelfth Night*. For example, Malvolio is frequently associated as a trapped bird, captured metaphorically, as a bird in a cage, or as a "woodcock near the gin" (or

¹⁶ The symbolic meanings of the goose-pen and the blood reference are explicated by Keir Elam in the footnotes of the Arden edition of *Twelfth Night*. These footnotes can be found on pages 266 and 267 respectively.

snare) as Fabian describes him (2.5.81), as Malvolio approaches the letter they have planted for him; thus marking Malvolio as a trapped bird, or prey, and their trick as the means with which they plan to trap him, which solidifies the tricksters' role as predators. And again, this same reference of the woodcock is made by Feste as he toys with Malvolio, who sits confined in a cell, quite literally trapped (4.2.58). Later, when he is released, Malvolio condemns Olivia for her mistreatment of him by having him imprisoned and "made the most notorious geck and gull," again calling to mind the gullible bird who mindlessly fell into the trap set for him (5.1.335-337).

Another way in which Malvolio is shown to be confined is through Maria's suggestion that he wear cross-gartered tights, a fashion staple used to metaphorically symbolize his confinement through their trickery. These tights work to do several things. First, they are a physical marker of Malvolio's lowly social status, as the yellow, cross-gartered tights are out of fashion and unsightly. Secondly, they represent his confinement to his own servant social class, as he is not fashionable enough to elevate himself to Olivia's. Thirdly, the confinement of the tights, as well as his willingness to wear such hideous garments, illustrates the way Malvolio's ignorance has led to his entrapment, both literal and metaphorical, by the tricksters. So, the repeated alignment of Malvolio with trapped birds, and stupid birds at that, marks Malvolio as prey worthy of being picked on. His gullibility makes his mistreatment laughable and justifiable in the eyes of both the characters and the audience.

In addition, both Malvolio and Sir Andrew are associated with bear-baiting.¹⁷ This comparison serves to establish the trickery towards them as a means of entertainment, rather than acts of cruelty or violence (just as bear-baiting would have been seen to an early modern audience). While Malvolio is most like a proud, trapped bird, Sir Andrew is easily compared to the baited bear, because he is invited to participate in the fooling of Malvolio, making Andrew at times a predator but ultimately a means of revelry (for Maria and Sir Toby), just like a baited bear whose predatory nature incites him to fight his opponents, while the nature of the situation makes it a means of entertainment for the spectators.¹⁸ For example, in the aforementioned dialogue between Sir Andrew and Maria in act 1, scene 3, Sir Andrew makes a reference to the entertainment of bear baiting, signaling to the audience the comedic effect of his encounter with Maria and her disdainful behavior towards him. Furthermore, Jason Scott-Warren suggests in his article “When Theaters Were Bear-Gardens; or, What’s at Stake in the Comedy of Humors,” that the treatment of Malvolio throughout the play is like that of a bear being baited (66). In other words, Maria and her compatriots bait Malvolio for their own entertainment, and for the entertainment of their audience. And in the end, he lashes out, like an angry bear, and exclaims, “I’ll be reveng’d on the whole pack of you,” (5.1.371) likening his tormentors to a pack of dogs who have been egging him on, like a baited bear. Again, the use of confinement with the allusion to bear baiting calls to mind not only the entrapment of Malvolio and Sir Andrew in Maria’s schemes, but also the

¹⁷ See 1.3.91, 2.5.7, 3.4.286-287 of *Twelfth Night*.

¹⁸ For an extensive and enlightening discussion on bear-baiting see “When Theaters Were Bear-Gardens; or What’s at Stake in the Comedy of Humors” by Jason Scott-Warren.

immutability of the confines of their social status, thus reminding them that they will never reach the social standings to which they aspire.

Ultimately, the recurrent connection made between Malvolio and Sir Andrew as confined animals serves not only to justify, but also to make comedic, the cruelty demonstrated towards the two. The depiction of Malvolio and Andrew as trapped birds and baited bears makes them laughable, rather than pitiable, characters and signals to the audience that the cruelty shown towards these two characters is meant to be entertainment.

The Predators

The use of hunting metaphors in the play also works to create a paradox in which Maria is able to punish Malvolio and Sir Andrew for their class jumping, while also exploiting her predatory behavior to intrigue and trap Sir Toby, a man outside of her social class, as her husband. The letter Maria writes to trick Malvolio allows Maria to class jump in several ways. First, she is quite literally pretending to be someone of a higher class through her imitation of Olivia's penmanship as well as by signing the letter as Olivia (Hobgood, "*Twelfth Night's*, 8). Secondly, she uses her trickery and predatory behavior to draw herself closer to Sir Toby, a man above her in social standing (Fetzer 3). In her article "*Twelfth Night's* 'Notorious Abuse' of Malvolio: Shame, Humourality, and Early Modern Spectatorship," Allison Hobgood describes Maria's use of the letter and the hypocrisy her cruelty demonstrates in this way:

Cunningly...Maria stigmatizes Malvolio as the play's ultimate geck and gull so as to shift the dramatic focus from her own presumptuous desires to pass herself off as the rich and powerful Countess. As Malvolio's supposed madness occupies

center stage in act four, scene two, both audience and characters come to either ignore or excuse Maria's actions as well as the rampant overreaching of the play's other characters. As Maria, Toby, Fabian, and Feste gain pleasure from tormenting Malvolio and justify his shaming as necessary, they absolve themselves of their own audacious attempts at altering their social identities. (8)

In other words, Maria, as well as her co-conspirators, punish Malvolio for social climbing, not because they disagree with it, but because they want to draw attention away from their own lofty and unacceptable ambitions. So, with the use of the letter, Maria jumps social classes, while simultaneously tricking and punishing Malvolio for attempting to do the same thing. And, it is their use of hunting metaphors which enables them to do so, because through their language, they are able to position themselves as predators, while pinning down Malvolio and Sir Andrew as their prey. The tradition of the hunt not only allows this hypocritical behavior in the play, it also displays for the audience the contradictory nature of their own society. Thus, in many ways, the play stands as a mirror for the audience, who laugh at characters for doing the same things they are guilty of.

While Maria devises her plot, her language as well as the diction of her co-conspirators is peppered with hunting metaphors. For example, Maria states that she plans to "gull" Malvolio and "make him a common recreation" (2.3.131-132), or in other words trap and trick him for her own entertainment. Then, Sir Andrew, who ironically is also a victim of Maria and Sir Toby, claims that he would "beat [Malvolio] like a dog" for being a Puritan (2.3.136). I would like to pause here for a moment to point out that as Andrew imagines violence against Malvolio, he chooses an animal that can be positioned as both prey and predator-- just as Sir Andrew is juxtaposed in the play. As I discussed

earlier, Sir Andrew's likeness to a baited bear, both predator and prey, serves to illustrate the entertainment value of the cruelty towards him as well as the social upheaval represented through hunting and animal metaphors. Furthermore, his relationship with Sir Toby, who is both his enemy and his friend, again reestablishes Andrew's contradictory position as both predator and prey. Unlike Malvolio, who is completely on the outside of this gang of tricksters, Sir Andrew participates in the gulling of Malvolio as a member of the pack, while he simultaneously falls victim to their cruelty for his own gullibility. Sir Andrew's unstable social standing only serves to further reflect the fickleness of social acceptance.

Now to continue on, once Maria exits, Sir Toby calls her "a beagle true bred, and one that adores me" (2.3.175-176). This comparison directly highlights the fact that Maria's predatory behavior, like that of a hunting dog, has caught Sir Toby's romantic attention. However, in another light, by calling her a beagle, Sir Toby also paints her as a submissive pet that follows him like a pup in heat. While the beagle or the hound is a useful helpmate, it is ultimately inferior to the noble hunter, just like Maria is inferior in social status (and in sex to the early modern audience) to her partner, Sir Toby. Later, right after Malvolio has read this counterfeit letter, Sir Toby declares his intention to marry Maria for her cunning caper (2.5.176), and he then submits to her by declaring "Wilt thou set thy foot o' my neck?" as she reenters the scene, calling to mind an animal submitting to the hunter who has trapped him (2.5.182). Thus, the audience is clearly shown that Maria's predatory behavior has doubly worked by trapping herself a mate in Sir Toby.

In the end, while Maria is rewarded for her cruel behavior, her partner Sir Toby is punished. Agency is subverted when one of the play's predators, Sir Toby, falls victim to violence. In this scene, Sir Toby is cast as impotent, in the same way that he once verbally mutilated Sir Andrew and Malvolio. Sir Toby has been attacked by Cesario, an alleged eunuch-- a castrated man who is actually a woman in disguise-- and needs medical attention. Not only does his defeat serve to emasculate him, he is further humiliated and metaphorically castrated by repeatedly being described as a "bloody coxcomb"-- an image which both evokes a castrated bird and also the blood of a woman's menstrual cycle-- two emasculating comparisons. As Gail Kern Paster puts it,

The bleeding body signifies as a shameful token of uncontrol, as a failure of physical self-mastery particularly associated with woman in her monthly 'courses.' ...The male body, opened and bleeding, can assume the shameful attributes of the incontinent female body as both cause of and justification for its evident vulnerability and defeat (91-92).

Toby's shameful defeat serves as a sort of poetic justice-- once in which he is beaten by a woman and humiliated in the same way he sought to humiliate Sir Andrew.

So, here we see Sir Toby both physically and verbally punished for his wrongdoings, and his cruelty towards others ends in his own denigration. But, what of his wife? Her cruel behavior actually empowers her and enables her to move to a higher social class-- illustrating the contradictory nature of social expectations. Additionally, as Malvolio shames those who shamed him in act 5, scene 1, Maria is nowhere to be found and is not made to be held accountable for her actions (Hobgood, "*Twelfth Night's*, 9). Sir Andrew and Malvolio are ridiculed for something that she is also guilty of-- class

jumping. Sir Toby, her husband, gets punished for participating in the crimes she incited. Yet, Maria remains unscathed. I believe she goes unpunished because she is female. Marliss Desens argues throughout her article “Marrying Down: Negotiating a More Equal Marriage on the English Renaissance Stage” that Shakespeare allows women more social mobility than the men in his plays. So, while Malvolio and Sir Andrew are punished for their aspirations to climb the social ladder, Maria obtains her target and succeeds in her hunt for men, regardless of her social status, adding an extra layer to the contradictory nature of the social standards of the time.

Aside from Maria and Sir Toby’s abuse of Malvolio and Sir Andrew, Orsino also uses hunting metaphors to justify predatory and aggressive behavior against Olivia. For example, after Orsino has been rejected by Olivia in favor of Cesario, Orsino heatedly exclaims, “I’ll sacrifice the lamb that I do love to spite a raven’s heart within a dove” (5.1.126-127). First, by referring to Cesario as a lamb, he calls to mind Abraham’s sacrifice in Genesis. Not only does this comparison belittle Cesario, as a diminutive lamb, thus making violence towards him acceptable, it also supplies this instance of violence with biblical justification. Secondly, by comparing Olivia to a raven, a black bird with negative connotations, he again condones his fit of rage and desire for violence by illustrating Olivia as something evil, inhuman, and undesirable. Here, Orsino’s pugnacious diction is driven by his deflated pride at not only being edged out by a boy, but by a servant boy at that. So, here we see the roles reverse between Orsino and Olivia. At the very beginning of the play, Orsino positions himself as Olivia’s prey in the game of love, thus drawing the traditional allusion to the romantic chase. However, once he is

rejected, he uses these same types of animal metaphors to place himself as a predator, ready to attack the woman who has wounded his heart, as well as the lowly servant boy she desires. In the end, his use of animal metaphors not only justifies his anger and cruelty, it also highlights the class jumping implicit in Olivia's attraction to Orsino-- something for which she is punished by the Duke's cruelty, while Maria is rewarded. So, here we see that the contradictions lie not only in the ability for women to aspire to higher classes (while men cannot), but also in the inability for women to marry below their social status (which man can do). Hunting metaphors again serve to highlight the inconsistency of social protocol.

Finally, at the end of the play, we see one more subversion of roles as Malvolio, the play's main source of prey, puts himself in a predatory position. In the play's final scene, Malvolio is released from his imprisonment. The liberation of Malvolio is comparable to the freeing of a bird from its cage or a baited bear from his chains-- likenesses that are repeatedly made by Malvolio's abusers. This new found freedom ignites the beginning of Malvolio's transformation from prey to predator at the end of the play. For example, when Malvolio reveals his mistreatment and discovers that he has been tricked by Maria and her friends, he cries out in rage, "I'll be revenged on the whole *pack* of you!" (5.1.371, emphasis mine)¹⁹. Here, Malvolio, the prey, turns on his predators, likening them to dogs or wolves-- highlighting their (Malvolio's intended victims) own violent, predatory treatment towards him, ganging up on him like a pack of

¹⁹ In her article, "Violence as the 'Dark Room' of Comedy: Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*," Margaret Fetzer suggests that "through leaving the stage, he revenges himself on his environment by tainting the final comic reconciliation which should harmoniously include and unite all characters" (9).

blood-hungry animals. It also possible that his vaguely addressed threat could be directed at the audience, for laughing at him for something they are also complicit in in their own lives.²⁰ Furthermore, with his statement, we see the call for violence again vindicated by the use of hunting and animal metaphors, seen by the implications of Malvolio's statement, which calls to mind both hunting and bear baiting. If Malvolio is referring to his abusers as a pack of animals, he is using hunting metaphors to declare his intentions to attack the hunters who have been shamelessly dogging him through the play; furthermore, this pack comparison calls to mind the baited bear, and Malvolio's statement then suggests that now that he has broken free of his confines, he is going to attack the pack of animals who have been nipping at his heels. Either way, once Malvolio is released from prison (or freed from his cage if you will), he decides that he is going to turn the tables and, in the tradition of the hunt, make the hunters become the hunted, just as we see in the myths of Actaeon and Adonis.

The ambiguity of his threats, also leads to the question of who exactly will be revenged. Is it the characters who have abused him? Or the audience who has been complicit in his shaming?

²⁰ In her article, "Notorious Abuses in *Twelfth Night*," Allison Hobgood repeatedly discusses the audience's participation in the shaming of Malvolio. For example, in one such instance, she states: "...Malvolio's shame in *Twelfth Night* is in fact highly contingent upon an audience's emotional collaboration. The steward does not suffer evil alone, but rather in the presence of or along with the audience, and that suffering is, in each instance, shaped—made easier or more foolish—by those participating playgoers" (129).

Conclusion

In conclusion, Shakespeare's continued incorporation of animals and hunting metaphors in *Twelfth Night* enables certain characters to act outside of the constrictions of social hierarchies, while also punishing others for doing the exact same thing. These metaphors also work to subvert social standings, allowing characters to maneuver not only between classes, but between positions as predator and prey as well. Drawing from the literary tradition of the hunt and its contemporary popularity and social implications, Shakespeare, a social climber himself, used this trope repeatedly to examine, and perhaps ridicule, the constrictions and contradictions of social classes. In *Twelfth Night* specifically, he utilizes hunting and animal metaphors to enable cruelty towards the ambitious characters of the play, as well as to make this macabre behavior comedic. When the audience laughs at the gulling of Malvolio and Sir Andrew, it is with the self-conscious awareness that could fall prey to the same cruelty if they step out of their bounds. In the end, the animal and hunting metaphors in *Twelfth Night* let the beasts out of their cages-- exposing the cruel and contradictory nature of social expectations.

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