UNDERGRADUATE PAPER

Enough of Excess: Portrayals of *Twelfth Night's* Maria

Sanner Garofalo
Pepperdine University

Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* deals with the tangled and confused love relations of its characters, mainly Viola, Orsino, Olivia, and Sebastian. However, a third love match also occurs, one between Olivia's kinsman, Sir Toby Belch, and her gentlewoman, Maria. Within the text, Maria's role centers on this relationship with Sir Toby, as well as her role in the plot against Malvolio. The final mention of her in the text unites these two aspects of her character: "Maria writ / The letter, at Sir Toby's great importance, / In recompense whereof he hath married her."[1] Her success as a trickster leads to her marriage with Sir Toby. Yet, in recent adaptations of *Twelfth Night*, directors have chosen to emphasize one of these aspects of her character over the other, casting her in either a distinctly feminine or distinctly masculine role.

In the film *Twelfth Night*, Trevor Nunn focuses on Maria's affection for Sir Toby, portraying her as matronly and love-sick.[2] In contrast, in the 2006 Pepperdine University production of the play, Danny Campbell stresses her scheming nature, whereby she emerges as an independent, self-serving figure.[3] Thus, the question lies in how, with such differing portrayals of Maria, both productions reach the "recompense" of the play: why do Toby and Maria marry and is this outcome even believable?

Maria is a minor character participating in a subplot of *Twelfth Night*, so these directors are able to edit her role without greatly impacting the ultimate outcome of the play. However, in reference to the subplot, the characterization of Maria in these productions proves "problematic."[4] Within the text, Maria seems a fairly balanced character. She is masculine, dominant, in her involvement with the trick. Yet she is still a servant to Olivia *and* Sir Toby, and is thus feminine. However, Campbell and Nunn take this balance

away from her, forcing her into a more confined role within the patriarchal system. In *Sexual/Textual Politics*, Toril Moi describes "two different options for women: mother-identification, which will intensify the pre-Oedipal components of the woman's psyche and render her marginal to the symbolic order, or father-identification, which will create a woman who will derive her identity from the same symbolic order."[5] Nunn and Campbell each confine Maria to one of these two categories. Within the context of patriarchy, women must conform to the roles assigned to them by men. Because Maria resists typical classification, her character proves problematic, giving Nunn and Campbell a struggle with her depiction.

Within Maria's character a tension exists between her roles as servant and trickster. She is foremost Olivia's gentlewoman. However, her role in the plot of *Twelfth Night* comes mainly through her involvement in the gulling of Malvolio. And, within this scheme, she notably goes against Olivia's wishes: "Good Maria, let this fellow be looked to. Where's my cousin Toby? Let some of my people have a special care of him, I would not have him miscarry for the half of my dowry" (3.4.57-59). Nunn and Campbell deal with this contradiction within her character by casting her either as the servant or as the trickster; essentially, they *eliminate* the contradiction. Nunn's Maria is a servant, who, within the trick, serves Sir Toby. In contrast, Campbell's Maria is a trickster who delights solely in scheming and seeking personal pleasure. These depictions permeate all aspects of Maria's character.

Using setting and costume, these directors create contrasting pictures of Maria. Nunn sets his film in Cornwall, England, and directs the production in a way which "hint[s] at the fascination with fairy-tale and myth and legend of the nineteenth-century pre-Raphaelite Gothic period."[6] Following this vision, Nunn's Maria becomes the "most Victorian of creatures, a dependent woman with a 'history.'"[7] In contrast, Danny Campbell transforms Illyria into a Malibu beach community. All characters conform to this setting. Feste becomes an insightful surfer/beach bum with long blond hair. Sir Toby repeatedly appears in Hawaiian shirts and the current fashion, Ugg boots. And Maria emerges as a modern-day businesswoman, well-dressed and cunning. She literally becomes either the servant or the trickster in these productions and the characterization remains consistent through her performance. Every scene reinforces her position within the plot.

In Nunn's film, Maria first appears examining Olivia's kitchen with Malvolio. This occurrence stems from Nunn's imagination;

no such incident appears in Shakespeare's text. However, her actions in this brief scene greatly reflect the characterization of Maria in the film. Marshall notes that "from this point in the film there seems to be little difference between Maria and [Malvolio]; the two are visually paired together in all three of the kitchen shots."[8] In fact, Maria seems submissive to Malvolio; she follows him and he appears to be controlling the situation. Thus, from the start, Nunn chooses to classify Maria as a reserved and dutiful servant, even if such a depiction requires a departure from the text. As Nunn transitions back to the actual text of the play, he continues his characterization of Maria as he depicts her as a concerned woman chasing after and taking care of her love interest, Sir Toby. She finds him in drunken disarray in the garden and proceeds to follow him into the house, gently chastising his actions: "By my troth, Sir Toby, you must come in earlier o' nights" (1.3.3). However, once they reach the staircase, a clear division between these two characters emerges: Maria remains at ground level, while Sir Toby elevates himself a few steps above her. This action proves symbolic of their relationship. Toby literally looks down upon Maria in this shot, reflecting his view of himself as dominant and of her as submissive in their relationship. Maria's respectable appearance contrasted with the disheveled Toby contradicts this classification. However, Maria seems to accept her position.

Additionally, Nunn notably omits a rather large conversation between Sir Andrew Aguecheek and Maria in this scene. In the dialogue Nunn chooses to remove, a witty and somewhat scandalous aspect of Maria's personality emerges. The vaguely sexual puns which Maria employs in this scene—"I pray you, bring your hand to th' buttery-bar, and let it drink" (1.3.58-59), for example—sharply contradict Nunn's vision of her as a conservative and matronly figure. Nunn prefers not to see her in this way, thus ignoring the connotations of this statement: "There's no real evidence that what she's talking about is putting a hand on her bosom. I mean, it might be that, but it might not be. It's a very obscure reference."[9] Regardless of the way Nunn reads the text, he chooses to omit this scene, thus removing the possibility for such bawdy behavior in his character.

Campbell, however, directs this scene in a very different manner. First of all, he remains true to the text. There are no additional scenes, nor any significant omission of Maria's lines. In contrast to Nunn's portrayal, Maria definitively emerges as the dominant character in this scene. Toby appears in drunken disarray, and Maria has to take care of him. However, she does so in a

much less subservient way. She is not serving Toby; she is organizing the household for which she is responsible. Toby and Andrew are ridiculous and Maria plays along with their antics. But she never becomes a ridiculous character in this exchange. There is a sense that she is superior to these men. The dialogue between Maria and Sir Andrew, which was mostly cut by Nunn, proves particularly comic in this production. However, the comedy comes from the absurdity of Andrew, not from any misconduct from Maria. She remains in control of the situation and only participates insofar as the interaction provides her with amusement. Furthermore, for most of the scene, Campbell places Maria apart from the men and at a slightly higher elevation. Through this positioning, the feeling emerges that though Maria *likes* Sir Toby and Andrew, she is not *like* them. These production choices greatly contrast the direction of Nunn's film. While Nunn sees Maria as subservient to Toby, Campbell places her as the dominant character in his production.

Maria's dialogue with Feste following his return to Olivia's household furthers these differing portrayals of Maria's character. In Nunn's interpretation, Maria views Feste through the window in her study and immediately rushes downstairs to meet with him. Once again, Nunn casts Maria as the subservient maid, willing to cater to those around her. As Toby took on the dominant role in the previous scene, Feste becomes the stronger presence in this scene. Not unimportantly, the dominant figure is again a male. Similarly, as he did in her dialogue with Andrew Aguecheek, Nunn omits the majority of Maria's lines from her discussion with Feste. In this editing, he removes the wit and intelligence which Shakespeare intends for Maria to possess. However, Feste's lines remain intact. Nunn views Feste as "the truth-teller in the story" and, accordingly, uses this character to clarify meaning and further characterization in the film.[10] This can be seen through the emphasis added to Feste's declaration, "If Sir Toby would leave drinking thou wert as witty a piece of Eve's flesh as any in Illyria" (1.5.23-25). According to Nunn, Maria's love for Toby defines her character, and he utilizes Feste to further this interpretation. For him, Feste is "telling Maria, 'I know exactly what you're after, I know your concern for Toby Belch isn't as a servant to a master, it's as a potential wife to a lonely man.'"[11] Thus, in this brief scene, Nunn both detracts from the wit and intelligence of Maria's character and further positions her as the love-sick servant in his plot.

Campbell's interpretation of this scene, however, emphasizes the very aspect of Maria's personality which Nunn chooses to neglect. The majority of Maria's lines remain intact during her encounter with Feste, allowing the audience to witness her cleverness and command of language. However, she commands not only language, but the situation in general. Maria has Feste by the ear as they enter the stage, both physically and verbally demonstrating dominance. She becomes the controlling force in their dialogue, almost dictating to the fool, "Peace, you rogue, no more o' that" (1.5.26). As well, Campbell completely omits the line that Nunn had chosen to emphasize in this scene. No reference to Sir Toby or Maria's love for him appears in this dialogue. Where Nunn's Victorian interpretation of the gentlewoman accentuates her dependence and love for Toby, Campbell's vision of Maria as a modern businesswoman highlights the strength of her character. For Campbell, Maria's affection for the drunken and foolish Sir Toby would weaken her. By emphasizing the wit and intelligence of the gentlewoman and removing the reference to her romantic feelings for Sir Toby, Campbell's Maria emerges as a strong, independent character.

These differing interpretations of the dynamics between Sir Toby and Maria continue to develop during Toby's deliverance of the news of Cesario's arrival. In both productions, Maria's response to Olivia's question, "Who of my people hold him in delay," remains the same: "Sir Toby, madam, your kinsman" (1.5.90-91). However, in Nunn's production, Maria stumbles over her lover's name, seemingly uncomfortable, whereas in Campbell's production, Maria has no such problem. Instead, she stresses the phrase, "your kinsman," separating herself from this embarrassingly drunk man. Furthermore, in Campbell's interpretation, Maria's role in this encounter between Olivia and Toby ends with this announcement. Yet Nunn further interjects her into the scene, taking this opportunity to develop the love connection between the gentlewoman and Sir Toby. When Toby enters to relay his message, he sloppily stumbles across the room, knocking over tables and carelessly leaving a mess behind him. However, in the middle of Olivia's discussion with her kinsman, Maria cautiously enters the room, quietly reorganizing the room Toby left in disarray. This, once again, reinforces Nunn's vision of Maria as a subservient and matronly character. Maria wants to take care of Toby and seems pleased with the reward she receives for her service: Toby awkwardly bows and holds the door open for Maria as the two exit the room together. Predictably, Campbell's Maria remains the

independent woman typical of his previous characterization of her, and Nunn further develops Maria's affection for and subservience to Toby in this scene.

The scene in which the plot against Malvolio develops proves integral to the portrayal of Maria's character. Nunn does not want Maria to be the female trickster, so he must emphasize her devotion to Toby in this scene. A rearrangement of the action increases Maria's engagement in the antics of Toby and his friends. Reminiscent of her earlier scene with Feste, the three men beckon Maria as she sleeps in her bedroom, and she hurriedly departs to meet them in the kitchen. Setting so many of her crucial scenes in the kitchen emphasizes her matronly character. This incident especially highlights her desire for the domesticity of married life. She tries to quiet and control these riotous men. However, she too becomes involved in the revelry as Toby grasps her and begins dancing. Her laughing and smiling clearly indicate her enjoyment of this kind of attention. Yet the scene takes on a more serious, thoughtful tone when Feste inquires, "Would you have a love-song, or a song of good life?" (2.3.32). Toby's response of "a love song, a love-song" (2.3.33) seems to please Maria. As Feste sings, Maria, Toby, and Andrew grow silent and contemplative. Maria stands somewhat apart from the two men and stares lovingly toward Sir Toby throughout the performance. In turn, Toby cannot help but shoot her glances in return.

The cross-cutting which Nunn employs during this scene emphasizes the level of affection which Maria feels for Sir Toby. During the song, the film oscillates between the scene with Maria and Toby, a frustratingly romantic exchange between Viola and Orsino, and Olivia in her bed, obviously dreamingly musing about Cesario. "The impression of unrequited longing created by 'Oh, Mistress Mine'" connects all of these scenes and specifically highlights "Maria's painful longing for Sir Toby."[12] She becomes absorbed in the song which so closely parallels her own situation, singing along with Feste as the refrain draws to a close: "Youth's a stuff will not endure" (2.3.48). At the end of the song, she turns away, almost in tears. Her desire for Toby and the recollection of her lost youth become overwhelming for her at this point, a reaction that makes her a sympathetic, if not somewhat pitiful, character. Maria is not a strong character; she is dependent and needs the companionship of a man.

This episode directly precedes Malvolio's rude interruption of the festivities, which provokes Maria's plot against him. Nunn's placement proves crucial in establishing Maria's motive in devising

this scheme. As Malvolio reprimands the characters, Maria stands slightly apart from the men. There is a sense that Malvolio separates Maria from the others. In fact, he directly places the blame on Sir Toby as he addresses him with the statement, "This is much credit to you" (2.3.97). However, when he turns to seek an ally in Maria—"Mistress Mary, if you prized my lady's favour at anything more than contempt, you would not give means for this uncivil rule" (2.3.109-11)—she must make a decision. Maria must be a dutiful servant to either Olivia or Sir Toby. She clearly chooses the man she loves with her uncouth response, "Go shake your ears" (2.3.112). She cannot help but laugh after this statement, surprised at herself and delighted in the response her comment evokes from Sir Toby.

Her actions and subsequent plotting stem from the reaction she receives from Toby. "She does find that humiliating Malvolio is the way to Toby's heart" and thus continues that behavior to further win Sir Toby's affection.[13] At this point, she moves to the table where Toby and Andrew are sitting, allying herself with these men. She thus confides her plan to her companions: "For Monsieur Malvolio, let me alone with him. If I do not gull him into a nayword and make him a common recreation, do not think that I have wit enough to lie straight in my bed. I know I can do it" (2.3.120-23). While her intelligence and cunning are evident in the plot, they do not characterize her motive. Rather, Maria wants to trick Malvolio to impress Toby and deepen a connection between herself and him. Thus, while more forward, she still remains an entirely feminine character. As mirrored by her placement at the table alongside the men, her plot will help to bond her and Sir Toby.

However, this sense of a growing connection dissipates as the characters part for the night. Once again, Toby, Maria, and Andrew find themselves at the staircase. And, once again, Toby and Andrew place themselves at a higher level than the gentlewoman. Maria has still not completely won the heart of Sir Toby and still remains inferior to him. He clearly separates himself from her. An awkward moment before Maria departs emphasizes her desire for something more, which Toby is not yet capable of giving to her. Yet after she leaves, a darker side of Toby emerges. Sir Andrew asserts that "she's a good wench," and Toby responds, "She's a beagle true bred, and one that adores me" (2.3.157-58). His arrogance adds to the already numerous faults of his character, and the viewer is left pitying Maria for her devotion to such a man. At the same time, Maria's love for Sir Toby highlights the weakness of her character. She simply wants companionship, even if her companion proves to be a less than ideal mate.

In contrast, Campbell's development of the plot against Malvolio focuses on the characters' desire for amusement and their general dislike of the steward. As usual, Campbell closely follows Shakespeare's text in his handling of this scene. Toby, Andrew, and Feste alone dominate the beginning of the action; Maria does not enter until after "O, Mistress Mine" has already been sung. In this production, Toby and Andrew mostly appear somewhat absurd and foolish, constantly seeking amusement. Even Feste, though still subtly wise, seems focused on personal enjoyment. Thus, "O, Mistress Mine" serves a completely different purpose in this production. The song seems to exist simply because Toby and Andrew want a song to dance to. The characters, and thus the audience, ignore the meaning of the words. This song, which is essentially about "the sorrow that terminates so many transactions between men and woman and . . . the onset of old age and death as the necessary counterweight for the onset of sexual maturity," becomes solely a way in which Toby and Andrew can further amuse themselves.[14] In the text and in Nunn's production, this message parallels Maria's feelings for Sir Toby. However, with the meaning removed from the song, Maria's motivation for devising the plan against Malvolio becomes completely about the masculine pursuit of personal pleasure.

When Maria does enter the scene in Campbell's production, she comes to reprimand these three men: "What a caterwauling do you keep here! If my lady have not called up her steward Malvolio and bid him turn you out of doors, never trust me" (2.3.65-67). She does not chase after Sir Toby or run to him as soon as he calls her; instead, Maria joins the group freely and with a specific purpose. She seems angry and annoyed with the antics of these men, and when Toby tries to engage her in a dance, she clearly resists. A quick kiss shared between Maria and Toby hints at their later engagement. However, the love match seems unbelievable and a viewer unfamiliar with the text would not anticipate their future marriage.

As Malvolio enters and rebukes the characters, Maria appears markedly disturbed. An important interpretative choice comes through Campbell's direction of Malvolio's line, "This is much credit to you" (2.3.97), to be said to Maria, clearly placing Maria as the dominant force among these men. Malvolio sees her as the strongest character and blames her for the disorder. Though she favors a degree of control like Malvolio, Maria also indulges in the pursuit of pleasure. This aspect of her personality combined with Malvolio's condescending attitude provokes her to the comment,

"Go shake your ears" (2.3.112), at which she becomes a much more playful presence on the stage.

After Malvolio exits, the tone of the production becomes much more light-hearted. The steward did insult them, and none of the characters likes Malvolio; however, no real hostility emerges among the group. Maria's deliverance of her plan exudes a sense of fun and humor. Obviously, the plot will present the characters with an opportunity for further amusement. However, with the characterization of Maria, another possible outcome of the trick gains importance. Malvolio insults these characters and, in humiliating him, Maria will be able to assert her superiority to him. In her declaration, "On that vice in him will my revenge find notable cause to work" (2.3.135-36), her desire for revenge mirrors her desire to be a strong and dominant force in every situation. Similarly, her ability to organize and direct Toby and Andrew in the plot proves part of the reason she finds so much enjoyment in its execution. Thus, the way in which Campbell directs this scene and portrays Maria further establishes her as a capable and dominant character in the plot.

The directors' portrayals of Maria's actual role in the scheme against Malvolio enhance their chosen interpretations of her character. In both productions Maria enters with the letter and the news that Malvolio is approaching. However, her demeanor and general presence are quite different in each scene. In Nunn's film, Maria comes hurrying out to Toby, Andrew, and Fabian, who are lounging in the garden. She seems to be acting out of a desire to please Toby and gain his favor, rather than out of a desire to please herself, and she ultimately proves successful in this mission. After Malvolio has fallen for the trick with Toby, Andrew, and Fabian watching, Toby happily runs toward Maria with the line, "I could marry this wench for this device" (2.5.158). In Nunn's production, Maria seems the one desiring this love match. She acts in a way which she believes will win Toby's affection, and she proves correct in this assumption. Thus, while Toby begins to show some feeling for Maria, Nunn continues to keep her in the inferior role.

In Campbell's production, Maria remains the dominant force in the scene. Campbell hints at the relationship between Sir Toby and Maria; yet the affection seems completely one-sided. Toby, not Maria, emerges as the one desirous of a love match. His statement, "Here comes the little villain" (2.5.11), is tinged with affection; however, Maria ignores any such implication. Instead, she moves front and center, delivering her news. She revels in the attention, though not in the same way as Nunn's Maria. Nunn

characterizes Maria's enjoyment as coming from Sir Toby's treatment of her. Campbell's Maria simply enjoys being in control and dictating to those around her. She tells the three men how to carry out the trick—"Get ye all three into the box-tree" (2.5.13)—lays down the note, and leaves. She orchestrates, yet does not participate in the ridiculous execution of the scheme. In Campbell's production, she remains a self-sufficient, strong woman. While Toby does show the start of some affection, Maria seems oblivious to his advances and continues to serve only herself.

As the plot begins to take shape, the directors continue to keep Maria within either the dominant or submissive role to which they have thus far confined her. In Nunn's film, Maria seems perfectly content to go along with the trick. As Malvolio makes a fool of himself in front of Olivia, Maria watches, clearly enjoying the amusement and suppressing laughter. However, the dark turn the scheme soon takes is foreshadowed as Malvolio exits Olivia's room to find Toby, Maria, and Fabian waiting for him in the darkened hallway. At this point, the plot still seems light-hearted as the three wittily joke with the pretentious Malvolio. Yet after Malvolio exits, Toby, Maria, and Fabian return to the darkened hall. They are all laughing until Toby's declaration, "We'll have him in a dark room and bound" (3.4.121). The implications of such a statement silence the others. For Maria, making a fool of Malvolio has been fun and relatively harmless, but she seems uncomfortable with taking the scheme to such a level. Still, as she sits on the bench alongside the man she loves, she does not object to this course of action. While she does not approve of this treatment of Malvolio, she is too weak a character to stand up to Sir Toby. As Nunn desires, she remains submissive to him.

While in Nunn's adaptation Maria submits to the will of Sir Toby, she remains self-willed in Campbell's production. Toby emerges as the devious instigator in the plot against Malvolio in Nunn's film. But Maria seems the dominant force in Campbell's interpretation. She is more controlled during her interaction with Olivia, thus seeming deceitful and conniving in this production. She does have fun with the scheme; however, there is also the sense that she enjoys the power and control she holds within this plot. She and Toby maintain a much more even role as they comically provoke Malvolio. And Toby's line, "We'll have him in a dark room and bound" (3.4.121), which was so disturbing in Nunn's version, is completely passed over in Campbell's stage production. Although in Nunn's interpretation, Maria and Fabian are disturbed by the course of action, in Campbell's version, Maria and Fabian

seem pleased. Thus, Maria remains as dominant a force as Sir Toby. Her authority, combined with the superiority which has already been established through her previous characterization and her physical appearance, continues to keep her in the dominant position in this play.

Her feelings regarding the treatment of Malvolio become more apparent as they actually carry out the plot against the steward. In the text, Maria instructs Feste and instigates the start of the trick: "Nay, I prithee put on this gown and this beard, make him believe thou art Sir Topas the curate. Do it quickly. I'll call Sir Toby the whilst" (4.2.1-3). Nunn omits these lines, removing her as a controlling and willing player in the plot. Instead, he has her uncomfortably helping dress Feste. Once Sir Toby enters the scene, she completely moves aside, separating herself from the action and deferring to Toby's decisions. She seems somewhat upset with the entire course of actions, pouting with her arms crossed. Toby definitely holds the controlling role in this plot. He dictates the course of the trick, marking the end with the lines, "I would we were well rid of this knavery. If he may be conveniently delivered, I would he were, for I am now so far in offence with my niece that I cannot pursue with any safety this sport to the upshot" (4.2.60-63). In the text, this line indicates both Toby's and Maria's exit. However, Nunn chooses to further emphasize the dominance of Sir Toby by having him turn to Maria and forcefully and inappropriately kiss her. He then exits. Maria seems uncomfortable and embarrassed, but the weakness of her character comes through as she then turns and follows behind Sir Toby. She is not a controlling force in either the plot against Malvolio or in her relationship with Toby.

Quite the opposite, in Campbell's production, Maria never compromises her own desires for those of the other characters. She retains a prominent role in the plot against Malvolio, arranging and ordering the preparation for the Sir Topas trick. Furthermore, Maria seems to enjoy the actual execution of the trick as much as, if not even more than, the other characters. She and Toby eagerly watch and can barely control their laughter. In no way does Maria seem offended or uncomfortable with this course of action. Thus, she remains a strong force in the plot against Malvolio. Further, Campbell does not diminish her power by having her succumb to Sir Toby. In Nunn's film, Toby's line, "Come by and by to my chamber" (4.2.64), is addressed to Maria, who subsequently follows after him. In Campbell's production, they exit together, holding hands—setting them on a more equal level. Maria never chases

after Sir Toby. Additionally, even though the line seems to suggest a love connection between the two characters, Maria never reveals any sign of real affection. A relationship, though implied by the text, is not obvious in this production. Maria remains a self-willed, independent woman, resisting oppression from the men around her.

After this scene, Maria never appears again in the text. Fabian recounts her marriage to Sir Toby, but she is not physically present beyond this point. However, in both Nunn's film and Campbell's stage production, Maria does have an additional role. In Nunn's adaptation, Feste witnesses Toby and Maria's marriage and consequent departure, reinforcing Nunn's vision of Feste "as an observer and to some extent a teller of tales."[15] For Nunn, Maria's importance lies in her affection for Sir Toby. Thus, she should be seen as achieving her goal, happy with Toby in the church. Yet during their departure, Maria clearly sees Feste and seems uncomfortable with his viewing her and Sir Toby in this situation. Even at this last moment, she still appears an insecure and dependent character. She needs Toby, despite his flaws—not an admirable characteristic. Fabian confirms her dependence as he recounts their elopement: "Maria writ / The letter, at Sir Toby's great importance, / In recompense whereof he hath married her" (5.1.351-53). Though a marriage should be an exciting announcement, Fabian's tone is somewhat dismissive and disapproving. Neither Sir Toby nor Maria is an impressive character in the film. In the end, he remains an unpleasant, ridiculous character, and she seems weak and pathetic in her devotion to him. However, their roles remain in line with patriarchal binaries; she is submissive and he is dominant.

In Campbell's production, Maria reappears upon Toby and Andrew's entrance after Sebastian's attack on them. As Andrew recounts their injury, she seems sincerely concerned and clasps her heart at the sight of the bedraggled Toby. Though her action indicates some concern, a love connection is still not believable. Toby, especially in this state, seems too ridiculous in comparison to Maria. They can conspire and enact plots together, but any deeper affection is implausible. When Fabian announces their marriage, he seems to find the news exciting, but the audience seems to find this ending surprising, considering the previous relationship between Toby and Maria. Maria is simply too strong a character to be seen as the companion for Sir Toby. Perhaps she could be his care-taker, but not his wife.

Thus, both productions reach the resolution of Maria's plot-line: "Maria writ / The letter, at Sir Toby's great importance, / In

recompense whereof he hath married her" (5.1.351-53). However, neither production provides a satisfactory resolution. *Twelfth Night* is a play of excess. The opening lines of the play establish this theme: "If music be the food of love, play on, / Give me excess of it that, surfeiting, / The appetite may sicken and so die" (1.1.1-3). Within the text, Maria is an excessive character in her ability to be both masculine and feminine. This ability supports what Toril Moi describes as Helene Cixous' "strong belief in the inherently *bisexual* nature of all human beings."[16] Yet Nunn and Campbell reject this characterization of Maria and carve away her excess by emphasizing only one of these aspects of her persona. Ultimately, the depictions of Maria in Nunn's film and Campbell's production represent the opposing binaries within "patriarchal binary thought."[17] Though her character resists, they force her to conform to the roles designated for women by men. Nunn creates a conservative and needy gentlewoman (feminine), whereas Campbell depicts Maria as a headstrong, independent force in the play (masculine). Campbell seems to be allowing her more freedom through her masculine behavior, though this seeming freedom proves only another form of oppression. Maria becomes a dominant force in the play through imitating the behavior of the men around her. Thus she participates in "mimicry," which "only succeeds in reinforcing the patriarchal discourse."[18] Within the text, Maria unacceptably breaks away from the designated female roles, and Nunn and Campbell are clearly uncomfortable with such a departure from the hierarchical binaries. Judith Butler reiterates the Lacanian opinion that "all gender ontology is reducible to the play of appearance."[19] Thus, Nunn and Campbell simply choose to "play" Maria's character in a way that adheres to patriarchal assumptions.

Nunn and Campbell clearly cannot accept a woman who mediates the hierarchal binaries. They change her characterization to force her to conform. Shakespeare, however, allows her to oscillate in this gray area. She possesses both masculine and feminine traits. Yet all three versions of the play leave Maria in the same position, marrying Toby. In watching the film and play production, the problem with this resolution is obvious: Nunn makes her pathetic in her dependence upon Toby; the audience feels sorry for her with such a husband. Campbell, on the other hand, basically ignores the relationship until the final announcement, making the marriage unbelievable. Nevertheless, no matter how *Twelfth Night* is directed, the importance lies in the fact that this marriage does occur. Within the context of patriarchy,

a woman must conform to the will of men, and marriage ensures that this happens.

Shakespeare allows for Maria to challenge the position of women, only to force her into submission in the final scene. Initially, he allows for her "excess," yet, in resolving her plot line, his decision mirrors the conclusion of Orsino's opening lines: "Enough, no more, / 'Tis not so sweet now as it was before" (1.1.7-8). Maria's excess ultimately proves unacceptable and, as is the case with most female characters in Shakespeare, the playwright resolves her situation by having her become a wife. All three women end the play appropriately aligned with a man. Maria and Olivia are actually married, thus seen as wives at the end. Though Viola remains unwed and in her male attire, the expectation lies in her continued service to Orsino through marriage. Shakespeare allows for the existence of strong female characters only to ultimately restrict them. Maria resists the confines of patriarchy, and marriage to Toby proves her "recompense" for this behavior.

Notes

1. William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1997), 5.1.351-53. Subsequent references to Shakespeare's plays from this volume will be noted in the text.

2. Trevor Nunn, dir., *Twelfth Night: Or What You Will*, Fine Line Features, 1996.

3. Danny Campbell, dir., *William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night or What you Will*, Smothers Theatre, Malibu, 4-8 April 2006.

4. Kelli Marshall, "'How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria?': A Problematic (Re)Interpretation of Maria in Trevor Nunn's *Twelfth Night,*" *Literature Film Quarterly* 30 (2002): 217.

5. Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1985), 165.

6. Francois Laroque, "Interview Given by Trevor Nunn, Director of the Film *Twelfth Night*, to Francois Laroque," *Cahiers Elisabethains: Late Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 52 (1997): 94.

7. Nicholas R. Jones, "Trevor Nunn's *Twelfth Night*: Contemporary Film and Classic British Theatre," *Early Modern Literature Studies: A Journal of Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century English Literature* 8 (2002): 10.

8. Marshall, "How Do You Solve," 218.

9. Laroque, "Interview Given by Trevor Nunn," 93.

10. Ibid., 91.

11. Ibid., 91.

12. Laurie Osborne, "Cutting up Characters: The Erotic Politics of Trevor Nunn's *Twelfth Night*," *Spectacular Shakespeare: Critical Theory and Popular Cinema,* ed. Courtney Lehmann and Lisa S. Stark (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2002), 97.

13. Linda Anderson, *A Place in the Story: Servants and Service in Shakespeare's Plays* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 195.

14. R. W. Maslen, "*Twelfth Night*, Gender, and Comedy," in *Early Modern English Drama: A Critical Companion*, ed. Garret A. Sullivan Jr., Patrick Cheney, and Andrew Hadfield (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 138.

15. "Shakespeare in the Cinema: A Film Directors' Symposium," *Cineaste* 24 (1998).

16. Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics*, 108.

17. Ibid., 104.

18. Ibid., 142.

19. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 60.