

The Representation of Communitas in the Forest of Arden: Shakespeare's *As You Like It*

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Abstract: In *As You Like It*, Shakespeare creates the Forest of Arden as a transitional liminal site where the characters undergo a process of becoming and transformation. While it is possible to analyse the individual experience of liminality and focus on the influence of the liminal place on the characters of the play, the play has a revealing case for the examination of the collective experience of liminality as well. Communitas, in Victor Turner's terms, refers to a group or a community's going through a rite of passage *en masse*. Accordingly, the group of exiles living in Arden who escape from the tyranny of Duke Frederick develop a bond of equality and a sense of freedom in an anti-structural attitude. Duke Senior and other courtiers in the forest communally experience liminality during the period between their separation from the court and their eventual return. Moreover, Duke Senior's daughter, Rosalind, and her cousin Celia are engaged in the same process upon their arrival to Arden. While both of these groups fit into Turner's definition of communitas and particularly share certain characteristics of ideological communitas, their experience can be grounded on the basis of their gender that divides them into two as male communitas and female communitas. This paper aims to scrutinise how these two groups collectively experience liminality in Arden and to explore the nuances of each communitas by framing the issue in Turner's conceptualisation of the term.¹

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Shakespeare'in *Size Nasıl Geliyorsa* Adlı Oyunundaki Arden Ormanı'nda Eşikte Topluluğun Tasviri

Öz: *Size Nasıl Geliyorsa* adlı oyunda Shakespeare, Arden Ormanı'nı karakterlerin değişim ve dönüşüm süreci yaşadığı geçici, eşikte bir alan olarak yaratmıştır. Oyunda, bireysel eşiklik deneyimini analiz etmek ve eşikte mekânın oyun karakterleri üzerindeki etkisini vurgulamak mümkünken, oyun kolektif eşiklik deneyiminin incelenmesi için elverişlidir. Victor Turner'in deyişiyle, "communitas" bir grup ya da bir topluluğun hep birlikte geçiş dönemi töreninden geçmesidir. Bu bağlamda, Duke Frederick'in zulmünden kaçıp Arden'da yaşayan sürgün grup anti yapısal bir duruşla eşitlik bağı ve özgürlük hissi geliştirmiştir. Ormandaki Duke Senior ve diğer saraylılar, saraydan ayrıldıkları ve sonunda döndükleri süre boyunca toplu olarak eşikliği tecrübe etmektedir. Ayrıca, Duke Senior'in kızı Rosalind ve onun kuzeni Celia, Arden'a varışlarından itibaren benzer bir sürece girmektedir. Her iki grup Turner'in communitas tanımına uymakta ve özellikle ideolojik communitas'ın bazı özelliklerini taşımaktayken, bu grupların

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deneyimleri onları erkek communitas ve kadın communitas olarak ikiye ayıran cinsel farklılıklarıyla temellendirilebilir. Bu çalışma, Turner'ın kavramsallaştırdığı bağlamda communitas'ı çerçeveleyerek, oyundaki bu iki grubun kolektif bir şekilde Arden'da eşikliği nasıl yaşadığını analiz etmeyi ve her bir grubun farklılıklarını araştırmayı hedefler.

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**Introduction**

In *As You Like It* (1599-1600), William Shakespeare sets the first act at Duke Frederick's court, but the rest of the events takes place in the Forest of Arden which is the main setting of this comedy. Even though there is an attempt to associate Arden with a distant French setting owing to the characters' names and their use of French words, it is not easy to identify the forest's exact location. Coloured by the traits of English culture and historical details, Arden emerges as an in-between site of contradictions, transition and transformation for the characters. When Duke Senior, his courtiers, and later Rosalind, Orlando and their companions escape from the tyrannical rule at the court and reach Arden, they go through a rite of passage. The period between their separation from the court and their return to the restored order at the court turns into a time when they all experience liminality in exile. From this vantage point, it is possible to regard the Forest of Arden as a liminal place because it becomes the in-between transitory site for the characters who experience a process of becoming there. More tellingly, the liminal forest entangles with the characters that occupy it in that they are observed to collectively experience liminality. With respect to the British anthropologist, Victor Turner's understanding of liminality and its communal experience, the two groups that undergo a liminal process – respectively Duke Senior and his followers, and Rosalind with Celia – emerge as communitas that refers to the community who collectively live in an anti-structural form in a state of in-betweenness and ambiguity for a temporary period. This paper attests to the claim that male and female groups, both of which resist the oppressive rule of the court and go into exile in Arden, can be analysed in the light of Turner's definition of communitas. Taking gender binaries into account, this paper sets out to analyse the collective experience of liminality by male and female communitas in Shakespeare's comedy and reach a conclusive argument about their differences.

The Concept of Community in Early Modern England and the Arden Community

Before examining the representation of *communitas* in Shakespeare's comedy, it is necessary to explore the understanding of community in the early modern period. In *The New World of Words* (1658), a dictionary compiled by Edward Phillips, society is defined as "company, conversation, civil intercourse, fellowship, friendship: also a company of several persons joined together for some common interest, or to assist one another in the management of any particular benefits" ("Society"). Phillips delineates community as a comparatively small unit within the society: "the having things in common; partnership: also a body of men united in a civil society for their mutual advantage; as a corporation, the inhabitants of a town, the companies of tradesmen" ("Community"). Before the publication of this dictionary over a century, William Harrison must have had his own definition of social stratification so that he clearly divided the Elizabethan society into four main groups in 1577. Based on a strictly hierarchical rank, Harrison's category consists of "four sorts, as gentlemen, citizens or burgesses, yeomen, and artificers or labourers" (2). Obviously, Harrison's classification of society refers to a kind of organisation formed by financial power and status in the Elizabethan period. In addition to this broad division, it is possible to classify Elizabethan society in different ways. As a point of interest, Alan Everitt argues that England has never been limited to the descriptions of "a single community, a unitary society" (6). Drawing on Everett's claim, early modern English society during Elizabeth I's reign can be reviewed as a palette of different communities.

The major tenets of England's early modern community are about the divisions of "rank, gender and age, the values of hierarchy and place" all of which create power relations (Griffiths, Fox and Hindle 2). In addition to the status of wealth, the authorial hierarchy of the State and the Church grouped the Elizabethan society. While the courtly society was the centre of governmental authority and formed the community of the nobility, the Church played a significant role in the organization of a religious community. There was also a clear division between male and female communities in the public and domestic spheres. While the patriarchal society was the main component of the web of relations, the feelings of sisterhood and solidarity united women in family units or local communities. More significantly, geography, landscape and settlement were key elements of social classification that offered various subcategories. Considering that regional differences determined the social, economic and cultural aspects of life, they shaped the characteristics of communities. Accordingly, there occurred a division between the city and countryside, the centre and periphery, the court and provincial, and urban community and rural community.

Considering these strains, Shakespeare is one of the playwrights that bring every stratum of early modern society into focus so that his "theatrical audience sees the material of real life presented in meaningful form" on stage (V. Turner, *Anthropology* 27). Fittingly, Shakespeare's comedy, *As You Like It*, represents different types of community

in early modern England. Contrasting the life at the court and in the Forest of Arden, the play offers a contrast between the courtly, urban society and the pastoral, rural community in that it illustrates the connection between the landscape and the development of community. Undoubtedly, the court society, epitomised by Duke Frederick and Oliver who both have abused their brothers' positions and rights, denotes the practices of tyrannical power, corruption and abusive authority at the court. In stark contrast, the community in the Forest of Arden, consisting of Duke Senior and his courtiers, the newcomers escaping from Duke Frederick and Oliver's oppression and rustic inhabitants, is positioned against all of the characteristics associated with the court. In this framework, Shakespearean scholars initially have focused on the dynamics of pastoral community depicted in this comedy. As Shakespeare borrows from Thomas Lodge's pastoral romance *Rosalynde, or Euphues' Golden Legacy* (1590), he makes use of pastoral conventions. Set in pastoral Arden, the play celebrates the values and virtues of pastoral community that the courtiers have participated in. Anne Barton refers to the "sylvan community" in Arden (12) whereas Jeffrey S. Theis emphasises the variety of "communities" in the forest as "lovers, fairies, shepherds, courtiers, and townspeople all populate the wood" (19). Secondly, the comparison of Duke Senior with Robin Hood in the play invites readings of the Robin Hood community in the Forest of Arden. Granted that the stories about Robin Hood and his men in the forest present "an alternative, utopian, view of what the social order could be" (Pollard 128), the exiles taking refuge in Arden under the leadership of Duke Senior are related to Robin Hood's community and its ideals represented in Shakespeare's play (Potter 89-90). Moreover, the discussions on the pastoral community and the allusion to Robin Hood enable some to incorporate a political perspective to identify the forest community. Paul Joseph Zajac, for instance, comments on the "political community through the affective agency of Duke Senior" (325).

It is true that the action of Shakespeare's comedy culminates in the portrait of the foresters in terms of their exile and settlement in a rural landscape which is juxtaposed with the court. Having concentrated on the evaluation of the forest community by Shakespearean scholars, it is possible to observe that there is a tendency to focus on one major aspect of the community. What emerges here is that there is still a gap in the studies on the Arden community as they lack an inclusive definition of the forest community in different aspects. Hence, this paper aims to propose a new understanding of the community in the Forest of Arden by making use of Victor Turner's definition of *communitas* which refers to the collective experience of liminality. Among the studies on community,² this paper employs Turner's terminology in two respects. First, the study of

² Giorgio Agamben, Jean-Luc Nancy and Robert Esposito's works can be counted as the cornerstone of philosophical studies on the concept of community. While Agamben focuses on the linguistic turn of communication within the community, Nancy, following Heidegger's trajectory, contemplates on the ontological and existential aspects of communal life. In response to Agamben and Nancy's studies, Esposito develops his ideas on the ethical, economic and political facets of *communitas* by borrowing from the medical term *immunitas*. Although the theories of these philosophers are of significance, their ideas are not applicable to the community represented in Shakespeare's comedy. For further research, the following sources can be listed: Agamben's *The Coming Community*, Nancy's *The Inoperative*

liminality has been revived during the liminal period of the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, it is timely to read Shakespeare's plays in terms of liminality. More significantly, in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, the liminal state of being in exile defines the foresters as a liminal community as they temporarily stay in the in-between and transitory place. And, the liminal group, according to Edith Turner, can be identified in nature (2) as can be exemplified in Shakespeare's illustration of the liminal community in the Forest of Arden. Considering that the experience of exile in *As You Like It* has not been examined in terms of the liminal community before, defining the Arden community as *communitas* will offer a new interpretation.

The Definition and Types of Communitas

Following Arnold van Gennep's study of rites of passage, Victor Turner extensively dealt with and popularised the term of liminality with his critically acclaimed definition that "[l]iminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial" (*Ritual* 95). In his studies on liminality, Turner not only focused on the attributes of liminality but also broadened the scope of this concept. As a case in point, Turner's understanding of liminality indicates that it is not merely about an individual's process of becoming that situates him/her in an in-between state of transition and transformation. Liminality can also be a communal experience as Turner delineates this kind of a liminal society "as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated *comitatus*, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders" (*Ritual* 97). Borrowing from Martin Buber's use of "*communitas*" in exchange for "community," Turner defines the collective experience of liminality as *communitas* (*Ritual* 126). Accordingly, the sudden changes that abruptly force a society or a community to temporarily experience an anti-structural state lead people to feel a sense of equality and fellowship. In *Blazing the Trail*, Turner pointedly notes that the liminal community is a "social antistructure, meaning by it a relational quality of full, unmediated communication, even communion, between definite and determinate identities, which arises spontaneously in all kinds of groups, situations, and circumstances" (58-59). While people detach themselves from the structure, order and norms of ordinary life, they build an alternative community with a network of comradeship and a sense of in-betweenness. To exemplify his concept, Turner provides an example from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1610-1611). According to Turner, Gonzalo's commonwealth is an instance of *communitas* because this community is not restricted by structural boundaries, and they reject hierarchical rank within a state of equality and innocence: "[A]mong his innocent people there would be no treason, felony, sword, pike, knife, gun – with which he appears to equate the need of any engine, as

Community and Being Singular Plural, Esposito's *Communitas: The Origin and Destiny of Community and Terms of the Political: Community, Immunity, Biopolitics*.

though war, conflict, or indeed any 'politicking' were necessarily connected with technology, even of the most rudimentary sort" (*Ritual* 136).

Going into more detail about his concept, Turner posits that there are three types of *communitas*. He calls the first one "spontaneous or existential *communitas*" which "can never be adequately expressed in a structural form, but it may arise unpredictably at any time between human beings who are institutionally reckoned or defined as members of any or all kinds of social groupings, or of none" (*Ritual* 137). This first type cannot be stranded by any structural patterns and the members of the liminal community experience transformation in a way that they collectively discover their commonality. While Turner associates spontaneous *communitas* with enjoyable and magical moments of life, he defines the second kind of *communitas* as "the attempt to capture and preserve spontaneous *communitas* in a system of ethical precepts and legal rules" (*Blazing* 59). Unlike spontaneous *communitas*, the liminal group is engaged with an organised system in normative *communitas* due to temporal consciousness (*Ritual* 132). Lastly, ideological *communitas* is Turner's third category which is "a label one can apply to a variety of utopian models of societies based on existential *communitas*" (*Ritual* 132). Among the three types, Turner acknowledges a connection between spontaneous and ideological *communitas* regarding that the latter one is about the exposition of what spontaneous *communitas* experiences in a concrete form.

Correspondingly, in *As You Like It*, those in exile because of the oppressive rule at the court constitute two groups of *communitas* in Turner's terms. Duke Senior and his followers are in Arden because Duke Senior's younger brother, Duke Frederick, usurped his position. While the father and his courtiers go into exile, his daughter Rosalind initially remains at Duke Frederick's court with her cousin Celia. Later on, Duke Frederick regards Rosalind as a threat to his political power and banishes her from the court. Yet Celia does not want to abandon Rosalind so she and the court fool Touchstone leave the court with her and they go to the Forest of Arden together in disguise. Meanwhile, Orlando suffers from his elder brother Oliver's oppression at the court and escapes from the court in company with his old servant Adam in order to save his life. In Arden, he and Adam join Duke Senior's group. At the heart of Shakespeare's play lies the act of going into exile which is itself a liminal action. As those exiles are separated from their former life and identities and transgress certain boundaries, their experience can be tied to liminal experience. In addition, they communally experience liminality after they are banished and choose to live in exile. In the frame of Turner's study of *communitas*, the presentation of male and female communities in Arden can be analysed. Accordingly, Duke Senior's male *communitas* and Rosalind's female *communitas* unfold communal experience of liminality in Arden as both challenge the ideology of the court and experience a process of becoming in a transitory period. Particularly, their alternative communities come into tune with Turner's delineation of ideological *communitas* but in different veins. While the male community come together and go through a liminal process in a struggle against the

tyrannical rule, the female group spontaneously emerge and grow into ideological *communitas* in resistance not only to the court but also to the patriarchal control.

A Probe into Ideological *Communitas* in the Forest of Arden

Broadly conceived, the characters in Shakespeare's comedy become refugees in Arden since they experience a serious conflict and crisis with those in authority and power: Duke Senior and courtiers vs Duke Frederick; Rosalind and Celia vs Duke Frederick; and, Orlando vs Oliver. Considering their circumstances in Arden, many Shakespearean scholars have attempted to prove or confute the argument about the pastoral traits of the forest life and community in *As You Like It* (Bulman 597-602; Gifford 81-88; McFarland 101-117; Tomarken 4-26; Young 40-72). More than the ongoing discussions on the pastoral community, it is possible to shed light on the forest community with respect to their collective liminal experience. Fundamental to their communal liminality is the transition marked by their exile after the separation from the court. Actually, following the trouble at the court, the characters' ordinary course of life is disrupted considering that they have to give up their social life and status and retreat into exile in a new environment. The forest hosts all of these characters after their escape from the court until their return to the restored court in the end. During the intermediate period, these characters undergo a process of becoming by letting the forest transform their identities. That is to say, they experience liminality in Arden between their separation and reintegration into the courtly society when they are in exile. In the play, the reader/audience is shown that their involvement with liminality is communal. As in the cases of Duke Senior with the courtiers—Orlando and Adam and Rosalind-Celia, they spontaneously unite in a period of ambiguity and crisis that drives them to a process of change. In the forest, they can be regarded as a community "running *counter* to the stratified and rule-governed conception of society, in the space that Turner called *liminality*, in which social distinctions are temporarily suspended" (Patterson 60-61). In this regard, they accord well with the characteristics of *communitas* as the Arden community appear to refuse the restrictive hierarchies and order that trouble them. They develop a sense of equality and share common values, creating a kind of paradise for themselves in the forest.

Having established the Arden community's relationship with liminality, it is possible to initially deal with male *communitas* in detail. Before the foresters appear on stage, they are introduced to the reader/audience by Charles, Duke Frederick's wrestler, when he tells Oliver that Duke Senior is living in the Forest of Arden along with "a many merry men with him, and there they live like old Robin Hood of England. They say many young gentlemen flock to him every day and fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world" (1.1.110-114). Charles's definition of Duke Senior's new community is of significance on the grounds that those in Arden are associated with a famous rebel figure Robin Hood, and their life creates a utopic vision for others. The connection between Robin Hood's community and that of Duke Senior illustrates that the group in Arden are

like outlaws who refuse the hegemony of hierarchical boundaries and oppressive system of government. Undoubtedly, their Robin Hood-like community suggests a network of unhierarchical relations, but Duke Senior's position may seem problematic. Although Duke Senior's men still regard him as a leader to guide them, his "dukeship is a personal quality, not a position conferred by or imposed upon the community" (Potter 89). Given this focus, Duke Senior's role in the group can be considered a representative act to define the whole community. In this light, the courtiers in the forest are not in a power struggle in a way that they rebel against the corrupt court of Duke Frederick by living an alternative utopic life without any practice of power or tyranny. In the play, Robin Hood becomes a point of reference to reveal that the male community in exile as outlaws is an anti-authoritarian group living in the forest. While Arden becomes a site of resistance, the male community collectively dissolve the structures and norms that make them grow a sense of outsiderhood. In Edith Turner's terms, this *communitas* emerges "from necessity – to rid themselves of their concern for status and dependence on structures, and see their fellows as they are" (1-2). Therefore, away from the court, the foresters choose to live happily, and their communal life is based on the feeling of equality and comradeship. Therefore, in Arden, as Amiens's song manifests, they "see no enemy" (2.5.6) since everyone in this community is "pleased with what he gets" (2.5.36). They enjoy life in nature and only complain about the wintry weather that they cannot control.

What is more, the presence of male *communitas* in Arden is akin to ideological *communitas*. In fact, Duke Senior and other courtiers in the forest constitute an alternative community characterised by their sense of solidarity, liberty and equality. In contrast to the act of usurpation and the feelings of enmity and ambition at the court, male *communitas* collectively supports each other in a protected environment. It is Duke Senior who puts an emphasis on their equality in this community as he calls all of them "co-mates and brothers in exile" (II.i.1). They conduct the same attitude towards strangers in the forest as can be observed in the arrival scene of Orlando and Adam. When Orlando is desperately in search of food for Adam in Arden, he interrupts the feast of the courtiers by drawing his sword to have food. Duke Senior's warm welcome with an invitation to their feast shocks Orlando as he says: "Speak you so gently? Pardon me, I pray you. / I thought that all things had been savage here" (II.vii.107-108). Orlando's explanation indicates that he mistakenly relates the foresters to a barbaric and savage community, but it turns out that there is a civilised sharing community that welcomes all. In contrast to Duke Frederick and Oliver who threaten their family to maintain their power at the court, the Arden society does not foster ambition, enmity and rivalry. In reference to the difference between the court and the forest, Duke Senior pointedly notes that "[h]ath not old custom made this life more sweet / Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods / More free from peril than the envious court?" (2.1.2-4). This is to say that the values of their community are in stark contrast to those of the court where Orlando escapes to save his life. The Arden community, unlike the court, transgress the boundaries that limit them at the court. To put it differently, the alternative community go out of structures, norms

and feelings that define the dominant group. This is revealing for their anti-structural pattern that resides in Turner's understanding of *communitas*. When the sense of outsiderhood unites these characters and makes them exist together without restrictive norms, "there tends to go," in Turner's words, "a model of society as a homogeneous, unstructured *communitas*, whose boundaries are ideally coterminous with those of human species" (*Ritual* 132). Duke Senior and other courtiers harmoniously live together and cooperate by breaking down hierarchies in a way that their portrait comes in tune with Turner's definition of communal experience of liminality. It seems that Duke Senior and his men immediately come together, cross the courtly boundaries and live in a state of happiness during the transitional period. The ideal features central to the male community herald the fact that male *communitas* in Arden is an ideological *communitas* in terms of Turner's classification. It is telling that the utopian mode of living as an alternative community presents them as an ideological *communitas*. What emerges here is that this type does not necessarily pose a serious threat to the court in the play. However, the ideal and independent mood of the community offers a criticism of usurpation, corruption and tyranny at the court. Moreover, their anti-structural bonds "in the absence of social and political structures (in the in-between)" suggest that "there is considerable political potential inherent in its [*communitas*'s] manifestations" (Downey, Kinane and Parker 9). Thus, ideological *communitas* in Arden functions to target a political criticism of the court since their communal experience challenges the negative atmosphere of the political institution. Regarding their resistance against Duke Frederick and his court's values and their decision to stay in Arden, ideological *communitas* is poised to denounce and attack the practices of tyrannical figures.

With respect to female *communitas* in the play, it is possible to focus on the sojourn of Rosalind and Celia at first. After Duke Frederick banishes Rosalind from the court, Celia offers Rosalind to go to the Forest of Arden as Rosalind's father is living there. However, unlike Orlando and Adam fleeing from Oliver, Rosalind is aware of the fact that travelling for women is dangerous in their plan to escape together. Thus, Celia persuades Rosalind to disguise themselves. While Celia remains in female attire but with poor clothes in the name of *Aliena*, Rosalind disguises herself as a man, changing her name into *Ganymede*:

A gallant curtal-axe upon my thigh,
A boar-spear in my hand, and in my heart,
Lie there what hidden women's fear there will,
We'll have a swashing and a martial outside[.] (1.3.114-117)

Obviously, the reason for crossdressing is out of necessity because of the patriarchal order and male hegemony in the early modern period. In order to avoid attacks and decrease vulnerability, Rosalind and Celia change their names and identities and make the court fool Touchstone participate in their journey. When they reach Arden, Touchstone is not usually with them and gets involved in a love affair with a country girl called Audrey. Thus, Celia and Rosalind constitute female *communitas* from the moment that they decide to leave the court together. Female solidarity and love immediately unite these women in

opposition to the patriarchal authority and power represented by Duke Frederick. In other words, female *communitas* is not only positioned as opposed to the head of the family but also to the patriarchal and political power vested in Duke Frederick's image. Thus, a strong sense of sisterhood leads Rosalind and Celia to transgress class and gender boundaries in that they go through a process of becoming and embrace liminality.

As a matter of fact, disguise, an element to complicate the storyline in Shakespeare's comedies, is functionally used in the female characters' experience of liminality. Edward Berry explains that the act of disguise "occurs as a phase in a process of self-discovery and self-revelation. In this sense disguise functions very much like the face-painting, masking, or sex reversal characteristics of novices during the liminal period of rites of passage" (84). Accordingly, the act of disguise in this play can be regarded as a transitional act which initiates the liminal process for Rosalind and Celia. Rosalind-as-Ganymede and Celia-as-Aliena leave their old selves behind and remain in limbo before their reintegration into society. After being separated from their usual course of life, they are betwixt their disguised selves and their future identities. Prior to their reincorporation into the social structure as wives, Rosalind and Celia in limbo transform themselves during the transitional period until the restoration of the court. Hence, the act of disguise enables the female characters to experience a passage from girlhood to womanhood/wifeness through their love affairs with Orlando and Oliver so Rosalind and Celia together achieve liminal identities in a similar vein.

By focusing on the liminal experience of female characters in more detail, it is possible to specify their in-betweenness and ambiguity. To begin with Rosalind, one may observe that she oscillates between femininity and forged masculinity because she acts and thinks in two minds. In order to live in Arden, she appears to be a man like Ganymede, but she questions her in-betweenness when she asks Celia: "Do you not know I am a woman?" (3.2.242). Her indeterminacy, a part of her liminal identity, is evident in the scene where she believes that Orlando is dead after seeing a bloody napkin. When she faints, this creates confusion because fainting is associated with weakness and hysterical sentimentality attributed to femininity, but Rosalind-as-Ganymede is in male attire. Thus, Oliver questions Rosalind's identity by stating that "[b]e of good cheer, youth. You a man? / You lack a man's heart" (4.3.162-163). Her ambiguous state manifests her liminality because Rosalind-as-Ganymede is on the edge of manhood and womanhood. Moreover, she not only transgresses gender roles in an in-between status but also destroys gender constructions. This can be evidenced in her relationship with Orlando. When Orlando meets Rosalind-as-Ganymede, the latter promises to help him by demanding that "if you would but call me Rosalind and come every day to my cote and woo me" (3.2.408-409). In this plot, Rosalind-as-Ganymede turns into Ganymede-as-Rosalind so that Rosalind comes to the threshold of more identities. Her two-layered role-playing ostensibly thrives on homoerotic desire. In effect, the tension of homoeroticism is strengthened through the use of the name Ganymede as Ganymede, according to the myth, is the young shepherd abducted by Zeus and serves the god as a cupbearer and a lover. More interestingly,

however, her fluid transition between gender identities refers to her liminal self while she is in a process of becoming. Her transgression evolves into an act that damages the gender-specific barriers as Jean E. Howard argues that Rosalind's portrait "reveals the constructed nature of patriarchy's representations of the feminine and shows a woman manipulating those representations in her own interest, theatricalizing for her own purposes what is assumed to be innate, teaching her future mate how to get beyond certain ideologies of gender to more enabling ones" (119).

In a similar fashion to Rosalind, Celia trespasses on the patriarchal rules and the courtly standards that Duke Frederick represents. Her father regards Rosalind's presence at the court as a threat to Celia claiming that Duke Senior's daughter "robs thee [Celia] of thy [Celia's] name" (1.3.77). However, Celia rebels against her father when she tells Rosalind that "let my [her] father seek another heir" (1.3.96). Her bond with Rosalind is much stronger than her love for Duke Frederick. Moreover, Celia's poor attire is her symbolic rebellion against the father since she rejects the wealth and power of his court. Henceforth, Celia's process of becoming embarks on as a result of her solidarity and her love for Rosalind. Accompanying her cousin in Arden, Celia experiences liminality similar to that of Rosalind. While guiding Rosalind-as-Ganymede in her affair with Orlando, Celia at first observes the dynamics of the romantic relationship and warns Rosalind to control her manners (4.1.189-192). Then, she, like Rosalind, grows into a lover in disguise as Oliver narrates: "But say with me, I love Aliena. Say with her that she loves me. Consent with both that we may enjoy each other" (5.2.7-9). That is to say, Celia changes from a daughter to a lover/wife in the end. Thus, love and marriage take part in her liminal transition, too.

What is mesmerising about the female characters' liminality is that their experience is quite different from other characters. In effect, the play lays bare that Rosalind and Celia found female *communitas*, providing another example of ideological *communitas* in the forest. However, their *communitas* emerges out of necessity because of their gender identity. Although Rosalind and Celia settle down in Arden, they live separately from the rest of the male community. Probably because of their disguise, they choose to live "in the skirts of the forest, like fringe upon a petticoat" (3.2.324-325). The bond between the two figures spontaneously brings them together, and the vulnerability of women makes them connect further. Thanks to their plot of disguise, they are able to lift patriarchal restrictions together. More tellingly, Rosalind and Celia continue their resistance under ideal and utopic circumstances that they create for themselves in the forest. The act of disguise is a sign of their anti-structural community on the grounds that it liberates them from social norms and makes them violate gender and class structures in an ideal way. Therefore, this female community in Arden can be regarded as a kind of ideological *communitas*. Their personal struggle against Duke Frederick demonstrably unfolds the political endeavour of women in a broader perspective. The utopic strain of ideological *communitas* responds with Rosalind and Celia's abolition of the limits that suppress the female self in the early modern period.

Conclusion

The two groups of ideological *communitas* come to the end of their transformation and resolve their liminal identities in the last scene of the play. After Orlando saves Oliver from an attack by wild animals in Arden, the fraternal rivalry is settled, and the brothers are rewarded with romantic love and marriage as Orlando-Rosalind and Oliver-Celia get married. Meanwhile, the forest manifests its liminal agency on Duke Frederick through religious love. Although Duke Frederick aims to reach Arden in order to beat his rivals, he meets a religious man in the forest (5.4.157-160) and decides to dedicate himself to religious life: "His [Duke Frederick's] crown bequeathing to his banished brother [Duke Senior], / And all their lands restored to them [those in Arden as exiles] again" (5.4.161-162). This amounts to saying that the court is restored as the courtiers in the forest are able to return and have a new beginning at the court. Thus, all of them complete their transition and transformation at the end of their exile. Correspondingly, the change of place and the restoration of ideal order are common elements in Shakespeare's comedies so the courtiers' return to the court is inevitable at the end of *As You Like It*. Moreover, the emergence of *communitas* is for a short term because liminality is regarded as a temporary experience by Victor Turner. In this respect, liminal male and female communities in Arden have to resolve. As the members of *communitas* complete their transformation in the forest, the liminal process ends, and the characters reincorporate into the society that they have left before.

Locating the types of *communitas* in *As You Like It*, it seems fair to suggest that ideological *communitas* is central to the community living in the Forest of Arden. The members of male and female groups struggle with the practices of corruption and usurpation at the court. In opposition to the decayed values of the court, they choose to live in exile, which is a liminal act itself, and get involved in a process of becoming by embracing a simple life in nature. Those foresters are bonded with the dominant ties of equality, freedom and solidarity in a positive manner. The communities laden with utopic traits share the characteristics of ideological *communitas* when they collectively go through a transitional process in Arden.

Although the communal liminal experience of the male courtiers and the female pair can be framed within ideological *communitas*, major differences between the two communities derive from their gender identities. The members of the liminal male group, for instance, are in conflict with the political authority as a result of the practices of exploitation and absolutism. When they collectively experience liminality in Arden, they do not need any resources to live their utopian life. In nature, their only vulnerability turns out to be harsh weather conditions. The restoration of their political position at the court announces the cessation of their political resistance and communal liminality. As the court is liberated from tyranny and corruption, the negative circumstances that drive them to exile are lifted so that male *communitas* is easily resolved. Conversely, the experience of female *communitas* is fundamentally teemed with some challenges because of Rosalind

and Celia's gender. Unlike the liminal male group, Rosalind and Celia are in need of protection so they are in disguise. Violating gender and class structures in disguise, they have to live away from the male community and protect themselves by paying for their place even in a natural setting. What is more, they not only oppose the court but also the patriarchal system that imprisons them. Therefore, they need more means such as the act of disguise and material resources in their collective experience of liminality. Additionally, the reintegration of male *communitas* leans upon the restoration of their political power and status at the court. As for female *communitas*, on the other hand, marriage is the fount of their reincorporation into the social structure. As a common element of Shakespeare's comedies, the final scene of *As You Like It* promises the marriage of young couples. This is to say that Shakespeare is not radical in his approach to female *communitas* because Rosalind and Celia have to relocate themselves to a society where male figures have authorial power in the domestic and public spheres. Even though marriage can be regarded as a domestic union for the female figures, it empowers Orlando and Oliver because it entails them strengthening their political position according to the inheritance rights of the court. To speak in these terms, the dissolution of female *communitas* forces Rosalind and Celia to be part of the patriarchal structure again. Albeit Rosalind's appearance in the final scene, Celia's lack of voice and presence upon Oliver's announcement of their affair indicates that the reincorporation of women into the society may not promise an ideal experience in contrast to the sense of freedom and independence that they have as in their female *communitas*. To sum up, the restrictions on female identity come to be seen as the main difference in the collective experience of liminality by male and female *communitas* in the play.

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