

Disguise as Self-Expression In *As You Like It*
through an Analysis of the Rhetorical Devices

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Abstract

In this paper, we would like to analyze how disguise becomes the occasion for a disguised heroine, Rosalind in *As You Like It*, to express her femininity and affections toward her beloved. This analysis will focus on her language including the rhetorical devices by referring to *Reading Shakespeare's Dramatic Language*. Let us introduce the definition of rhetorical devices briefly. Katie Wales regards rhetorical devices as “figures of speech”. Also, she states that these devices “[help] them [poets and playwrights] to [...] probe into nuances of meaning, to provide a vehicle for the emotions of their characters, and to move and manipulate the emotions of readers” (271). As Wales suggests, Rosalind’s language including rhetorical devices are used to indicate the changes of her emotions. Moreover, her language moves the readers’ minds passionately; in other words, we can notice Rosalind’s self-expression which can sometimes be glimpsed when her disguise nearly slips off.

While focusing on Rosalind’s language including some rhetorical devices, on the one hand, we will examine how we can get a glimpse of her femininity through her cross-dressing. On the other hand, we will explore how she completely becomes the character of the shepherd boy Ganymede. Through the two points, we would like to examine how her disguise affects her self-expression. On the one hand, it is clear that Rosalind is about to cast off her disguise through rhetorical devices such as *quaesitio* which means Rosalind’s illogical state and the sudden change of her address toward Orlando when she calls him *thou* instead of *you*. On the other hand, we may say that she completely disguises herself as a shepherd by using some rhetorical devices such as *decorum* and *iffy-an (and)* which enable Rosalind to play Ganymede as a shepherd. This implies that Rosalind expresses her femininity and straightforward feeling toward Orlando without being restricted by the “female virtues” important to women which were “chastity”, ‘silence’ and ‘obedience’” (Kusunoki, *Shieikusupia* 94, trans. mine). Moreover, we would like to focus on how other disguised heroines use these rhetorical devices which are adopted by Rosalind.

It is also important to note that disguised heroines who disguised as boys were acted by boy actors, which is the dramatic device of “double disguise”; in fact, the convention of boy actors acting the role of women as well as men was

common in those days. Thus, this paper focuses on this unique situation; furthermore, we will point out how it affects the ways the disguised Rosalind expresses her real feelings based on the understanding of cross-dressing for Renaissance people.

Through this paper, we would like to stress that disguise does not necessarily hide Rosalind's identity through an analysis of her language, by not only pursuing its literal meaning but focusing on its rhetorical devices.