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Untitling *Galatea*: Erasure, Transformation, and Transgender Allegory

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Abstract

Through examining John Lyly's *Galatea* from the lenses of queer theory and gender theory, it is clear that the play's titular character—herein referred to as Tityrus II—serves as an explicit example of transmasculine identity within Renaissance literature, specifically Renaissance plays. Drawing upon Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity and Agnes Callard's theory of aspiration, this essay explores the repeated enactments of masculinity that produce Tityrus II's gendered substance, revealing a persistent desire to live as authentically male. Through a close reading of *Galatea*, the essay analyzes the ways in which transformation and erasure function as strategies of self-construction and survival by contrasting Tityrus II's comfort with masculine performance to Phillida's resistance to boyhood. In highlighting the relationship between gender enactments within the play, this essay uncovers transgender possibilities within the scope of Renaissance plays.

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Introduction

For centuries, transgender individuals have been hushed into oblivion, their narratives often ignored and erased from various media. Considering literature has always acted as a reflection of the society in which it is written, it would not be unreasonable to find transgender narratives, both implicit and explicit, scattered across various literary genres. Take for instance the playwright John Lyly, who utilizes transformation and erasure to propel queer and transgender narratives in his play *Galatea*. This essay not only posits the unoriginality of identity enactments through clothing and action as transformative towards the self within Renaissance plays, but reasons enactments of gender exist similarly within such works, thereby asserting that Tityrus II, formerly known as Galatea, is a transgender[1] man. Thus, I will be referring to *Galatea*'s main character as "Tityrus II," rather than "Galatea," as well as using masculine pronouns to refer to him.

As to why taking such a stance is important, interest in transgender narratives within Renaissance plays has been a key point of inquiry in recent years. For example, Marjorie Rubright's "Transgender Capacity in Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton's *The Roaring Girl* (1611)" initiates a modern discussion of *The Roaring Girl*'s chief character, Moll. This discourse is furthered by Christine Varnado's book, *The Shapes of Fancy: Reading for Queer Desire in Early Modern Literature*, as Varnado not only outlines Moll's capacity for queer intimacies, but how those capacities lend to transgender possibilities within the play. Although past "feminist scholarship has generally viewed Moll as a cis woman and/or as a crossdresser, scholars might now want to reclaim or recast Moll/Jack as trans, nonbinary, bigender, intersexed, transmasculine, or transbutch (to name but a few possibilities)" (Chess et al. 6). Theorizing about transgender narratives is significant as "engaging critically with the opacities surrounding 'the soma-semantics of gender' is one way of registering a character's transgender capacities" (Chess et al. 7), and "this work helps build meaningful trans histories" (Chess et al.

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13). Simply stated, representation of marginalized identities cannot be constructed lightly. It is important to both respect and affirm the identities of marginalized communities, even within a work of fiction or speculation, if we are to lend legitimacy to the identities being discussed. Hence, Tityrus II will be referred to as such, as referring to him as anything else would detract from accurate and respectful representation.

Transformation and Gender Theory

To bridge the gap between transformation, transness, and becoming, I propose navigating Agnes Callard's *aspiration* alongside Judith Butler's *gender performance*. It is crucial to recognize the role aspiration and gender performance play in the construction of gender, particularly within *Galatea*. Foundationally, David Hume[2] and Aristotle both consider *substance* to be the idea or impression of an object, its *essence* or *self* if you will, which gives the object its identity, rather than its *form*. It is this definition of substance which I'd like to return to throughout this essay, as substance is constructed through aspiration. Hence it is aspiration, through gender performance, which creates *gendered substance*.

Agnes Callard's concept of aspiration holds relevance when considering the nature of expressing internal gender identity. To understand this connection, it may be more prudent to loosely outline what Callard calls *aspiration* and *aspirants* to begin with. Callard's aspiration is the act of *becoming* through repeated action intended to acquire one's innermost values. In no uncertain terms, Callard states,

> The aspirant is trying to change herself in some particular dimension; she is not merely open to changes that might come. She grasps, however dimly, a target with reference to which she guides herself. … the word 'aspirant' is philosophically charged in such a way as to pick out all and only the cases in which the project of becoming someone is also the process of appreciating the values distinctive of becoming that kind of person [, because a]spiration is

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> rational, purposive value-acquisition. (Callard 8)

If aspiration is purposefully obtaining a value for one's *substantial self*, then a person who aspires must be intentionally engaged in repetitive acts until they have become the type of person they value. In extending this thought to theories of gender, a connection must be drawn between the repeated value-acquisition of gender enactments.

Arising as the most significant point of analysis, then, is "the 'real' and its relationship to deception, how imitation constitutes gender, the prosthetic materiality of gender, and the role of narrativization in constructing gender" (Horbury 101), as gender is constructed, not in its capacity to exist as an identity linked to substance, but as a reflection of the substantial self. To that end, Judith Butler discusses the construction of gender through repetitive transformative action. Butler states, "if gender is instituted through acts which are internally discontinuous, then the *appearance of substance* is precisely that, a constructed identity, a performative accomplishment which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, come to believe" (Butler 520). What they mean is that the essence of a thing, of a substance, is constructed through enactment, which allows us as perceivers to associate a form with the intangible essence.

Callard mentions that in discussing aspiration and changes to the self, she is "not discussing a metaphysical question about personal identity over time, but rather an ethical question about a person's true or real or deep self…When you are proud or ashamed of some feature of yourself, you see that feature as having ethical significance" (Callard 32). This so-called ethical significance is formed within substance through enactments of the self. Thus, it is not a question of how one's enacted identity is changed over time, but how enactment portrays the substantial self. Likewise, in discussing Simone de Beauvoir's claim that one is not born a woman, but becomes a woman (de Beauvoir 283), Butler emphasizes that gender identity is "instituted through a *stylized repetition of acts* [and]...the stylization of the body

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[through]...gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self" (Butler 519). Which is to say that the repetitive actions and enactments which result in gendered associations are placed onto substance through essence, rather than form. Afterall,

> Gender reality is performative which means, quite simply, that it is real only to the extent that it is performed. It seems fair to say that certain kinds of acts are usually interpreted as expressive of a gender core or identity, and that these acts either conform to an expected gender identity or contest that expectation. (Butler 527)

When Butler says that gender is performed, they do not mean that gender is something a person can act out, but rather that gender identity as an intangible substance inherent to a person is materialized through form only after repetitive enactments have cultivated the association between genders and specific bodily forms. In *Galatea*, Tityrus II's masculine crossdress and repeated enactments of boyhood are cultivations of his gendered substance redefining his bodily form.

While literary critics have asserted that "sex could be defined by beards or hair length as well as by prosthetic characteristics such as handkerchiefs and codpieces" (Horbury 103), these assertions could be expanded upon through enactments of gender as a means to change sex. We should note that during the Renaissance, boyhood was understood to be a transitional gender on the path to manhood, hence why "boyhood becomes fertile ground for trans identities, which (naturally) are so constituted by transition themselves" (Horbury 112). The construction of femininity or masculinity within gender arises through similar repetitive enactments done by those identifying as women or men, conflating the associated acts with the identity of the forms. However, when we consider gender to be both fluid and constructed, the commonly associated forms of woman and man maintaining an opposite essence of feminine

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or masculine breaks the gender norms society has cultivated. This is what we refer to as transgender identity, and where John Lyly enters the scene, as the enactments of boyhood within *Galatea* are what ultimately lead to Venus' offer to transform either Tityrus II or Phillida's bodies.

An Exploration of Renaissance Plays

During the Renaissance, enactments of gender through external expression were heavily portrayed in plays. As the house dramatist for Children of Paul's, Lyly sought a level of verisimilitude within his plays. During his tenure with Paul's, he pioneered what would become the boy-playing-girl-playing-boy trope with *Galatea*; the trope would prove so compelling that contemporaries such as Shakespeare would quickly incorporate it into their own work. Working with the adolescent actors in Paul's "offered transgressive display of a wholly different order: the boys crossed boundaries of age, gender, and status with virtually every role, upending conventional assumptions about what schoolboys should do and say" (Tosh 88). With the publication of *Galatea*, Lyly was able to engross audiences with fluid displays of gender expression. Notably,

> According to Galenic theories of the human body – in which female genitalia were understood to be an interior, inverted form of a male penis and testes – any woman whose body was 'hot' enough to shake loose their sexual organs was potentially a trans man (male-to-female transition wasn't understood to be spontaneously possible in the same way). (Tosh 95)

The inclusion of gender transformations by female characters through enactments of masculinity by adolescent male stage actors left audiences of the Elizabethan[3] stage enthralled, and has since been marked by its transgender possibilities. But the decision to toy with identity and transformation, both on the stage and on the page, was not isolated to Lyly.

One such example of identity and transformation occurs in Shakespeare's *King Lear*. In

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King Lear, we see transformation through clothing, thus creating a new social identity in the character Kent. Kent's existence confirms that Lyly was not the only Renaissance playwright who saw an opportunity to utilize identity and transformation on the Elizabethan stage. But the core facets of who Kent's character is is what drives the transformation. Kent's identity as Caius is enacted through a drastic change in garment and speech, effectively erasing his previous form in order to create his new form. Kent straightforwardly says, "If but as well I other accents borrow/That can my speech defuse, my good intent…Now, banished Kent,/If thou canst serve where thou dost stand condemned,/So may it come, thy master, whom thou lov'st,/Shall find thee full of labors" (*King Lear* 1.4.1-6). Kent is transformed, but only in an effort to remain a loyal servant to King Lear. The idea that Kent's substance remains unchanged despite his external transformation is touched upon at the play's end, when King Lear himself declares Caius to be dead. Kent simply responds, "No, my good lord, I am the very man—" (*King Lear* 5.3.286), showing that Caius and Kent are one in the same, insofar as his soul, his innate substance, remains unchanged. What is changed is his form, his external shell, not his substantial self.

Abstractly, Kent's transformation into Caius depicts repeated enactments of the self which may change a person's perceived identity, though they maintain their substance, their core selves. Kent's transformation into Caius is a choice he actively makes as an aspirant in order to continue living authentically while continuously seeking the bonds of his past existence. This is exactly what the transgender experience is: a chosen enactment of the self through external expression (ie. clothing, speech, etc.) in an effort to be true to one's gendered substance. However, Kent's admission of disguise and desire to be acknowledged by Lear as "Kent" shows an alignment with his gendered substance and substantial self that rejects the substantive value-change fundamental to gender transition.[4] As Callard discusses, "we reason about how to get what we already want. If we want to understand how substantive value-change

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is possible, we will have to introduce a new kind of reason, one directed not at satisfying wants but rather at generating them" (Callard 10). Kent desires to remain by King Lear's side and aid him in any way he can, thus Caius is born. In allowing himself to transform outwardly, Kent is able to remain a loyal servant and companion to his king. We see a similar transformation in *Galatea*.

Transformation and *Galatea*

Evidently, Lyly took inspiration from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in writing *Galatea*. He not only pulled from ancient Roman mythology, but incorporated the permanence of the singular transformations Ovid's characters experienced (Reid 71). Ovid's narratives were allegorical, the physical transformations he wrote being metaphors for internal changes which "overwhelmingly represented metamorphosis as the (nonphysical) alteration of a dramatic character's psychology or identity" (Reid 73). It is not that Tityrus II is experiencing a physical transformation in order to align with the singular transformations seen in Ovid's work, but that his continued enactment of boyhood allows him to explore expressing his substantial self, insofar as his gender identity has been quieted until this point in his life. As the aspirant, Tityrus II's repeated performances of boyhood allow him the opportunity to obtain a masculine value for his substantial self.

Though hesitant at first, Tityrus II shows incredible comfort with enacting boyhood. What is of critical note here is that while both Tityrus II and Phillida are asked to enact boyhood by their fathers, for fear of their beauty resulting in being sacrificed to Neptune, it is Tityrus II who shows the desire and drive to continue enacting boyhood as the play goes on. Yet, in an interview with Emma Frankland, theater historian Andy Kesson points out, "although both girls end up disguised as boys, the play's structure means that the audience meets Galatea when she is already presenting as male, at least in terms of her costume, whereas it meets Phillida when she is presenting as female" (Frankland and Kesson 287). He is right, as the play opens

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with the scene of Tityrus and Tityrus II sitting under an oak tree, Tityrus II already in masculine attire. The audience has no reason to assume Tityrus II is anything other than male as from the very start, Lyly positions Tityrus II as male.

When Tityrus initially tells Tityrus II to disguise himself as a man, Tityrus II responds, "The destiny to me cannot be so hard as the disguis-/ing hateful" (*Galatea* 1.2.93-94). This description of boyhood as something disgusting and hateful shows a desire to reject appearing in masculine clothing and enacting boyhood. A similar sentiment is shared when Melibeus asks his daughter, Phillida, to disguise herself in men's clothing as well. In a more resolute tone than Tityrus II, when Melibeus tells Phillida that she will need to dress "In man's apparel" (*Galatea* 1.3.15), she replies, "It will neither become my body nor my mind/…For then I must keep company with boys, and/commit follies unseemly for my sex, or keep company/with girls, and be thought more wonton than becometh/me" (*Galatea* 1.3.16-21). Whereas Tityrus II expresses a form of self-loathing, an internalized disgust which could be read as internalized transphobia, Phillida expresses a determination to learn from the experience. The difference between the two is that Tityrus II's initial resistance to boyhood dissipates as he continues to enact boyhood, while Phillida's rejection of enacting boyhood does not.

One instance in which Tityrus II's transness is written into the play is when he chooses to learn boyhood from Phillida, whom Tityrus II thinks is a boy. In stating "I will learn of him how/to behave myself" (*Galatea* 2.1.12-13), Tityrus II displays a capacity for enjoyment and determination to enact boyhood and masculinity accurately. This is reminiscent of Callard's statement that

> [w]e may rely heavily on mentors whom we are trying to imitate…As time goes on, however, the fact (if it is a fact) that we are still at it is usually a sign that we find ourselves progressively more able to see, on our own, the value that we could barely apprehend at first. This is how we work our way into

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> caring about the many things that we, having done that work, care about. (Callard 6)

Which is to say that, like with Butler's theory of gender performance, in aspiring we act, and in acting we become; in other words: aspiration implies enactment. As Tityrus II continues to enact boyhood, he aspires for what he deems accurate enactments. However, aspiration exists as a result of Tityrus II's unchanged substantial self as he begins to recognize his gendered substance.

Tityrus II, who is doing the work of enacting boyhood, shows an increased desire to enact boyhood with authenticity, becoming a boy himself. Afterall, "what aspirants are engaged in is a kind of self-making, self-shaping, or self-creation" (Callard 36), and, here, Tityrus II is an aspirant. Whereas Tityrus II greets the audience as ostensibly male and seeks to learn the proper performance of boyhood, Phillida is always against enacting boyhood and masculinity. Placing her attention on her state of crossdress, Phillida exclaims, "I neither like my gait nor my garments,/the one untoward, the unfit, both unseemly" (*Galatea* 2.1.14-15). Her distaste for masculine attire is evident in her preference for a more feminine walk or dress. As Kesson says, "Phillida is not a fan of wearing boy's clothes, and indeed she seems firmly committed to inhabiting one half of a gender spectrum she wants to insist is binary. For her, gender is a socialized and clothing-based thing, forcing her to 'keep company' with one or other single-sex group and to be outed by her discomfort with her clothes" (Frankland and Kesson 296). Phillida sees her crossdress as a method of survival, an escape from Agar and patriarchal dominance. After meeting Tityrus II she says, "For now, under the colour of my coat, I shall decipher/the follies of their kind" (*Galatea* 2.1.23-24). Not only does Phillida separate herself from Tityrus II, othering the masculine gender, she confirms the outward perception of Tityrus II's maleness. In doing so, rather than learn how to be a boy from Tityrus II, Phillida utilizes her disguise as a means to understand what she sees as the faults of boys and men. Unlike

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Tityrus II, Phillida's goal is not to learn how to become, but rather how to overcome.

It should be noted that here Lyly is touching upon a form of gendered imitation which is now known as *passing*.[5] As passing is enabled by imitation (Horbury 109), it is important to recognize that such imitation is not emblematic of an inauthentic self, but rather "a necessary survival strategy and [is]self-authorship alongside modern trans experiences. Early modern *imitatio* constructs a relationship between masculinity, imitation, and the real that is radically different from that dictated by twentieth-century definitions of transness" (Horbury 111). In other words, the aspirant, Tityrus II, forges external authenticity by enacting boyhood in order to contend with his substantial self. Still, "'passing,' when it is the goal, is very much an intentional, mutually constituted project" in a relationship (Chess 152). Tityrus II's goal is certainly to pass as male, and in the case of his relationship with Phillida, Phillida's continued reference to her love for Tityrus II and affirmation of his enacted masculine identity provides a space for him to explore his gendered substantial self, while also propelling their mutual romantic feelings forward.

Critically, Tityrus II becomes distraught at the prospect of improperly enacting boyhood and masculinity. He laments "How now, Galatea? Miserable Galatea, that having/put on the apparel of a boy thou canst not also put on/the mind!" (*Galatea* 2.4.1-3). His frustration at not being able to think like a boy clearly shows a desire to not only become male externally, but internally as well. Meanwhile Phillida detests the mere act of disguise and performance. This is most noted in her display of discomfort at the ease of thinking like a boy. She says to herself, "Poor Phillida, curse the time of thy birth and rare-/ness of thy beauty, the unaptness of thy apparel and the/untamedness of thy affections!" (*Galatea* 2.5.1-3). Here, we see Phillida's discomfort with not only hiding her womanly beauty, but her ability to commit to a masculine gender performance while falling for Tityrus II. Her remarks on the abnormality of her performance of boyhood speaks more to her internal feelings on her own gender, and

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subsequent discomfort pretending to be a gender with which she is not aligned. This being the reverse experience to that of Tityrus II, Phillida's lack of comfort shows a solid grasp on her gender identity as a woman, and therefore identifies her as cisgender, while Tityrus II's conflict with seemingly not being able to perform boyhood well enough marks him as displaying a level of gender dysphoria.

An idea brought up by Butler is that gender performance can be a strategy of survival. They explain that "as a strategy of survival, gender is a performance with clearly punitive consequences. Discrete genders are part of what 'humanizes' individuals within contemporary culture; indeed, those who fail to do their gender right are regularly punished" (Butler 522). This is true in Lyly's play, as Tityrus II's final resolve to be reshaped by the gods as a man is a calculated move which ensures his survival, and the longevity of his mutual love with Phillida. There are two main points within the text which lead to this conclusion: Phillida's explicit refusal to love a woman and the gods' demand that either Phillida or Tityrus II must be transformed in order to marry.

In the first case, Phillida's rejection of homosexual love is markedly different from Tityrus II's. As the two grapple with loving one another while performing boyhood, they come to the conversation of what it could mean to love openly. What we see in the text is thus:

> *Phillida*. What a toy it is to tell me of that tree, being nothing
> to the purpose! I say it is pity you are not a woman.
> *Galatea*. I would not wish to be a woman, unless it were
> because thou art a man.
> *Phillida*. Nay, I do not wish [thee] to be a woman, for then I
> should not love thee. For I have sworn never to love a
> woman. (*Galatea* 3.2.6-12)

In this conversation, we see Philliada lament that she and Tityrus II are not of the opposite sex.

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However, Tityrus II states that the only way he would want to be a woman is if Phillida were a man. The particulars of this language, "I would not wish to be a woman," despite having been born a maiden, indicates that Tityrus II is unhappy and unwanting in terms of enacting womanhood. Furthermore, "unless it were because thou art a man" frames Tityrus II's gendered substance as masculine. As the two "wrestle privately with their growing feelings, each conscious that to fall for a boy would reveal her protective disguise, even as they take the freedom afforded by male drag to flirt boldly with each other" (Tosh 92), Tityrus II alludes to being aware of Phillida's true sex. Despite awareness of Phillida's femaleness, or perhaps due to this awareness, Tityrus II remains unwavering in his enactment of boyhood. Phillida, content to enact womanhood, replies that she would not love Tityrus II as a woman. This admittance may lead to a subconscious verification of maleness in Tityrus II, as he may be hearing these words from Phillida and feeling justified in maintaining his performance of masculinity and boyhood; and it is this continued performance of masculinity and boyhood which codes Tityrus II as a transgender man.

While Tityrus II and Phillida fall in love under the initial impression that the other is male, the two quickly realize the truth. Tityrus II says to himself, "Ay me! He is as I am, for his speeches be as/mine are" (*Galatea 3*.2.45-46), indicating recognition of their shared sex. Interestingly enough, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, from which *Galatea* is inspired, emphasizes the theme of transformation from one state of being to another. Tityrus II is readily available to accept such a transformation, as the two lovers find comfort in their love for one another, though not in a sapphic nature. I say that the nature of their love is not sapphic, as neither of the involved parties opt to confirm their love through mutually maintaining their birth sex. Rather, they play the parts of boys well enough to initially fool Cupid and Diana, only to opt for the ability to marry after one of their forms is physically altered by Venus. The breadcrumbs are left for readers in Phillida's implication that she loves Tityrus II as a brother, and thus

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Tityrus II should love Phillida in kind. Only, Tityrus II says, "No, I will not, but love thee better; because I cannot/love thee as a brother" (*Galatea* 4.4.15-16). At this point in the play, he is sure Phillida is a woman, but professes romantic love anyway. This is later repeated after the two have been exposed.

Early on, Phillida states, suspecting both herself and Tityrus II to be enacting boyhood despite having the body of a maiden, "It were a shame, if a maiden should be a suitor (a/thing hated in that sex), that thou shouldst deny to be/her servant" (*Galatea* 3.2.15-17). Her affections for Tityrus II, should they both be revealed maidens, are not what she views as being hated by society. No, rather, it is her affections as a maiden for one who could potentially be a maiden as well which is hated. This may be why at the end of the play Phillida decides to profess her love in saying "I will after him, or her, and lead/a melancholy life, that look/for a miserable death" (*Galatea* 4.4.47-48), meaning she expects to suffer or die for her love of another presumed woman. Similarly, Tityrus II declares "Die, Galatea, if thy love be not so!" (Galatea 5.3.148). Here, his sorrow is so great that he would rather die than not be able to love Phillida openly.

When it is revealed that both Phillida and Tityrus II have been enacting boyhood, Neptune intercedes, asking if the women love one another. To this, Tityrus II declares "I had thought the habit agreeable with the sex, and/so burned in the fire of my own fancies" (*Galatea* 5.3.127-128). Phillida in turn announces, "I had thought that in the attire of a boy there could/not have lodged the body of a virgin, and so was inflamed/with a sweet desire which now I find a sour deceit" (*Galatea* 5.3.129-131). This admittance on the part of both shows that Tityrus II and Phillida are in love with one another, which is why when Venus asks them if either would consent to their sex being transformed in order to marry, Phillida says "I am content, so I may embrace Galatea" while Tityrus II says "I wish it, so I may enjoy Phillida" (*Galatea* 5.3.158-159). While both are stating they will consent to the change, the language

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they use to consent with hold very different connotations. Phillida states that she is "content," whereas Tityrus II responds to Venus that he "wish[es] it," indicating an aspirant's purposeful value-acquisition.

Furthermore, Phillida and Tityrus II's use of the words "embrace" and "enjoy" both reveal an intentionality towards a masculine value-acquisition and hint at sexual acts. Phillida's verbiage aligns with the feminine gender, whereas Tityrus II's aligns with the masculine gender. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary,[6] "embrace" stems from the Old French prefix *em-*, meaning "to put into," and the Latin word for arms, *bracchium*. The term, modernly defined as "to enclose, cherish, or welcome," literally means "to put into one's arms." Phillida is read as either saying she "welcomes Galatea," indicating she will accept Tityrus II's transformation, or alluding to wrapping her arms around Tityrus II in the missionary sexual position. Meanwhile, Tityrus II selects the word "enjoy," meaning "to take pleasure in." The phrasing here is read as either indicating euphoria at the prospect of transformation, or denoting an inclination for deriving sexual pleasure from Phillida's body. Regardless, both parties are affiliating themselves with a particular gender and sex at this moment. Lyly's diction reveals—

> that they will happily undergo this change in one of their bodies in order to embrace and enjoy one another, [although]there is nothing explicitly heterosexual about those two acts and no physical reason that the lovers would have to be male and female to do those things; their agreement, therefore, seems to be more about the social aspects of creating a publicly sanctioned relationship. (Chess 163)

The lovers are consenting to a transformation in order for their love to be recognized by society, yes, but it is Tityrus II who desires the permanence of such transformation. Unlike Phillida, Tityrus II is the one whose language and enactments veer towards the masculine, further implying a sense of unity with enactments and feeling of boyhood.

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Residing within Tityrus II and Phillida's decision for one of their bodies to be transformed is the profound realization that, despite the greater quantity of joy, sorrow exists within transformation. Throughout the play, both Tityrus II and Phillida are fixated on the impossibility of their love, not because they find their mutual love unbearable, but that their mutual love as women is deemed impossible by the confines of their society. Their resolve when confronted by Venus in the final act ultimately reveals a necessity for social acceptance. As Callard says, "[i]f we want to understand how substantive value-change is possible, we will have to introduce a new kind of reason, one directed not at satisfying wants but rather at generating them" (Callard 10). Tityrus II may not initially appear to desire enactment and becoming of boyhood and manhood, but through his repeated enactment of boyhood, discovers, or generates, a desire to participate in boyhood and manhood, for the sake of his love, just as Kent desired the performance of loyalty for the sake of Lear.

Conclusion

Tityrus II not only erases his previous form, but through transformation is able to live as his authentic substantial self. However, while it is this essay's stance that Tityrus II explicitly changes sex, it is not his capacity for transformation which codes him as transgender, but rather his aspiration towards a masculine gendered substantial self. Kent's hyperperformance gives us insight into how enacted expressions of gendered substance can be a means of exploring an authentic self, as well as a means of survival. Venus' offer to transform one of the lovers' bodies to that of a male preserves the cis-heteronormative hegemony enforced by the gods and their community, but ultimately has no bearing on Tityrus II's gender identity. His narrative not only provides evidence of awareness of transgender identities during the Renaissance era, but emphasizes the metaphysical connection between substance, self, and form. The significance of such an undertaking cannot be overlooked, nor has the discourse surrounding identity within Renaissance plays been isolated to topics of gender.

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At the forefront of such discourse is Keith Hamilton Cobb, a renowned playwright and actor working towards the exploration of racial inequalities within Shakespeare's *Othello*, through a modern American lens. He argues on his Project Goals page that his *Untitled Othello* is for theater lovers who no longer wish to see Shakespear's work "packaged and sold to the public, [as]a mediocre, white-minded homogeneity masquerading as art" (Cobb). He further points out that as theater has influenced, and continues to influence, history, "[t]here seems no better time to experiment with…and, if nothing else, create a new starting point when discussing whose art and perspectives matter" (Cobb). Exploration of racial dynamics and titles within *Othello* offers insight into the culture during the Renaissance. While Cobb focuses his attention on reimagining *Othello* through an exploration of race, examining *Galatea* through an exploration of gender strives towards a similar purpose. In situating *Galatea* within transgender studies and queer theory, an untitled reading of the play challenges the assumption that transgender narratives are anachronistically imposed upon Renaissance literature. Instead, this work affirms transgender narratives within literary history.

From this perspective, *Galatea* emerges as literature which is deeply invested in the construction of gendered substance through repeated enactment, rather than form. Adopting Callard's concept of aspiration alongside Butler's theory of gender performativity recontextualizes enactments of identity as substantive value-acquisition, rather than disguise. Within this framework, Tityrus II's enactment of boyhood functions not as a temporary mode of survival, but as purposeful creation of value for his substantial self. Unlike Phillida's enactment of boyhood through crossdress alone, Tityrus II desires to appear, act and think as though he were not born maiden, but rather male. His distress when failing to successfully enact boyhood and pursuit of masculine mentorship signals a substantive shift, rather than a superficial transformation, constituting the very substance of gender culminating in his transformation at Venus' hands.

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Endnotes

[1]In an effort to orient this extensive discussion, the working definition of the term *transgender* is as follows: a person whose gender identity, as part of their substantial and gendered selves, does not correspond with their sex assigned at birth.

[2]See Hume, David. *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 1739. *A Treatise of Human Nature: Volume I Texts*, Edited by David Fate Norton and Mary J. Norton, Oxford University Press, 2007, pp. 152-170.

[3]Portrayals of transgressive enactments of gender were not isolated to the Elizabethan stage play. Analysis of Italian Renaissance literature has noted that "[w]omen, it was thought, turned into men because men are more perfect" (Crawford 419); though there may yet be more to say in terms of male bodies becoming female.

[4]Within the body of this essay, *gender transition* refers to a social transition in which an

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aspirant's enactments of gender are filtered through external expression. While transgender individuals today may seek medical intervention, an allegorical potential within Venus' intervention in *Galatea*, there are no records of medical transition during the Renaissance and Early-Modern era.

[5]Passing is when a transgender person is perceived as a cis-gender person of their gender, rather than the gender associated with their sex assigned at birth, due to successfully performing gender.

[6]Definitions and etymological understanding of "embrace" and "enjoy" come from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

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