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Camp, Masquerade, and Subtext: The Subversion of Sexuality Norms and Gender Roles in *Xena: Warrior Princess*

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Introduction

Xena: Warrior Princess—a syndicated TV action series about a female warrior in ancient Greece on a quest for redemption for her evil past—has achieved popularity and notoriety amongst scholars, critics and fans due to the its iconic *über-violent* beautiful heroine dressed in leather dominatrix-style garb and her implied lesbian relationship with her kinder, gentler sidekick Gabrielle,¹ which has been perceived as being “butch/femme.”² Such representations may be considered as important subjects of study, as they offer an alternative to conventional TV fare. As Sherrie A. Inness writes in her book *Tough Girls: Women Warriors and Wonder Women in Popular Culture*: “Xena’s appeal is particularly interesting because her show—and television in general—possess the power to change how we construct and understand gender in real life.”³ While the existence of *Xena: Warrior Princess* online fan fiction and Xena-related events—such as Xena nights at New York’s Meow Mix lesbian bar—would certainly attest to the cultural influence of the series,⁴ it is not possible to be exhaustive or definitive on the subject of Xena’s ultimate impact without undertaking a major reception study. Therefore, this paper will only deal with representation. Its objective will be to demonstrate one of ways in which the series challenges patriarchal and heterosexual norms—through its use of Camp, a queer aesthetic that uses cross-dressing, humor, and masquerade to show the artificiality of gender as performance.⁵ It will expand upon Jeanne Morreale’s article

"*Xena: Warrior Princess* as Feminist Camp." However, while she examines how the series "parodies gender roles through masquerade"⁶ to create feminist messages, this analysis will focus on the ways in which disguise and masquerade are used to create messages about the characters' sexuality. In disguising themselves, the main characters all "play a role within a role," and this masquerading will be analyzed in terms of its similarities to that of Shakespeare's gender-bending cross-dressing heroines who expose the nature of gender as artifice in plays such as *Twelfth Night* or *As You Like It*.⁷ As art critic Susan Sontag writes in her famous essay "Notes on Camp," "To perceive Camp in objects and persons is to understand Being-as-Playing-a-Role. It is the farthest extension, in sensibility, of the metaphor of life as theater."⁸

A "hybrid narrative" that combines action with soap-opera narrative and melodrama, *Xena: Warrior Princess* is not a typical action program in which the only point is to see the hero annihilate the "bad guy" at the end;⁹ the characters grow and change overtime as the series explores themes of love, friendship, heroism, and good and evil. As Professor Amanda Lotz describes it in *Redesigning Women: Television After the Network Era*, "the hybrid nature of the narrative allows it to tell episodic stories about vanquishing a particular foe while also constructing a serial narrative about the complicated development and maintenance of the relationship between the primary characters."¹⁰ In fact, love and its messages are an integral part of *Xena: Warrior Princess*, in general, and not just romantic love (whether homosexual or heterosexual), but love for community, friends, and family, and especially the love between Xena, and her "soul mate," Gabrielle, a warrior and bard, who travels around ancient Greece fighting evil with her.¹¹

Xena: Warrior Princess, produced by MCA/Universal,¹² was successful as a syndicated series, and it often led the ratings for first-run syndicated dramatic programs in the US and abroad.¹³ Moreover, it had quite a long run for an American TV series, with 6 seasons and 134 episodes. Its success is perhaps due to the fact that Xena differs from typical representations of TV action heroines in many ways.¹⁴ Xena possesses no preternatural powers, and her success depends neither upon men nor upon her feminine wiles. Not only is Xena morally ambiguous, as she is a reformed

villainess, her perceived romantic relationship with Gabrielle makes her sexually ambiguous. This relationship is never openly sexually explored. However, Elyce Rae Helford argues that the show is a “polysemic” text, which means that it lends itself to different readings—including queer readings—through interpretations of the “subtext.”¹⁵ In her article on the subject, “Feminism, Queer Studies, and the Sexual Politics of *Xena: Warrior Princess*,” Helford further argues that “relatively subtle hints”—such as the heroines’ bathing together in a hot tub, or sleeping together on the same bedroll—allow viewers to interpret the “masculine” Xena and the “feminine” Gabrielle as lovers.¹⁶ While some of these messages may be implicit, meaning that the viewers read them in a way that was never intended, it is important to note that the creators of the show also made a conscious decision to produce some of this subtext.¹⁷ As lesbian *Xena* producer Liz Friedman has been quoted as saying, “I don’t have any interest in saying they’re heterosexual. That’s just bull—, and no fun, either.”¹⁸

In her essay entitled “Toward a Butch-Femme Aesthetic,” Sue-Ellen Case considers Camp to be “the style, the discourse, the *mise-en-scène* of butch-femme roles.”¹⁹ There is a certain fluidity of gender and sexuality on *Xena: Warrior Princess*, as Camp and masquerade are used to express and explore aspects of the characters’ sexuality and relationships. An apt definition of Camp as it specifically pertains to the series is provided by Inness, who defines Camp in terms of *Xena: Warrior Princess* as “an over-the-top, tongue-in-cheek attitude toward the world, which pokes fun at social conventions and questions social norms. Camp reveals the artificiality of things we accept as the norm, (such as gender roles). Whether we are viewing Xena’s wildly improbable stunts, the silliness of some of the acting, or Xena’s hyperbolic toughness—the show is high camp.”²⁰

In *Xena: Warrior Princess*, Morreale believes that “Mimickry and parody become politicized textual strategies”²¹ as the nature of feminine-identity-as-playing-a-role is exposed. As previously mentioned, in this respect, *Xena: Warrior Princess* in some ways resembles Shakespeare’s plays, which involve the heroines’ playing a role within a role by disguising themselves, allowing them a certain “freedom” from social constraints, and showing gender to be merely a “performance.”²² As Stephen

Greenblatt points out in *The Norton Shakespeare* anthology's "General Introduction," the adopting of disguises by Shakespearian heroines "alters what they can say and do, [and] reveals important aspects of their character."²³ It is important to note here that all the actors in Shakespeare's time were male, even those playing women's roles, and that the women characters would then disguise themselves as male characters, or cross-dress, in such plays as *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*. While not comparing the quality of *Xena: Warrior Princess* and Shakespeare as art, common dimensions of bawdiness, over-the-top comedy, transvestitism, and cross-dressing might lend themselves to a queer reading. As in Shakespeare's plays, gender on *Xena: Warrior Princess* is indeed shown to be only a performance, a question of changing one's exterior and mannerisms. This paper will thus show three ways in which the characters play a role within a role on *Xena: Warrior Princess*: body-swapping, the use of doubles, and the setting of a story within a story (or a play within a play).

Uses of Camp: Body-swapping

On *Xena: Warrior Princess*—as on many science fiction and fantasy series—characters' minds can enter into another body for various reasons, allowing the actors to play another character, as it were, while retaining aspects of their original character. In the episode "Intimate Stranger" (2.31), Ares, God of War, puts Xena's arch-nemesis Callisto's mind into her body.²⁴ Xena's body containing Callisto's mind then makes love to Ares, which allows viewers the "fantasy" of seeing Xena's body being "feminine" and "sexual," according to Inness.²⁵ To take a campier example, in the episode "The Quest" (2.37), Xena's spirit enters the body of her friend, the king of thieves Autolycus, as she needs him to steal what is necessary to bring her back to life. However, in this case, their minds are seen to co-exist in the body of Autolycus, a recurring character who shares some traits with the rogue Autolycus in Shakespeare's *A Winter's Tale*, who is described by Jean E. Howard in her introduction to the play as a "subversive con man who uses disguises and deceptions."²⁶ Although the two Autolycci differ in some respects, this description does quite aptly fit Xena's Autolycus, who, despite his thievery, is seen to be a

sympathetic character. Camp comes into play when, to accomplish his mission, Autolycus disguises himself as one of Amazons to infiltrate their camp. Wearing a traditional Amazon mask, padded bra-top and skirt, he “passes” for an Amazon, despite the fact that his bare midriff exposes a fair amount of manly body hair. If—as Morreale believes—Xena is a woman “who typically wears a ‘male’ mask,”²⁷ this scene involves several levels of drag, as Xena, the woman/man, resides inside the body of cross-dressing Autolycus, the man/woman. These “levels of drag” bring to mind the way in which in Shakespearian plays, the heroines (all originally played by men) would disguise themselves as men, as in the gender-bending play *As You Like It*. Commenting on the heroine Rosalind’s cross-dressing in the *Norton Shakespeare’s* introduction to that play, Jean E. Howard writes that “cross-dressing, however, playfully undertaken, always threatened to expose the artifice of gender distinctions by showing how easily one sex could assume the clothes and ape the behavior of the other.”²⁸

Rosalind’s masquerade, furthermore, could involve homoerotic subtext just like—as we will see—it could on *Xena’s* “The Quest” episode (2.37). Famously, the disguise Rosalind adopts is that of a man called Ganymede, a name with obvious homoerotic connotations. Posing as Ganymede, she then does a role-play as herself, Rosalind, with the male character Orlando, who would be Rosalind’s lover, and who does not realize that Ganymede is really Rosalind playing herself. Howard believes that, “Provocatively, Shakespeare uses Orlando’s and Rosalind’s encounters to overlay a story of male-female desire with traces of another tale of a man’s love for a boy.”²⁹ A similar sort of sexually ambiguous situation happens on “The Quest” (2.37). Xena, speaking through Autolycus’ body, tells Gabrielle to close her eyes. The viewer then sees Gabrielle conversing with the real Xena. When Xena bends towards Gabrielle for a kiss, Gabrielle opens her eyes. The viewer then sees her, “in reality,” kissing Autolycus on the lips. The situation becomes overtly sexual when Gabrielle asks Autolycus to remove his hand from her bottom, leaving the viewer to wonder whether Xena or Autolycus or both are attracted to her. This scene illustrates one way in which romantic love as presented on the series breaks with traditional representations. Helford sees that particular aspect of *Xena: Warrior Princess* as

positive because the show “escapes static notions of sexuality and homosexuality on television by offering characters who can be read as lesbian or bisexual and non-monogamous without critique of their lifestyles within the narrative.”³⁰

Uses of Camp: Doubles and Doppelgangers

Further masquerading comes into play when actors play a role within a role in terms of look-alikes. In fact, every major actor on *Xena: Warrior Princess* has at least one double who is played by the same actor but as a totally different character. Some of these doppelgangers are used by the writers to play with the sexuality of the characters. For example, Xena and Gabrielle’s maladroit friend Joxer³¹ has two significant doubles, his brothers, the masculine violent assassin Jet, and the feminized and queer-coded cabaret singer Jace.³² The campy musical episode concerning Jace, “Lyre, Lyre, Hearts on Fire” (5.100) – which contains renditions of such pop anthems as “War” and “Sisters are Doin’ it for Themselves”³³ – has a message about Joxer’s learning tolerance for his brother whose flashy clothes, lifestyle and exuberance embarrass him.

More interesting, perhaps, is a study of Xena’s three main look-alikes, who represent four different stereotypes in the episodes “Warrior... Princess... Tramp” (2.30) and “Warrior... Priestess... Tramp” (3.55). The four characters respectively represent the virgin/whore, masculine/feminine dichotomies. Leah, the high priestess of the temple of Hestia, a Hestian virgin, contrasts with Meg, the prostitute (or should we say “bawd”) with a heart of gold. The very feminine and girly Princess Diana contrasts with the tough warrior Xena. This illustrates Mary Ann Doane’s ideas about femininity as performance in her article “Film and the Masquerade” in which she argues that, “Womanliness is a mask which can be worn or removed.”³⁴ This can be seen when the look-alikes adopt each other’s forms of dress for various plot reasons, and other characters – including Gabrielle – and at times the audience, cannot always tell them apart. This means that the butch Xena can wear the mask of the feminine Diana, and Meg, the bawd, succeeds in passing for the virginal Leah. In one extreme case, Joxer sleeps with Meg dressed as Xena and then later “hits on” the real Xena – he cannot distinguish his lover in her mask from his friend, the warrior.

Other messages about sexuality abound in these episodes. For example, in “Warrior... Priestess... Tramp” (3.55), when Leah discovers that Xena and Gabrielle are no longer virgins, she prays to her goddess to assist her in dealing with the “wanton strumpets” – to which Gabrielle replies, “You don’t have to be a virgin to be virtuous.” Later in the episode—in a moment of pure Camp—Leah, in an effort to reform the bawds at Meg’s tavern, makes them sing “Onward Virgin Soldiers”³⁵ while she tells Gabrielle “I’ll make virgins of them yet.” At the end, the priestess apologizes for having been so judgmental, and tells Gabrielle that she believes Gabrielle would make a good virgin. The fact that Gabrielle—as well as the tavern bawds—could “become virgins” shows the artificially constructed nature of women’s identities: one can apparently *learn* to become a virgin. Moreover Leah’s prejudices against the main heroines—and her subsequent change of heart—critique the hypocrisy inherent in basing women’s worth on their sexuality.

The Uses of Camp: Story within a Story

The last technique used to play with gender and sexual identities is that of frame narratives (sometimes reminiscent of Shakespeare’s plays within plays), which allow for the exploration of other aspects of the characters through the imaginary world. For instance, in “If The Shoe Fits” (4.80), a send-up of *Cinderella*, the Gabrielle/Xena relationship is explored through this technique, as it shows how Gabrielle is essentially the pre-*Feminine Mystique*³⁶ “housewife” in the relationship.³⁷ The celebrated Betty Friedan book, *The Feminine Mystique*, details the ways in which 1950s and early 1960s housewives felt unimportant and were unhappy with their only purpose in life being to serve their partners and families by doing domestic tasks. As will be shown, the dissatisfaction expressed by these housewives will resemble Gabrielle’s discontent about her “role” in her relationship with Xena.

In this episode Gabrielle, Xena, Joxer, and Aphrodite, Goddess of Love, tell the story of Cinderella, or in this case, “Tyrella,” to a little girl named Alesia as they travel.³⁸ The different parts of the story are seen through the different characters’ eyes, as they cast themselves in the main roles according to their point of view. For example, Joxer envisions himself as a male version of Tyrella, named Tyro, who

woos a beautiful princess, who is played by Gabrielle, to play out his fantasy of her falling for him (and allowing the viewer to see that fantasy come to fruition). In an extremely campy scene, they sing to each other in operatic voices on the disco-inspired ballroom floor. But there is even campier cross-dressing. In Xena's version, the male, real-life villains of the episode are in drag as the stepmother and stepsisters—wearing feathers and ruffles, and female wigs but with their male facial hair intact. In Aphrodite's version, she and Xena—as the stepmother and sister respectively—are outfitted a bit like nineteenth-century Old West-style bordello prostitutes. However, Xena's mannerisms are so unfeminine and exaggerated that—despite her sexy women's apparel and heavy makeup—she could be a man in drag.

In both the fictional world and the “real” world, Gabrielle is the one who is coded as the real Cinderella—doing the cooking and other domestic tasks, and feeling unappreciated by Xena. In fact, in Xena's version, Gabrielle technically plays the fairy “godssister”³⁹ to Xena's “Tyrella,” and the service Xena as Tyrella asks her to perform is to do the dishes, as “the place is a mess.” This elicits protests from the real Gabrielle listening to the story, who feels undervalued. She thus quarrels with Xena and storms off, in a way that parodies stereotyped husband and wife arguments, putting more emphasis on the notion of their being a butch/femme couple.

The rift does not last long, however. As we see the story finishing through Xena's eyes, Gabrielle as the fairy “godssister” comes back to battle the villains, saying “pardon the dishpan hands,” as she starts to fight. We then see her transform from the fairy “godssister” into the real Gabrielle as she violently routs the bad guys. This display of strength from the “femme” of the “butch/femme” couple—or the wife in the masculine/feminine couple—is not the only arguably feminist message in the episode, which seemingly has the goal of using intertextuality in the form of a fairytale to turn female stereotypes on their ear and send a message of women power. This can be seen when Xena as Tyrella kicks the prince out of her home at swordpoint, saying “I don't need you or a fairy godsmother⁴⁰ or anyone else to give me a happy ending. That's something I'll get or I won't get all by my lonesome.” Moreover, when Alesia asks if Tyrella married the prince and lived happily ever

after, Xena responds in the negative but says that she and her fairy “godssister” did make a pact that henceforth, they would help each another to be all that they could be. Moreover, Gabrielle says she came back to Xena because they are “family,” and while every family has problems, they need to stick together to work it out.

This episode, which perhaps contains the most costume changes and role-playing of any of the episodes, is also one that reinforces the Gabrielle/Xena relationship and contains some of the most transparent feminist messages. The parallel between Gabrielle’s frustrations over domestic tasks, and those articulated by women during feminism’s second wave shows a conscious exploitation of women’s issues. Moreover, the episode is, *par excellence*, the penultimate example of the way in which femininity and sexuality are represented on the show as a matter of performance. *Xena’s* producers are extremely aware of this notion of performance—and they make the audience aware of it as well, as evidenced in how they break the fourth wall. This can be seen, for example, in the self-referential episode “The Play’s the Thing” (4.85), which involves a story within a story. In this episode, Gabrielle (a bard) puts on a play she wrote about her and Xena’s experiences that features herself and Xena as characters in the lead roles (Gabrielle plays Gabrielle, another “actress” plays Xena). In a moment of self-parody, Gabrielle is convinced to lower her lofty artistic ideals to incorporate blood, sex and a hot tub into the play in order to attract a wider audience, which parallels the kind of situation TV producers must face. As she reasons, “A message is nothing if no one hears it.”

Conclusion

Thus, to conclude, to quote the oft-quoted character Jacques from the “homoerotic,”⁴¹ fourth-wall breaking, play *As You Like It*: “All the world’s a stage, And all the men and women merely players. They have their exits and their entrances, And one man in his time plays many parts...”⁴² This quote could very much sum up the way identity and sexuality are represented on *Xena: Warrior Princess*, as the technique of the actors’ playing a role within a role is quite deliberately exploited in the series along with the use of Camp in order to challenge gender norms and sexualities.

However, despite its subversive aspects, the show has limitations. First of all, while Greenblatt argues that Shakespeare's heroines' masquerading gives them some "freedom,"⁴³ he also says that "What looks like an escape from cultural determinism may only be a deeper form of constraint."⁴⁴ The same can be said about *Xena: Warrior Princess*. Whether it be for commercial or narrative reasons, Gabrielle and Xena's real love story – outside of the artifice of Camp and masquerade – is not as revolutionary as it could be, in that their lesbian sexuality is never fully explored on screen. Moreover, while the use of masquerade can certainly give viewers a new perspective on the characters, there is always the possibility that the potentially "positive" feminist messages contained within the series could be undermined by people laughing at – and not with – the characters. This analysis would, thus, benefit from being pursued within a more comprehensive study of the representation of femininity and of queerness in television series and serials, encompassing programs that represent strong female lead characters such as *Alias* (2001-2006) or *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003). *Xena: Warrior Princess* is a good start.

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Warrior...Princess... Tramp (S2: 30)

Intimate Stranger (S2: 31)

The Quest (S2: 37)

The King of Assassins (S3: 54)

Warrior...Priestess... Tramp (S3: 55)

If the Shoe Fits... (S4: 80)

The Play's the Thing (S4: 85)

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NOTES

¹ Lucy Lawless and Renee O'Connor played Xena and Gabrielle respectively.

² See Elyce Rae Helford, "Feminism, Queer Studies, and the Sexual Politics of *Xena: Warrior Princess*," *Fantasy Girls: Gender in the New Universe of Science Fiction and Fantasy Television*. Ed. Elyce Rae Helford (Lanham, Md.: Rowan and Littlefield, 2000) 135-162; See also Kathleen Kennedy, "Love is the Battlefield: The Making and the Unmaking of the Just Warrior in *Xena, Warrior Princess*," *Athena's Daughters: Television's New Women Warriors*. Eds. Frances Early and Kathleen Kennedy. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003) 40-52.

³ Sherrie A. Inness, *Tough Girls: Women Warriors and Wonder Women in Popular Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999) 162.

⁴ See Inness 160-176; See also Helen Caudill, "Tall Dark and Dangerous: Xena, the Quest, and the Wielding of Sexual Violence in *Xena On-Line Fan Fiction*," *Athena's Daughters: Television's New Women Warriors*. Eds. Frances Early and Kathleen Kennedy (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003) 27-39.

⁵ For a more about camp and its relationship to homosexuality: See Susan Sontag, "Notes on 'Camp'," *Against Interpretations and Other Essays* (New York: Picador, 1966) 275-292. See also Suellen-Ellen Case, "Towards a Butch-Femme Aesthetic," *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*. Ed. Amelia Jones. (London: Routledge 2006).

⁶ Jean Morreale, "Xena: Warrior Princess as Feminist Camp," *The Journal of Popular Culture* 32 (2). 81.

⁷ William Shakespeare, *As You Like It*. *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition*. Eds. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997) 1600-1657 and William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*. *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition*. Eds. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997) 1761-1821.

⁸ Sontag 280 (Capital letters conform to original text). Sontag would disagree with Shakespeare's being officially being called camp, as she defines the cut off point for camp readings at around the eighteenth century. This analysis, thus, does not intend to define Shakespeare as camp, but only to show how there are similarities in the use of masquerade in both *XWP* and Shakespeare's plays and how both could be read in terms of camp-related conventions.

⁹ For a deconstruction of the archetypal violent TV action plot, see Divina Frau-Meigs and Sophie Jehel, *Les Écrans de la Violence* (Paris: Économica, 1997).

¹⁰ Amanda D. Lotz. *Redesigning Women: Television after the Network Era* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006) 84.

¹¹ For a complete analysis of the importance of love in *Xena: Warrior Princess* see Kathleen Kennedy, "Love is the Battlefield: The Making and the Unmaking of the Just Warrior in *Xena, Warrior Princess*," *Athena's Daughters: Television's New Women Warriors*. Ed. Frances Early and Kathleen Kennedy (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003) 40-52.

¹² This company also produced the series *Hercules: the Legendary Journeys* (1994-1999), an action-adventure series that was very loosely based on the life of the mythological Hercules, half-mortal son of the Greek god Zeus. *Xena: Warrior Princess* spun off from this series, and the two shows had the same main producers, Rob Tapert and Sam Raimi, as well as some of the same recurring characters and sets.

¹³ See Jim Ruttenberg, "A Way to Defeat Xena," *The New York Times Online* (18 October 2000). 20 February 2005. <<http://query.nytimes.com/search/restricted/article?res=F20A1EFD3F5A0C7B8DDDA90994D8404482>>

7B8DDDA90994D8404482>; See also Morreale 79.

¹⁴ Inness provides a more complete analysis of Xena's origins and the ways in which she is both stereotypical and atypical in terms of representation of female heroism: Inness 160-176.

¹⁵ Helford 135-162.

¹⁶ Helford 139.

¹⁷ Farah Mendlesohn, "Surpassing the Love of Vampires: or, Why (and How) a Queer Reading of the Buffy/Willow Relationship is Denied," *Fighting the Forces: What's at Stake in Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. Ed. Rhonda Wilcox and David Lavery (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002) 46; Inness, 169-170; See also Joal Ryan, "Xena: Out in the Open," *E! Entertainment Television Online* (25 June 1998). 22 August 2005. <<http://www.eonline.com/News/Items/0,1,3207,00.html>>.

¹⁸ Helford 44.

¹⁹ Case 405.

²⁰ Inness 173.

²¹ Morreale 86. Capital letter conforms to original text.

²² See Stephen Greenblatt, "General Introduction," *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition*. Eds. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997) 1-75; See also Jean E. Howard, Introduction to *As You Like It, The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition*. Eds. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997) 1591-1599.

²³ Greenblatt 59.

²⁴ Ares and Callisto were played by Kevin Smith and Hudson Leick, respectively. Ares had romantic feelings towards Xena. See Kennedy 42-45 for further analysis of Ares' and Callisto's roles in terms of the series' messages on love and relationships.

²⁵ Inness 174-175.

²⁶ Jean E. Howard, Introduction to *The Winter's Tale, The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition*. Eds. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997) 2880; See also William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale, The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition*. Eds. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997) 2883-2953.

²⁷ Morreale 83.

²⁸ Howard 1596,

²⁹ Howard 1596.

³⁰ Helford 158.

³¹ Joxer was played by Ted Raimi. Joxer often accompanied Xena and Gabrielle on their travels. He wanted to be a warrior, but was hopelessly inept at it.

³² See the episodes *The King of Assassins* (S3: 54), and *Lyre, Lyre, Hearts on Fire* (S5: 100).

³³ "War" (1969) is an anti-war protest song; "Sisters are Doin' It for Themselves" (1985) is a "feminist anthem." See "War (song)," <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/War_%28song%29> and "Sisters are Doin' It For Themselves," *Wikipedia*. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sisters_Are_Doin%27_It_For_Themselves> (Both consulted on 29 March 2007).

³⁴ Mary-Ann Doane, "Film and the Masquerade: Theorizing the Female Spectator," *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*. Ed. Amelia Jones. (London: Routledge, 2006) 66.

³⁵ This is a variation of the English song, "Onward, Christian Soldiers" (1871). See "Onward, Christian Soldiers," *Wikipedia*. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onward_Christian_Soldiers> (Consulted on 29 March 2007).

³⁶ Betty Friedan, *The Feminist Mystique* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2001).

³⁷ "Housewife" here is put in quotes as Gabrielle and Xena didn't have a permanent home, but "set up house" at campsites and in villages wherever they were needed.

³⁸ Alexandra Tydings and Olivia Tennet played Aphrodite and Alesia respectively. Aphrodite could be both protagonist and antagonist. In this episode, she is a little of both. See Kennedy 46-47 for more about her role in terms of the series' messages about love.

³⁹ This is a play on words. Ordinarily, the word "godsister" would be used. However, as there was more than one god in ancient Greece, there is more than one "s" in "godssister." Gabrielle's being the "godssister" rather than the "godsmother" could be interpreted as representing ideals of "sisterhood," the feminist concept of female solidarity.

⁴⁰ As with “godssister,” the word “godssmother ” with an extra “s ” is used rather than the word “godmother,” according to the same logic.

⁴¹ See Howard 1591-1599.

⁴² Shakespeare, *As You Like it* (Act 2, scene 7, line 138-141), *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition*, 1622.

⁴³ Greenblatt 57.

⁴⁴ Greenblatt 57.

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