

"This falls out better, then I could devise": Play-Bound Playwrights and the Nature of Shakespearean Comedy

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William Shakespeare's comedies and romances are populated with a great many characters who function as internal representatives of the playwright's trade. In every comedy but his first, the cast includes at least one figure who either frames the entire play as an explicit artefact, directs and produces a contained performance, stages a theatrical practical joke, or orchestrates the events of the entire playworld toward a comic denouement. The early comedies display the evolution of the frame playwright and the internal performance, but it is with *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that Shakespeare creates his first genuinely surrogate dramatist, Oberon. The later comedies tend to exploit the uncomfortable scapegoat humour of the practical joke, develop the interaction of multiple and competitive dramatists, and finally produce the immensely problematic Duke Vincentio. Shakespeare's final romances return to the enchanted realm of Oberon, where omnipotent dramatists are once again capable of achieving truly comic resolutions. Something in the nature of comedy urged Shakespeare to create these play-bound playwrights, either to demonstrate the crucial role of the theatre in realizing social harmony, or to interpose a substitute between himself and the often absurd or arbitrary materials of the comic tradition.[1] Shakespeare's dramatic surrogates share an intriguing array of characteristics and methods, and quite possibly present an epitome of Shakespeare's own approach to comic drama.

Shakespeare's first comic effort, *The Comedy of Errors* (1592-4),[2] is in many ways presented as simply and straightforwardly as its title. The play is thoroughly classical in structure, exuberantly artificial in plot, and blatantly contemptuous of verisimilitude.[3] The traditional plot device of the shipwreck makes the first of many appearances in Shakespearean comedy: it is also prominent in *Twelfth Night*, *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest*. [4] Two sets of identical twins, dressed identically, further strains credibility, yet Shakespeare does not attempt to explain away the difficulty, as he will later do in *Twelfth Night* (12N 3.4.379-83). An arbitrary death sentence on all Syracusan tourists without a thousand marks in spending money makes use of yet another standard dramatic device, which for convenience can be labelled the death-on-sight scenario. This will resurface throughout the comedies as an excuse grasped in desperation by Shakespeare's deputy playwrights. *The Comedy of Errors* is unique among the comedies for its total lack of an internal dramatist, and indeed for the manner in which it virtually ignores its identity as drama.[5] When Antipholus appeals to "Some blessed power" to deliver him from the "illusions" of Ephesus (CE F1 4.3.42,41), his prayer is answered, not by some classical equivalent of divine providence, nor by a surrogate dramatist, but by Shakespeare himself, who never slackens his hold on the puppet-strings in this play. The exuberance and simplicity of the presentation of *The Comedy of Errors* marks it as an initial experiment in the comic genre.

Shakespeare's second comedy, *The Taming of the Shrew* (1593-4), is partially or entirely framed by an Induction, in which an unnamed Lord arranges for the play proper to be performed as part of his "practise on this drunken man" (TS F1 Ind.1.36).[6] This seems, in retrospect of course, a natural progression from the more direct presentation of *The Comedy of Errors*. A frame playwright figure absorbs responsibility for the comic material, which is arbitrary, absurd, and chauvinistic, more completely than any other form of fictional dramatist. The inflexibility and limited metatheatrical implications of the technique, however, evidently left Shakespeare unsatisfied, for he abandons the framework even before this play's completion, and the frame playwright disappears from his comedies until very late in his career, with Gower in *Pericles* and Time in *The Winter's Tale*.

The metatheatrical technique which seems to dominate the comedies of the middle 1590's is the internal performance, usually produced by a playwright-director of patently limited abilities. This seems a reasonable development from the technique of *The Taming of the Shrew*, in which a fictional playwright presents the entire play, in the process

heightening its artificiality and aesthetically distancing the audience. By inverting the approach, Shakespeare contains the playwright figure and his production within the play as a whole, achieving greater verisimilitude and a diminished distinction between the real world of the audience and the fictional world of the play.

Shakespeare's first attempt at contained plays, in *Love's Labour's Lost* (1594-5), seems a trifle overstated: the King of Navarre and his lords perform the masque of the "Muscovites" (_LLL Q1 5.2.124) complete with nervous prologue, then the Queen and her ladies defeat it with what has been called an "antimasque,"[7] Holofernes orchestrates the "pageant, or antique, or fierworke" of the Nine Worthies "in the posterior of this day" (_LLL Q1 5.1.92,98), and finally also the "Dialogue . . . in prayse of the Owle and the Cuckow" which completes the play (_LLL Q1 5.2.912-914). As Sidney Homan observes, Holofernes' preparations, like Quince's, are primarily concerned with possible disasters (Homan 73), but here it is the openly hostile audience, rather than any professional deficiency, which destroys the illusion of the pageant.

Shakespeare's next assay at a comedy with internal performance comes soon after with *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595-6), and demonstrates a number of technical refinements. Shakespeare does not overload the play with internal performances, but rather concentrates on Quince's production of the "tedious briefe Scene of young *Pyramus / And his loue Thisby*" (_MSND Q1 5.1:54-55), allowing it to underlie the structure of the entire play. The interruptions of the Athenian audience are appreciative and encouraging, resulting in a much subtler effect than the open antagonism of the audience in *Love's Labour's Lost*. Shakespeare's use of the theatrical framing technique reaches its climax in the final scene, in which the mechanicals perform before an audience which is itself a pageant for enchanted beings who are themselves part of a performance.

Although the internal play resurfaces in *Hamlet* (1600-1), Shakespeare seems to abandon it in comic circumstances with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Rather than explicit performances, Shakespeare relies on theatrical metaphors and images for similar metatheatrical effects in his later plays. One sort of formal performance which remains current throughout the comic canon, however, is the masque. First introduced in *Love's Labour's Lost*, masques resurface in *The Merchant of Venice* (1596-7), *As You Like It* (1599), and *The Tempest* (1611), where they are presented by Lorenzo, Rosalind, and Prospero.[8] The internal masque, less constrained by plot and theme than the internal play, was evidently a simpler and more flexible enhancement to scenes of pageantry, producing effects much like musical accompaniment in scenes of marriage or festivity.

Ultimately, the significance of these contained playwrights and their internal performances diminishes in comparison with the surrogate playwrights, who direct characters and orchestrate events within the expansive reality of Shakespeare's own dramatic cosmos. These characters appear in all but one of the comedies, and in many of the histories and tragedies.[9] Some, like Oberon, Vincentio, or Prospero, seem to function quite literally as surrogates for Shakespeare himself, apparently maintaining omnipotent control of events throughout their plays. Other playwright figures, often females in male disguise, guide the course of the play without any outward show of formal authority. In a number of plays, most notably *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1597), multiple playwrights interact in collaboration and competition. Secondary playwrights are responsible for dark practical jokes (primarily in the problem comedies), abortive conspiracies, and misguided designs which are contrary to Shakespeare's overall comic design. The more developed surrogate dramaturges, who are given responsibility for the direction of Shakespeare's own plays, more authoritatively reflect his approach to dramatic art than the producers of atrocious internal performances, which are contained and limited by a larger theatrical context.

The Comedy of Errors, unlike all of Shakespeare's other comedies, has no internal director. Duke Solinus appears to have authority in the opening scene as he pronounces sentence on Egeon, but he remains offstage and out of mind for most of the play. He returns at the zenith of confusion, but is no less perplexed than his subjects. Solinus is no Vincentio: he, like Duke Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, serves initially only to enforce the death threat, and finally only to dismiss it. Yet in *The Comedy of Errors*, arbitrary and absurd feats of stagecraft are accomplished and moreover emphasized through the dialogue. The newcomers to Ephesus repeatedly equate events there with "sorcery,"[10] and the work of professional entertainers, "nimble Iuglers that deceiue

the eie” (_CE F1 1.2.98). Adriana observes that her husband is “borne about inuisible” (_CE F1 5.1.190), not by the magic of Prospero or Ariel, but by Shakespeare’s dramatic artistry. In what may well be his first comedy, Shakespeare follows classical precedent by relying unabashedly upon authorial manipulation of coincidence and accident[11] to achieve comic confusion and its final resolution.

In the surviving text of *The Taming of the Shrew*, the Lord of the Induction diminishes in importance, eventually to be entirely forgotten, while the characters of the play proper take on independent dramaturgic power. First, Lucentio and Tranio are confronted with “some shew to welcome vs to Towne” (_TS F1 1.1.47), a conventional marriage intrigue being orchestrated by Baptista Minola. Later, Baptista finds his dramaturgy defeated by Petruchio’s own, as the groom appears “An eye-sore to our solemne festiuall” (_TS F1 3.2.93). Lucentio and Tranio next don disguises to play roles of their own devising, later recruiting “An ancient Angel” to portray Vincentio (_TS F1 4.2.65).[12] In both cases they resort to the death-on-sight cliché of *The Comedy of Errors* to avert suspicion:

_Luc. . . . Your fellow _Tranio heere to saue my life,
Puts my apparrell, and my count'nance on,
And I for my escape haue put on his:
For in a quarrell since I came a-shore,
I kil'd a man, and feare I was descried:
Waite you on him, I charge you, as becomes:
While I make way from hence to saue my life[.]

_Tra. 'Tis death for any one in Mantua
To come to Padua, know you not the cause?
Your ships are staid at Venice, and the Duke
For priuate quarrel 'twixt your Duke and him,
Hath publish'd and proclaim'd it openly:
'Tis meruaile, but that you are but newly come,
You might haue heard it else proclaim'd about.

(_TS F1 1.1.231, 4.2.88-94)

Petruchio is the primary surrogate playwright in the play, however, manipulating characters and shaping events toward his own vision of a comic conclusion. Kate explicitly remarks, “Belike you meane to make a puppet of me” (_TS F1 4.3.106), and Petruchio celebrates his success in terms suggestive of Duke Vincentio’s almost Machiavellian dramaturgy: “Thus haue I politicly begun my reigne, / And ‘tis my hope to end successefully” (_TS F1 4.1.175-6). Petruchio, like Iago, has mastered Shakespeare’s use of the implicit stage direction,[13] and uses the power of his language to alter reality:

Say that she raile, why then Ile tell her plaine,
She sings as sweetly as a Nightingale:
Say that she frowne, Ile say she lookes as cleere
As morning Roses newly washt with dew:
Say she be mute, and will not speake a word,
Then Ile commend her volubility . . .
(_TS F1 2.1.176-81)

Prospero’s magic is also primarily linguistic, a fact emphasized when he asks Ariel if he has “Performd **to point**, the Tempest that I bad thee,” and receives the reply, “To euery **Article**” (_Temp F1 1.2.225-6, emphasis mine). Slightly later, Ariel promises to follow Prospero’s instructions “To th’ syllable” (_Temp F1 1.2.587). Petruchio’s linguistic power also achieves miraculous proportions: he insists “It shall be what a clock I say it is” (_TS F1 4.3.188), “It shall be moone, or starre, or what I list” (_TS F1 4.5.9), and he transforms Vincentio, temporarily, into a “Faire louely Maide” (_TS F1 4.5.36).

Like many later Shakespearean surrogate playwrights, Petruchio repeatedly promises

explanations with no intention of actually providing them:

Sufficeth I am come to keepe my word,
Though in some part inforced to digresse,
Which at more leysure I will so excuse,
As you shall well be satisfied with all.

Gentlemen & friends, I thank you for your pains,
I know you thinke to dine with me to day,
And haue prepar'd great store of wedding cheere,
But so it is, my haste doth call me hence,
And therefore heere I meane to take my leaue.

I must away to day before night come,
Make it no wonder: if you knew my businesse,
You would intreat me rather goe then stay[.]

(_TS F1 3.2.98-101, 173-7, 179-81)

Likewise Lucentio assures Tranio, "if thou ask me why, / Sufficeth my reasons are both good and waighty" (_TS F1 1.1.251-2); Vincentio promises "Moe reasons for this action / At our more leysure" (_MM F1 1.3.51-2); Portia promises to answer "intergotories" within (_MV Q1 5.1.316); Paulina insists, "There's time enough for that" (_WT F1 5.3.156); and Prospero repeatedly makes the point:

No more yet of this,
For 'tis a Chronicle of day by day,
Not a relation for a break- fast, nor
Befitting this first meeting[.]

(_Temp F1 5.1.180)

Petruchio, the shrew-taming husband, seems to be the prototype for a long line of internal dramaturges in Shakespearean comedy. His energies are directed towards only a single character, and his ambitions for communal renewal are limited primarily to his own marriage, but the later surrogate playwrights who attempt to orchestrate any number of headstrong individuals into a larger comic resolution seem to have taken notes at Petruchio's "taming schoole" (_TS F1 4.2.59).

With *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (1594), Shakespeare creates the first of many female characters in disguise. Julia transforms herself into a male in order to act in a patriarchal society, but the movement into and out of disguise also, as Northrop Frye has observed, "comes as close to a death and revival as Elizabethan conventions will allow" (Frye, "Argument" 86). Shakespeare does bring his heroines closer to death, however: Julia and Rosalind swoon while in disguise (_2GV 5.4.84, _AYLI 4.3.157), and of course Hermione seems quite literally dead for most of *The Winter's Tale*. [14] Portia, Rosalind, Viola, and Imogen perform more distinctly dramaturgic roles than Julia while in disguise, but variations of Julia's ring trick bring about the comic resolutions in *The Merchant of Venice* and *Cymbeline* (1609-10), and the motif also appears in the middle of *Twelfth Night* (1601-2). The *coup de th__tre* for the disguised female playwrights is usually their own discovery scene, the moment at which Rosalind orchestrates an apparently supernatural marriage masque. Julia unveils herself, as Paulina unveils Hermione's statue, and as Prospero reveals the true Duke of Milan, with the word "Behold" (_2GV F1 5.4.106, _WT F1 5.3.23, _Temp F1 5.1.112), drawing an audience's attention to a spectacle in distinctly theatrical fashion.

Love's Labour's Lost contains both a number of internal performances and Shakespeare's first group of collaborating and competing dramaturges. The King of

Navarre is also the first in a series of royal playwrights, including Theseus, Oberon, Don Pedro, Vincentio, and Prospero, who combine political and dramatic authority to varying degrees. Navarre's project is announced in the play's opening lines, to stage a "lyttle Achademe, / Still and contemplatyue in lyuing art" (_LLL Q1 1.1.13-14), and he seeks the assistance of Dumaine, Longaville, and Berowne to transform his script into reality. This labour is the first to be lost, of course, in the concentric theatrics of the sonnet scene (_LLL 4.3), in which Berowne, like Prospero, sits "Like a demie God . . . in the skie" (_LLL Q1 4.3.74).

Navarre is also one of several secondary dramaturges whose intentions are good, but whose designs are in direct opposition to the communal emphasis of comedy. Ultimately his production is doomed to defeat as surely as the Pageant of the Nine Worthies, and it faces an even more critical audience: the ladies of France. Navarre's wish for academic withdrawal is like Lucentio's plan for "A course of Learning, and ingenious studies" (_TS F1 1.1.9), and likewise meets with dissent; Berowne, like Tranio, prefers "arts that bring men and women together, rather than philosophies which separate and distinguish the fibers of our existence" (Homan, _When Theatre... 52). Navarre's desire is the antipathy of comedy, the risk facing Portia's suitors and essentially the penalty which threatens Hermia's happiness, "to abiure, / For euer, the society of men" (_MSND Q1 1.1.68-9). As their plays open, Olivia and Isabella have both "abiur'd the sight / And company of men" (_12N F1 1.2.40-1), and in the process of comic resolution, such vows must be dissolved, even through arbitrary or disturbing means.[15] Duke Vincentio claims to love "the life remoued" (_MM F1 1.3.9), just as Prospero declares "my Librarie / Was Dukedome large enough" (_Temp F1 1.2.126-7); but for Prospero the solipsism has led to political disaster, and for Vincentio, the "life remoued" is only possible while he maintains the assumed habit of a friar.[16]

Such academic inclinations seem to be prerequisite for a number of Shakespeare's surrogate dramatists, but also a stage of life to be cast aside once the comic resolution is achieved. The ladies of France impose penances on Navarre and Berowne which are calculated to extract them from their ivory tower, much as Portia finally abandons her law-books, Vincentio proposes marriage (twice), and of course Prospero "drowne[s] [his] booke" (_Temp F1 5.1.62). Shakespeare tends to view scholarship as simply the young man's alternative to marriage (_1H6 5.1.21-3; _2GV 1.1.67); and the occupation of those like Angelo, "whose blood / Is very snow-broth" (_MM F1 1.4.64). Textual evidence suggests that the lines in _Pericles which praise Art's "labour scholler" are probably not Shakespeare's (_Per Q1 2.3.14-16): his treatment of pedants elsewhere tends to support Berowne's contention that "Small haue continuall plodders euer wonne, / Saue base authoritie from others Bookes" (_LLL F1 1.1.87-88). Sonnet 66 presents the still more powerful image of

. . . art made tongue-tied by authority,
 And Folly (Doctor-like) controlling skill,
 And simple Truth miscalled Simplicity[.][17]

In the realm of Shakespearean comedy, scholarship is an isolated and sterile occupation -- but then there is, after all, no Shakespearean comedy there to be studied.

In _Love's Labour's Lost, the Lords of Navarre are obliged to abandon their own project, and in typically human fashion they attack the Pageant of the Nine Worthies in retaliation. The Ladies of France undermine the Masque of the Muscovites and refuse to be absorbed into the comic pattern devised by the lords of Navarre:

here was a consent,
 Knowing aforehand of our meriment,
 To dash it lik a Christmas Comedie[.]

Our wooing doth not end like an olde Play:
Iacke hath not Gill: these Ladies courtesie
Might well haue made our sport a Comedie.

(_LLL Q1 5.2.488-90,900-2)

After the intrusion of Marcade assures that love's labour is indeed lost, the ladies present an apology which sounds distinctly like Puck's "If we shadowes haue offended" (_MSND Q1 5.1.386), an epilogue which makes their behaviour still more explicitly theatrical:

. . . I thanke you gracious Lords
For all your faire endeouours and intreat:
Out of a new sad-soule, that you vouchsafe,
In your rich wisdom to excuse, or hide,
The liberall opposition of our spirites,
If ouerboldly we haue borne our selues,
In the conuerse of breath (your gentlenes
Was guyltie of it.)

(_LLL Q1 5.2.752-9)

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare turns from political to magical power as an analogy for dramatic art, and the result is one of his three most significant playwrights, Oberon. Initially, Oberon seems to possess omniscience and omnipotence, and can therefore function, in Shakespeare's created play-world, as an extension of his creator. Under-standably, Shakespeare chose an immortal being for his first authoritative playwright, because his magical authority, like Prospero's, seems to make a comic resolution possible despite even insurmountable difficulties. Vincentio, the other major surrogate dramaturge, has no magical abilities, but only an assumed religious aura and his creator's blessing—and this is perhaps why *Measure for Measure* in general and he in particular are perceived as problematic: a magical spell can manipulate characters and yet maintain the comic spirit of the play, but machiavellian intrigues and an enforced marriage inevitably seem mere dictatorship.

Oberon's omniscience, like that of Vincentio and Prospero, is illusory, however. The events which befall the Athenian lovers preposterously are not part of Oberon's plan: he carelessly tells Puck that he will "know the man, / By the Athenian garments he hath on" (_MSND Q1 2.1.262), without realizing that Lysander and Demetrius are indistinguishable on the basis of this description. This minor oversight is well within the limits of immortal possibility, however; Vincentio and Prospero are guilty of more glaring, mortal errors.

Angelo says that Vincentio, "like powre diuine, / Hath look'd vpon my passes" (_MM F1 5.1.401-2), but the Duke is far from omniscient—in fact, he seems to make more errors than any other surrogate playwright. Vincentio's first obvious surprise is Angelo's treachery following the bed-trick. Vincentio assures the Provost that, "As neere the dawning Prouost, as it is, / You shall heare more ere Morning" (_MM F1 4.2.95-6). To this, the Provost replies, apparently with more prescience than the Duke: "Happely / You something know: yet I beleue there comes / No countermand: no such example haue we" (_MM F1 4.2.97-9). When Angelo's missive arrives, Vincentio verbally pats himself on the back while the Provost reads the orders:

This is his Pardon purchas'd by such sin,
For which the Pardoner himselfe is in:
Hence hath offence his quicke celeritie,
When it is borne in high Authority.
When Vice makes Mercie; Mercie's so extended,
That for the faults loue, is th' offender friended.

(_MM F1 4.2.111-6)

Of course Vincentio is dead wrong, just as another Friar-habited playwright, Friar Francis, is mistaken when he predicts Claudio's repentance:

so will it fare with Claudio:
When hee shall heare she died vpon his words,
Th Ideae of her life shall sweetly creepe,
Into his study of imagination,
And euery louely Organ of her life,
Shall come apparelld in more precious habite,
More moouing delicate, and full of life,
Into the eie and prospect of his soule
Then when she liude indeed: then shall he mourne,
If euer loue had interest in his liuer,
And wish he had not so accused her:
No, though he thought his accusation true[.]

(_MAAN Q1 4.1.227-237)

Vincentio, responding *ad lib* to this surprising turn of events, determines to send Barnardine's head instead of Claudio's, but again his comic design is undermined (_MM 4.3.53 ff).[18] Finally, Vincentio seems to marshal superfluous forces to prepare for some unreal eventuality (perhaps the assassination of a Caesar): he sends Friar Peter to Flavia, Valencius, Rowland, and Crassius, before speaking privately to Varrius (_MM 4.5.6-11).

Prospero, like Oberon, is guilty of a single significant oversight, perhaps because he is also working with the benefit of virtually unlimited magical power; his determination to "Bestow vpon the eyes of this yong couple / Some vanity of mine Art" (_Temp F1 4.1.43-4) suggests an enchantment very much like Oberon's. Suddenly, at the height of Prospero's art, and the climax of the play's rhyme, the chaotic prose world of Caliban erupts into his chastity masque:

_Enter certaine Reapers (properly habited:) they
ioyne with the Nimphes, in a gracefull dance,
towards the end where-of, Prospero _starts sodainly
and speakes, after which to a strange hollow and
confused noyse, they heauily vanish.

_Pro. I had forgot that foule conspiracy
Of the beast _Calliban, and his confederates
Against my life: the minute of their plot
Is almost come: Well done, auoid: no more.

(_Temp F1 4.1.151sd-155)

The oversights of Oberon, Vincentio, and Prospero seem in context merely Shakespearean ploys to add comic confusion, suspense, or activity—yet when the pattern is recognized across his major and minor dramaturgic figures, it appears to have other significance.

Some of Shakespeare's more minor playwrights are similarly surprised by forgotten matters. An earlier Duke, Theseus, who is trying to maintain rational control of Athens in the midst of lunatics, lovers, and fairies, has forgotten to discuss with Demetrius the matter of his involvement with Helena: "My minde did loose it," he explains (_MSND Q1 1.1.118) -- but fortunately Theseus is not the primary dramaturge of the play. The King of Navarre, too, who has just implemented his script for his "lytllle Achademe" (_LLL Q1 1.1.12), is immediately reminded of the imminent approach of the Princess of France, to which he replies, "What say you Lordes? why, this was quite forgot" (_LLL Q1 1.1.141). Shakespeare's surrogate dramatists seem consistently and quite deliberately guilty of oversights, errors, and missteps: evidently fallibility was a crucial characteristic of Shakespeare's mortal and immortal comic dramaturges.

The omnipotence of dramaturges also seems chimerical:

Oberon is “king of shadowes” (_MSND Q1 3.2.360), and thus the ultimate theatrical and magical power, but nevertheless, when Titania dotes on Bottom he admits, “This falles out better, then I could deuise” (_MSND Q1 3.2.35). Often surrogate dramaturgy looks like divinity: Lorenzo says that Portia and Nerissa “drop Manna in the way / of starued people” (_MV Q1 5.1.311-2); Don Pedro thinks that “if we can do this, Cu-pid is no longer an Archer, his glory shall bee ours, for we are the onely loue-gods” (_MAAN Q1 2.1.341-3); Angelo feels that “your grace, like powre diuine, / Hath look'd vpon my passes” (_MM F1 5.1.401-2); and Ferdinand declares, “So rare a wondred Father, and a wise / Makes this place Paradise” (_Temp F1 4.1.135-6). Shakespeare makes it clear, however, that fortuitous events play a major role in the dramaturgy of his surrogates: Mistress Page finds “a double excellency” in Ford’s accidental entanglements in her play (_MWW F1 3.3.155); and Vincentio, stymied by Barnardine’s obstinate refusal to follow the script, is relieved by Ragozine’s death: “Oh, ‘tis an accident that heauen prouides” (_MM F1 4.3.76). Even Prospero, perhaps the most Shakespearean of Shakespeare’s surrogates, credits “prouidence diuine” with his exile (_Temp F1 1.2.186), and Fortune with his current position:

_Pro. Know thus far forth,
By accident most strange, bountifull _Fortune
(Now my deere Lady) hath mine enemies
Brought to this shore: And by my prescience
I finde my _Zenith doth depend vpon
A most auspitious starre, whose influence
If now I court not, but omit; my fortunes
Will euer after droope[.]
(_Temp F1 1.2.207-14)

Prospero's name may itself be a subtle acknowledgement of his dependence upon providential assistance.[19]

Shakespeare’s conception of comic dramaturgy seems to demand that events fall out better than they can be devised. Helen Gardner observes that, while a tragic plot must have inescapable logic, comic plots consist of “changes, chances, and surprises,” and that comedy itself is “an image of life triumphing over chance” (Gardner 61-2). Shakespeare’s play-bound playwrights seem in fact to depend upon chance to triumph over life: Friar Francis predicts that “successe / Will fashion the euent in better shape, / Then I can lay it downe in likelihood” (_MAAN Q1 4.1.238-40); as Viola declares, “What else may hap, to time I will commit” (_12N F1 1.2.62), and later makes time explicitly responsible for the “d_nouement”: “O time, thou must vntangle this, not I, / It is too hard a knot for me t’vnty” (_12N F1 2.1.40-1). Once the multiple deceptions of Page, Mistress Page, and Fenton have been revealed, Ford explains that a greater playwright has overruled them all (and he does not refer to Fenton):

_Ford. Stand not amaz'd, here is no remedie:
In Loue, the heauens themselues do guide the state,
Money buyes Lands, and wiuies are sold by fate.

(_MWW F1 5.5.230-2)

Prince Hal has a different meaning in mind, but it would appear that, so far as Shakespearean comedy is concerned, “nothing pleaseth but rare accidents” (_1H4 Q1 1.2.180). Shakespeare’s surrogate dramatists, surprised by unforeseen or forgotten complications and redeemed by fortuitous events, may even reflect their creator’s approach: confident of inspiration and negligent of minor inconsistencies, prepared to embark without fully knowing the ultimate destination, perhaps accepting as inevitable later collaboration, revision, improvisation or afterthought.

Oberon’s dramaturgy, like Prospero’s, is dependent upon magic, and his magic, like Ariel’s, is clearly associated with music, a major element in the art of Shakespeare’s surrogate playwrights: Portia also seems to use song lyrics to direct Bassanio in his

choice of caskets (_MV 3.2.63-5);[20] Vincentio, although he uses little music for his dramaturgy, explains to Mariana that “Musick oft hath such a charme / To make bad, good; and good prouoke to harme” (_MM F1 4.1.14-5); Ariel’s magic is repeatedly equated with music in the dialogue and the Folio stage directions;[21] and Paulina restores Hermione with the words, “Musick; awake her: Strike[!]” (_WT F1 5.3.121). Oberon and Titania’s control of the Athenian woods, and Prospero’s mastery of the sea, are echoed in Shakespeare’s later description of Orpheus’ magic:

Orpheus with his Lute made Trees,
And the Mountaine tops that freeze,
Bow themselues when he did sing.
To his Musicke, Plants and Flowers
Euer sprung; as Sunne and Showers,
There had made a lasting Spring.
Every thing that heard him play,
Euen the Billowes of the Sea,
Hung their heads, & then lay by.
In sweet Musicke is such Art,
Killing care, & griefe of heart,
Fall asleepe, or hearing dye.[22]

Oberon’s music, like Ariel’s, is used to “strike more dead / Then common sleepe: of all these, fiue the sense” (_MSND Q1 4.1.81-2). In addition to music’s magical effects as a soporific, however, Duke Orsino points out that “Musicke [is] the food of Loue” (_12N F1 1.1.1) -- and love is ultimately the aim of the playwrights’ magic in most of these comedies.

There are striking contrasts to the fairy music in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*; in fact, within a single scene Oberon’s incantation (_MSND 4.1.81-3) follows Bottom’s request for “the tongs, and the bones” (_MSND Q1 4.1.29), and is almost immediately interrupted by the winding of Duke Theseus’ hunting horns (_MSND 4.1.102sd), which introduce a startling definition of harmony: Theseus advocates “the musicke of my hounds,” and “the musicall confusion / Of hounds and Echo in coniunction” (_MSND Q1 4.1.106,110-11), while Hippolyta “neuer heard / So musicall a discord, such sweet thunder” (_MSND Q1 4.1:122-123).[23]

Theseus is not alone among Shakespeare’s minor dramatists; many equate dramaturgic art with the art of hunting. This is most apparent in *Much Ado about Nothing*, as Benedick and Beatrice are deceived by a theatrical presentation:

O I, stalke on, stalk on, the foule sits.
(_MAAN Q1 2.3.84)

Baite the hooke wel, this fish will bite.
(_MAAN Q1 2.3.98)

Let there be the same nette spread for her[.]
(_MAAN Q1 2.3.191)

If it proue so, then louing goes by haps,
Some Cupid kills with arrowes, some with traps.
(_MAAN Q1 3.1.108-9)

Leontes likewise claims he is “angling” as his initial social comedy and his jealousy both grow beyond his control (_WT F1 1.2.213). Petruchio’s conquest of Kate is virtually a blood sport on which he is prepared to wager,[24] and Shylock’s designs for a “merrie sport” call for “an equall pound / of [Antonio’s] faire flesh” (_MV Q1 1.3.143,147-8). Hunting, the merciless application of rational art to nature, is Theseus’ sport, both in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, but it is certainly not Oberon’s pastime. Petruchio seems to follow this hunter’s credo, the merciless subjugation of others, which achieves certain basic goals but leaves the audience

uncomfortable.[25] Imagery of hunting surrounds many of the practical jokes and gullings: the Parolles-baiters promise to “make you some sport with the Foxe / ere we case him” (_AWEW F1 3.6.104-5), Shallow reports, “Ile tell you what the sport shall be, / Doctor _Cayus and sir _Hu are to fight” (_MWW Q1 2.1.104-105), and Malvolio is transformed to “Sport royall” (_12N F1 2.3.161). Ford promises to “vnkennell the Fox,” Falstaff (_MWW F1 3.3.142), who significantly ends up with horns on his head at the oak of Herne the Hunter. The Lord of the Induction to _The Taming of the Shrew turns from hounds to beggars as a source of entertainment.

The hunters’ approach to comedy is a dark, aggressive, victimizing one, an art which ultimately leads not to social reconciliation, but to outcasts and fugitives, who cry out “Ile be reueng’d on the whole **packe** of you[!]” (_12N F1 5.1.386, emphasis mine), or “Sorrow on . . . all the **packe** of you / That triumph thus vpon my misery” (_TS F1 4.3.33-34, emphasis mine). It is not at all coincidental that at the height of his powers, Prospero and Ariel literally _hunt down Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo:

_A noyse of Hunters heard. Enter
diuers Spirits in shape of Dogs and
Hounds, hunting them about: Prospero
and Ariel setting them on.
(_Temp F1 4.1.268sd)

Shakespeare’s major benevolent dramatists, Oberon, Portia, Rosalind, Viola, Paulina, and even Vincentio, take a more humane approach, and it is this mercy which Prospero learns from Ariel immediately after the hunting scene:

_Pro. Let them be hunted soundly: At this houre
Lies at my mercy all mine enemies . . .
[_Ar.] . . . your charm so strongly works 'em
That if you now beheld them, your affections
Would become tender.
_Pro. Dost thou thinke so, Spirit?
_Ar. Mine would, Sir, were I humane.
_Pro. And mine shall.
Hast thou (which art but aire) a touch, a feeling
Of their afflictions, and shall not my selfe,
One of their kinde, that relish all as sharply,
Passion as they, be kindlier mou'd then thou art?

(_Temp F1 4.1.277-8, 5.1.19-28)

In Shakespearean comedy, aggression which selects victims for humiliation or abuse can be a temporary source of humour or merriment, but cannot be the foundation for a successful comic resolution.[26] The discomfort felt by audiences after the treatment suffered by Kate, Holofernes, Falstaff, or Malvolio, is symptomatic of this. The master playwrights in Shakespeare’s comedies avoid such manipulation, or learn to overcome it as Prospero does. The Globe Theatre and the Bear Garden may have been close enough neighbours for Wenceslaus Hollar to confuse them, but for Shakespeare they remained worlds apart.[27]

In _The Merchant of Venice, the female playwright figure finally comes into her own. For the first three acts, Portia is committed to a script written by her deceased father, which outlines “the lottrie of [her] destenie” and “Barrs [her] the right of voluntary choosing” (_MV Q1 2.1.5-6). Her father’s script even includes stage directions for her courtship: “Turne you where your Lady is, / And claime her with a louing kis” (_MV Q1 3.2.140-1). Like Julia and Rosalind, Portia becomes a dramaturge in her own right only once she enters male disguise, to follow her husband to Venice. She immediately grasps

at a conventional, stock explanation:

for mine owne part
I haue toward heauen breath'd a secret vowe,
To liue in prayer and contemplation,
Onely attended by _Nerrissa heere,
Vntill her husband and my Lords returne,
There is a Monastery two miles off,
And there we will abide.

(_MV Q1 3.4.26-32)

The “secret vowe,” like Vincentio’s “sacred Vow” (_MM F1 4.3.149), looks like dramatist’s stock-in-trade, as is the monastery, which is quite probably full, after all, of meddling friars eager to effect comic d_nouements. Russell Fraser observes that “the Friar, crooked, bumbling, or omniscient as the plot requires, is the last resort of every Renaissance playwright” (Fraser & Rabkin 10). In Renaissance comedy, it would seem, the friar was the _first resort: Mucedorus chooses the disguise of a hermit as the most obvious option after exhausting the potential of his shepherd’s disguise (_Mucedorus sc 14); Duke Vincentio resorts to this role to effect his designs; it is as a hermit that Malevole and Celso disguise Pietro in Marston’s _Malcontent; and to return to the play under discussion, Portia seems to have included a “holy Hermit” in her tale upon her return to Belmont (_MV Q1 5.1.40).

It would also seem that Portia’s script undergoes minor rewriting from time to time: although she first warns Bassanio, “ile haue that Doctor for mine bedfellow” (_MV Q1 5.1.246), within thirty lines, apparently as an afterthought, she changes the story: “I had it of him: pardon me _Bassanio, / for by this ring the Doctor lay with me” (_MV Q1 5.1.273-4). Likewise, Angelo and Escalus report that Duke Vincentio’s letters seem peculiarly contradictory:

_Esc. Euery Letter he hath writ, hath disuouch'd other.
_ An. In most vneuen and distracted manner, his actions
show much like to madnesse, pray heauen his
wisdomme bee not tainted[.]

(_MM F1 4.4.1-4)

Vincentio’s excuses for leaving Vienna are blatantly contradic-tory: our difficulty is not that he fails to offer motives, but that he offers us too many—we are witnessing dramaturgic “doodling” (Leggatt, “Substitution” 359). Contradiction thrives in _The Winter’s Tale, too, whether of Shakespearean or Pauline origin: when Leontes explicitly asks to be brought “To the dead bodies of my Queene, and Sonne” (_WT F1 3.2.252), it is evident that a more convincing substitute than Barnardine has been produced; nonetheless, Shakespeare contradicts himself and his sources by bringing Hermione back to life two acts later, with the assistance of Paulina. Shakespeare “doodles” throughout his plays, as evidenced by the many inconsistencies, ghost characters, and incomplete revisions, everywhere in the canon.[28] It may be that his surrogate dramatists simply suffer as a result of their creator’s indeterminacy, but there remains a possibility that Shakespeare endowed them with dramatic missteps to reflect the dramatic process as he knew it.

Despite the surrogate playwrights, however, in _The Merchant of Venice it would seem to be Shakespeare’s own plot mechanism creaking as Portia produces Antonio’s three missing argosies _ex machina (_MV 5.1.273-8), just as the two sonnets produced conveniently at the end of _Much Ado about Nothing are the sole means to reconcile Beatrice and Benedick. When Portia insists “You shall not know by what strange accident / I chanced on this letter” (_MV Q1 5.1.294-5), she is merely emphasizing the contradictory and arbitrary nature of this development: elsewhere Portia uses the standard comic dramatist’s trick of promising an offstage explanation (_MV 5.1.295-9). No explanation is forthcoming, either, for Portia’s delay in revealing the propitious news to Antonio.

Such postponement, often excessively cruel, it would seem, is another common technique of Shakespeare’s surrogate dramatists. Portia is one of the worst offenders, not only

keeping Antonio in suspense unnecessarily, but also playing cat and mouse with Shylock in the trial scene. First, as must Vincentio and Paulina, Portia must lie to maintain the desired suspense:

Of a strange nature is the sute you follow,
yet in such rule, that the Venetian law
cannot impugne you as you doe proceed.

(_MV Q1 4.1.177-9)

Of course, Venetian law can indeed impugn Shylock as soon as he proceeds, and Portia points it out within two hundred lines:

Tarry Iew,
the law hath yet another hold on you.
It is enacted in the lawes of Venice,
if it be proued against an alien,
that by direct, or indirect attempts
he seeke the life of any Cittizen,
the party gainst the which he doth contriue,
shall seaze one halfe his goods, the other halfe
comes to the priuie coffer of the State,
and the offenders life lies in the mercy
of the Duke onely, gainst all other voyce.

(_MV Q1 4.1.354)

Regardless of her moral and religious motivations to argue mercy before legality, Portia is displaying a common character-istic among Shakespeare's fictional playwrights. Vincentio's postponement is perhaps most infamous: he maintains the fiction of Claudio's death, even going so far as to fire the Provost (_MM 5.1.461), until he is finally prepared to tell Isabella the truth, justifying his deception in these well-known lines:

But I will keepe her ignorant of her good,
To make her heauenly comforts of dispaire,
When it is least expected.

(_MM F1 4.3.110-2)

The whole of Paulina's elaborate production seems rather unnecessary: the very moment in which Leontes hears of his son's death, he seems entirely repentant:

I haue too much beleeu'd mine owne suspition:
'Beseech you tenderly apply to her
Some remedies for life. _Apollo pardon
My great prophanenesse 'gainst thine Oracle.
Ile reconcile me to _Polixenes,
New woe my Queene, recall the good _Camillo
(Whom I proclaime a man of Truth, of Mercy[.])

(_WT F1 3.2.161-167)

Paulina's postponement, so long that Time must appear as the play's chorus, seems redundant, unnecessary, even extravagantly ruthless. Prospero, too, resorts to such cruel postponement more than once. He rationalizes his harsh treatment of Ferdinand much as Vincentio explains his own:

But this swift busines
I must vneasie make, least too light winning
Make the prize light.

(_Temp F1 1.2.522-4)

Prospero must resort to deception, too, by alleging to Alonso that both Ferdinand and Miranda were lost in the tempest (_Temp 5.1.145-53). It has often been observed that the reasons for these postponements are sound dramatic reasons, despite their awkwardness—but arbitrary postponement seems another consistent feature of Shakespeare's comic dramatists, and as such it seems a deliberately chosen technique.

_The Merry Wives of Windsor contains more dramaturges than any other play, yet because none is dominant the comic resolution is effected despite them rather than through them. In _The Tempest, Prospero and Ariel remain in steady control; despite counter-plots by Caliban and Antonio, the past is clearly a Prospero's prologue, which he narrates himself in the first scene. In _The Merry Wives of Windsor, no single dramaturge can supervise the many contending plots, although Fenton seems to come closest (_MWW 4.6.16-51). Ten independent playwrights work in competition, then collaboration and finally competition once more, throughout the course of the comedy. Falstaff plots to cuckold Ford and Page in blatantly theatrical terms: he explains, "we had embrast, kist, protested, & (as it were) spoke the prologue of our Comedy" (_MWW F1 3.5.64-6). Pistol and Nym counter-plot to reveal Falstaff's designs and humiliate him, and Ford disguises himself as Broome and begins an intrigue of his own. The Host masterminds a "sport in hand," the duel between Evans and Caius (_MWW F1 2.1.177), much as Sir Toby and Fabian arrange the confrontation of Cesario and Andrew Aguecheek. In revenge, the butts of this humour stage the theft of the Host's horses. Mistress Quickly orchestrates the courtship of Anne Page by several suitors simultaneously, while she acts for Mistress Ford and Mistress Page in their repeated humiliations of Falstaff.[29] Finally, in a collaborative effort of monumental proportions, all the dramatists cooperate in the ultimate mortification of Falstaff at Herne's Oak, where he finds himself faced with the fairy realm, like Bottom; he recognizes his metamorphosis immediately, saying, "I do begin to perceiue that I am made an Asse" (_MWW F1 5.5.119). Despite the larger collaborative effort, Page, Mistress Page, and Fenton continue to plot romantic comedies in competition with one another, centering on the marriage of Anne Page.

Ford, in particular, demonstrates a characteristic of the fictional playwright not yet mentioned: a distinctive self-consciousness, or a curiosity about his reputation while in disguise. Ford is a virtual glutton for punishment as he repeatedly asks questions of Falstaff:

_ Ford. I am blest in your acquaintance: do you know _Ford
Sir?

_Fal. Hang him (poore Cuckoldly knaue) I know him not: yet I
wrong him to call him poore: They say the ielous
wittolly-knaue hath masses of money, for the which his
wife seemes to me well-fauourd: I will vse her as the key
of the Cuckoldly-rogues Coffe, & ther's my haruest-home.

_Ford. I would you knew _Ford, sir, that you might a-uoid him,
if you saw him.

_Fal. Hang him, mechanicall-salt-butter rogue; I wil stare him
out of his wits: I will awe-him with my cudgell: it shall
hang like a Meteor ore the Cuckolds horns: Master
_Broome, thou shalt know, I will predominate o-uer the
pezant, and thou shalt lye with his wife. Come to me
soone at night: _Ford's a knaue, and I will aggra-uate his
stile: thou (Master _Broome) shalt know him for knaue,
and Cuckold.

(_MWW F1 2.2.250-67)

In the same fashion, Vincentio is overly concerned about his reputation while disguised as Friar Ludowick, and makes the mistake of asking Lucio for news of the Duke (_MM 3.2.87).[30] The result is a torrent of slanderous abuse which Vincentio cannot arrest, and which he cannot forget, even after forgiving Angelo entirely.[31] Vincentio's

curiosity meets with more palatable results from Escalus, who wishes to avoid even harmless gossip:

[_Duke.] I pray you Sir, of what dis-position
was the Duke?

_Esc. One, that about all other strifes,
Contented especially to know himselfe.

_Duke. What pleasure was he given to?

_Esc. Rather reioycing to see another merry, then
merrie at anie thing which profest to make him
reioice.

A Gentleman of all temperance. But leaue wee him to his euent, with a praier they may
proue prosperous[.]

(_MM F1 2.2.510-7)

Ford, like Vincentio, does indeed contend to know himself, but is not entirely pleased with what he hears.

Similar or related self-consciousness is evident in some of Shakespeare's other fictional playwrights. As Bassanio and Gratiano swear their concern for Antonio, Portia and Nerissa make sly asides about their wives (_MV 4.1.288,293), and of course they later display an inordinate interest in their wives' rings. Polixenes, while attending the sheep-shearing festival in disguise, repeatedly asks Florizel about his father, and is distinctly displeased with the replies he receives (_WT 4.4.392ff). It would appear that Shakespeare's fictional playwrights don't disguise, and perhaps take on the responsibilities of a dramatist, at least in part to discover something of themselves, or of others' perception of themselves.[32] Perhaps it is not too much to claim that Shakespeare, in similar fashion[33] but with distinctly different results, found dramatic and poetic art an avenue for self-exploration.

In *Much Ado about Nothing* (1598-9), Don Pedro, Borachio, and Friar Francis are the primary dramaturgic characters. Don Pedro plots the disguised wooing of Hero in collaboration with Claudio, then the deception of Benedick and Beatrice with still more accomplices, and finally the rejection of Hero at the altar. Borachio is ultimately responsible for the deceptive midnight performance, despite Ursula's assertion that "Don Iohn / is the author of all" (_MAAN Q1 5.2.81), but the audience never actually sees the scene. Borachio's description of it, however, like Bardolph's description of the "three _Germane-diuels; three _Doctor Fau-stasses" (_MWW F1 4.5.67), is distinctly artificial and literary, apparently influenced by *Romeo and Juliet* rather than Marlowe:

_Bor. Not so neither, but know that I haue to night wooed
Margaret the Lady Heroes gentle-woman, by the name of
Hero, she leanes me out at her mistris chamber window,
bids me *a thousand times good night*: I tell this tale
vildly.

(_MAAN Q1 3.3.131-4, emphasis mine)

Friar Francis, ultimately, is the surrogate playwright of *Much Ado about Nothing* who brings about the comic resolution. Like Oberon, Vincentio, and Prospero, he is not omniscient—he is completely mistaken about Claudio's repentance—and like Friar Laurence and Paulina, he suggests a mock-death to promote a loving marriage.

Beatrice seems to recognize another dramatic cliché when she scoffs at Claudio's assertion, "Talke with a man out at a window, a proper saying" (_MAAN Q1 4.1.311). Like the shipwreck and the death-on-sight scenario, the moonlight window rendezvous seems to have been conventional material ready at hand to any dramatist: Valentine plans to enter Silvia's window (_2GV 2.4.181); Egeus asserts that Lysander has "by moone-light, at her windowe / sung" (_MSND Q1 1.1.33-4); Jessica arranges to elope with Lorenzo from her

window (_MV 2.6); and Diana arranges to meet Bertram by her chamber window (_AWEW 4.2.54).[34] To twentieth-century apartment-dwellers, the image may seem less commonplace, but Beatrice makes it evident that Claudio's accusation has been contrived by a second-rate story-teller.[35]

Rosalind is quite clearly the central dramaturge of *As You Like It*, from the moment she decides to "speake to [Orlando] like a sawcie Lacky, and vn-der that habit play the knaue with him" (_AYLI F1 3.2.283-4). Like the hackneyed excuses used by her predecessors (in particular the monastery and hermit mentioned by Portia), Rosalind explains her distinctly unpastoral accent by fabricating "an olde religious Vnckle of mine" (_AYLI F1 3.2.327-8). Like Puck, Oberon's own deputy dramatist, who declares, "What, a play toward? Ile be an Auditor, / An Actor to perhappes, If I see cause" (_MSND Q1 3.1.69-70), Rosalind views the "pageant" of Silvius and Phebe, intending to "proue a busie actor in their play" (_AYLI F1 3.4.50,58). Rosalind, like both Puck and Prospero, speaks the play's epilogue, which seems appropriate for the internal dramaturge.[36] In the triumphant scene of Rosalind's perform-ance, the revelation of her true identity, she presents a masque, in anticipation of Prospero, and claims magical powers much like those of Paulina, miraculous but "not damnable":

Beleeue then, if you please,
that I can do strange things: I haue since I was three
yeare old conuerst with a Magitian, most profound in
his Art, and yet not damnable. If you do loue _Rosalinde
so neere the hart, as your gesture cries it out: when your
brother marries _Aliena, shall you marrie her.

(_AYLI F1 5.2.58-63)

The quadruple wedding at the close of *As You Like It* is defiantly artificial, as Jaques makes clear: "There is sure another flood toward, and these couples are comming to the Arke" (_AYLI F1 5.4.36-7). Shakespeare also seem deliberately to eliminate all motivation for Celia's acceptance of Oliver: in Lodge, a daring rescue demonstrates his worthiness (Gardner 60). Perhaps it is only because Touchstone is also one of the "Country copulatiues" (_AYLI F1 5.4.56) that he does not address his objection about Corin's profession to the comic dramatist:

That is another simple sinne in you, to
bring the Ewes and the Rammes
together, and to offer to get your
liuing, by the copulation of Cattle, to
be bawd to a Bel-weather, and to
betray a shee-Lambe of a tweluemonth
to a crooked-pated olde Cuckoldly
Ramme, out of all reasonable match.

(_AYLI F1 3.2.74-79)

Shakespeare's comedies and romances are replete with such arbitrary marriages: Leonato arranges an anonymous marriage for Claudio (_MAAN 5.1.288ff), after which Benedick suggests that the Prince should "get thee a wife," presumably regardless of her identity (_MAAN Q1 5.4.122). Sir Toby marries Maria "in recompence" for the letter she wrote to Malvolio (_12N F1 5.1.373), and in fulfillment of Helena's request, the King of _All's Well that Ends Well compels Bertram to "Take her by the hand" (_AWEW F1 2.3.182). Vincentio is responsible for three arbitrary matches: he couples Angelo and Mariana, Lucio and Kate Keepdown, and most notably himself and Isabella[37] -- perhaps indeed a betrayal of "a shee-Lambe of a tweluemonth to a crooked-pated olde Cuckoldly Ramme"?[38] Marina, who can "freze the god / _Priapus" (_Per Q1 4.6.3-4) is coupled with a frequenter of brothels, and Leontes pairs Camillo and Paulina quite abruptly (_WT 5.3.135). As G.K. Hunter observes, it appears that "the pattern of the dance is what matters" (Hunter 92),

and it was perhaps as a result that Shakespeare grew interested in the pattern-makers in his comedies.

The independent internal performances of *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* gradually evolved into the more complex interaction of multiple playwrights in *Much Ado about Nothing*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *Twelfth Night*. *Measure for Measure*, the problem play to end all problem plays, demonstrates the difficulties Shakespeare encountered introducing an ostensibly omniscient dramaturge into the political sphere. Vincentio was a deliberate addition on Shakespeare's part—there is no trace of him in the sources—yet it is his character which is largely responsible for the critical unrest over the play. Without Oberon's musical and floral charms, Vincentio is faced with rebellion from characters like Angelo and Barnardine, and as a merely temporal ruler, his pseudo-divine edicts seem arbitrary and dictatorial. Vincentio's human motives become questionable, in a way that Oberon's never can. The comic resolution Vincentio achieves ultimately seems somewhat hollow, and the three marriages he commands seem destined for unhappiness: apparently reciprocal love exists only between Claudio and Juliet, who managed to pair themselves without the intervention of a meddling friar (without benefit of clergy at all, in fact). In the realistic world of *Measure for Measure*, true comic dramaturgy becomes virtually impossible; perhaps this is why Shakespeare went on to write an uninterrupted stream of six tragedies instead.

After the incomparably bitter *Timon of Athens* (1607-8), Shakespeare's plays grow steadily less sinister through four romances, concluding with *The Winter's Tale* (1610-11) and *The Tempest* (1611). In the realm of romance, to an even greater extent than in the early romantic comedies, dramaturgic art reigns supreme. Shakespeare can conjure tempests and shipwrecks, span decades or restrict himself to the two hours' traffic of the stage. Natural laws can be ignored, shipwrecked vessels can be restored intact, and in *The Winter's Tale*, at least, Shakespeare demonstrated that "Graues at my command / Haue wak'd their sleepers, op'd, and let 'em forth / By my so potent Art" (*Temp* F1 5.1.53-5). The romances evidently occur in Oberon's realm of magic and mystery: Pericles must ask Marina "Haue you a working pulse, and are no Fairie?" (*Per* Q1 5.1.140), Belarius thinks Imogen is a fairy, "But that it eates our victualles" (*Cym* F1 3.6.42), the old shepherd finds a "Change-ling" child and "Faery Gold" (*WT* F1 3.3.119, 123), and Stephano and Trinculo are convinced Ariel is a fairy (*Temp* 4.1.196,212). In this context, as in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare can successfully present master dramatists, and they can successfully effect comic resolutions. Paulina and Camillo perform complementary functions, and Prospero is undeniably Shakespeare's greatest dramaturgic figure.

Paulina, who dominates the dramaturgy of *The Winter's Tale* almost as completely as she dominates the stage in performance, has already been adequately discussed. When the play opens, however, it is not Paulina but Leontes who is manipulating characters, attempting to produce a comedy of his own. Leontes tries to coax Hermione much as Lear tries to draw language from Cordelia: "Tongue-ty'd our Queene? speake you" (*WT* F1 1.2.34).^[39] But Leontes' comedy, like Lear's love-test, quickly escapes his control, primarily because "he hath euer but / slenderly knowne himselfe" (*KL* F1 1.1.311-2), and it becomes instead an "entertainment / My Bosome likes not, nor my Browes" (*WT* F1 1.2.142-3). Leontes proceeds to stage his own perverted rendition of *Measure for Measure*, in which Hermione is on trial for a supposed bed-trick and in which he is cast as Vincentio (while actually playing Angelo): "How blest am I / In my iust Censure? in my true Opinion?" (*WT* F1 2.1.48-9). In the end, however, he, like Ford, manages only to make a spectacle of his jealousy, broadcasting his shame before a summoned audience. Once Leontes begins to collaborate with Camillo, however, the comic resolution is more certain. Within a single scene, Camillo formulates Leontes' plan of action against Polixenes, and counter-plots Polixenes' designs for escape.

After the conspicuous intervention of Time, it is Polixenes who attempts to orchestrate events in Bohemia. Like Vincentio, who "like powre diuine, / Hath look'd vpon [Angelo's] passes," Polixenes feels omniscient: "I haue eyes vnder my seruice, / which looke vpon his remouednesse" (*WT* F1 4.2.36-7). Those "eyes," however, have not observed the events of the first three acts, and do not realize, as the audience does, Perdita's ancestry. Polixenes stages the disguise of Camillo and himself, although they spend considerable time as an audience for Perdita's "*Whitson-Pastoral*" and the ensuing dances (*WT* F1 4.4.152). When Polixenes declares his own son "too base / To be

acknowledge" (_WT F1 4.4.460-1), he demonstrates that he has not yet attained Prospero's final level of wisdom, at which he can say, even of the basest creature, "this Thing of darkenesse, I / Acknowledge mine" (_Temp F1 5.1.312-3).

Camillo again intercedes for the sake of the comic action, directing Florizel and Perdita to Sicilia, arranging for wardrobe, suitable props, and even a script:

Things knowne betwixt vs three, *Ile write you downe,
The which shall point you forth at euery sitting
What you must say*.[.]

(_WT F1 4.4.626-8, emphasis mine)

As before, he also orchestrates a counter-plot for Polixenes, always working toward the more complete community which eventually results. Camillo, an accomplished dramatist, requires no superhuman magic to accomplish his comic purposes because he knows himself and his characters, and he can direct them on their own terms. His approach is, if anything, more successful than Paulina's spectacular one, which inadvertently leads to the abandonment of Perdita and the loss of her husband Antigonus. He and Paulina are complementary dramatists, orchestrating events in alternation until the final discovery scene. Leontes is acting arbitrarily by coupling the two, but he may be acting for the best: they are unquestionably a compatible couple.

Shakespeare's independent dramatic career ends,[40] as Prospero's begins, not with a bang but a Tempest. That tempest is made possible through both Prospero's and Shakespeare's art, but also through the collaboration of the audience. The first scene of Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girle*, published in the same year that *The Tempest* was first performed (1611), describes the scene in an Elizabethan public theatre:

The very floor, as't were, waves to and fro,
And, like a floating island, seems to move
Upon a sea bound in with shores above.[41]

In the first scene of *The Tempest*, Shakespeare's audience is converted into part of Prospero's tempest, the stage in its midst becomes a frail sea vessel, and the gradually-diminishing clamor of patrons supplies the roar of the surf. This seems the ultimate "collective imaginative act of playwright, actors, and audience." [42]

Prospero's epilogue recognizes this ultimate power of the audience to create and dispel dramatic illusion:

Now my Charmes are all ore- throwne,
And what strength I haue's mine owne.
Which is most faint: now 'tis true
I must be heere confinde by you,
Or sent to Naples, Let me not
Since I haue my Dukedome got,
And pardon'd the deceiuer, dwell
In this bare Island, by your Spell,
But release me from my bands
With the helpe of your good hands:
Gentle breath of yours, my Sailes
Must fill, or else my proiect failes,
Which was to please[.]

(_Temp F1 Epil.1-13)

The audience, as Northrop Frye points out, is the final cause of any performance (Frye "Argument" 80); Portia says less technically, "The Crow doth sing as sweetly as the Larke / when neither is attended" (_MV Q1 5.1.108), and Rosaline makes the point in _Love's Labour's Lost:

A iestes prosperitie lies in the eare,
Of him that heares it, neuer in the tongue
Of him that makes it[.]
(_LLL Q1 5.2.887-9)

Shakespeare's most successful comic dramatists recognize the immense value of collaboration, not merely with other dramatists and actors, but with the audience. The final communal spirit of comedy must cross the boundary of the playworld and incorporate the entire theatre audience as well.[43] When the revels end and the shadows disperse, the audience is the enduring community formed by the comic action.

Shakespeare's comic dramatists seem to share many intriguing characteristics. A number are men who withdraw or seek to withdraw from social responsibilities, or women who through male disguise are enabled to act in a patriarchal society. Several demonstrate a curious self-consciousness, either as a result of their dramaturgic role, or simply their disguise. Their methods also tend to be similar: even the most omniscient are guilty of oversights, errors, and contradictions, often resorting to lame excuses and promises of explanations which are never forthcoming. Most make use of apparently cruel postponement for dramatic suspense, and display a propensity to make use of hackneyed plot devices such as shipwrecks, friars, death-on-sight scenarios, and balcony scenes. Finally, most share Oberon's _laissez faire attitude, that with the assistance of providence or fortune, things will eventually turn out better than they can devise.

The common characteristics of Shakespeare's fictional dramatists seem incidental in isolation, but when viewed together their similarities become striking. Shakespeare may have deliberately set out to portray flawed and careless playwrights for a number of reasons. Certainly their imperfections increase the transparency of Shakespeare's dramaturgy-verisimilitude was probably the initial motive for internal performances in the mid-1590's. The oversights and mistakes of these internal playwrights may also have been designed to create the opportunity for Shakespeare to rescue their designs with his own greater art.

It is more intriguing, however, to speculate that the comic context demanded responses from Shakespeare's surrogate dramatists very similar to those it elicited from himself. Shakespeare's own comic dramaturgy uses musical magic, conventional motifs and devices, lame and hackneyed excuses, cruel postponements, arbitrary marriages, and _ex machina resolutions. Shakespeare's art evidences minor oversights, inconsistencies, and contradictions. Shakespeare depended upon the talents of his fellow players to transform written poetry into oral magic, and despite Hamlet's objections, the ability of Kemp or Armin to improvise extemporaneously. Shakespeare quite probably revised on the basis of collaboration and rehearsal, and his foul papers often seem to have left final decisions up to the players.[44] Shakespeare's comedy, as Jonson noted, seems instinctual rather than crafted; in the comedies, at least, we are inclined to believe Heminges and Condell when they say "His mind and hand went together: And what he thought, he vttered with that easinesse, that wee haue scarce receiued from him a blot in his papers" ("To the great Variety of Readers" F1 28-30). It hardly seems humanly possible that Shakespeare deliberately contrived the myriad complexities of his plays, and found time to write them as well. Inspiration and genius are not "continuall plodd[ing]" but carefree creation, which ultimately stands back and recognizes that "This falles out better, then I could deuise."

Russell Fraser's observations about rhetorical ornament also help to explain the concentration of dramaturgic figures in Shakespearean comedy:

...when language is highly stylized,
virtuosity is everywhere to the fore.
The playwright is pulling the strings
and desires our witnessing and
applause. When on the other hand he
is seeking to rouse our emotions, he
takes pains to conceal himself and his
expertise. In tragic drama, he is
invisible like the god of creation. In
comic drama, he is all brazenly the
"god from the machine." Plot is
conspicuous and turns on contrivance,
characters are submerged in their
extravagant function, attention to
rhetoric is overt.

(Fraser & Rabkin 12)

Internal playwrights are much less frequent in Shakespeare's tragedies and histories, although figures of political authority are everywhere.[45] This is partly, as Fraser suggests, because the dramatist seeks to avoid drawing attention to his illusion. It is also true, however, that political authority alone seems adequate to direct events toward a tragic or historical conclusion: in the real world, men do this every day. John of Gaunt points out the limitations of mere mortal authority to King Richard:

Shorten my daies thou canst with sullen sorrowe,
And plucke nights from me, but not lend a morrow:
Thou canst helpe time to furrow me with age,
But stoppe no wrinckle in his pilgrimage:
Thy word is currant with him for my death,
But dead, thy kingdome cannot buy my breath.

(_R2 Q1 1.3:227-232)

Royal authority cannot command a loving betrothal or a childbirth: the closest which a King or Duke can manage seems to be Bertram's "I take her hand" or Lucio's "pressing to death, / Whipping and hanging" (_MM F1 5.1.569-70). The comic dramatist, however, creates loving matches and renewed communities as a matter of course. He may perform his duties awkwardly or conventionally, _magically or mechanically, with the assistance of providence or fortune, accident or luck, but ultimately his powers exceed those of mere royalty, and partake of the divine:

Not marble nor the gilded monuments
Of Princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme[.]

(Sonnet 55:1-2)

E N D N O T E S

[1] Like James Calderwood, I may occasionally seem guilty of an "intentional-biographical fallacy," but my methods and aims are strictly limited to the interpretation of the plays. It is simply more expedient (and comprehensible) to say "Shakespeare intended . . ." than "The evidence of Shakespeare's plays consistently seems to demonstrate a deliberate . . ." (but even this does not avoid the "intentional fallacy"). In the end, I must confess with

Calderwood that "it is pleasant to think of Shakespeare as having at least temporarily occupied live skin before being permanently bound in calf" (Calderwood 6). It is also necessary to be aware that, as Ralph Berry observes, "audience" is often rhetoric for "self" (Berry, "Homan" 241). Being aware, and being immune, are of course vastly different things.

- [2] The chronology used in formulating the arguments in this paper is that of G. Blakemore Evans in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, pp 47-56. Direct quotations from Shakespeare's dramatic works are taken from the Hinman facsimile of the First Folio and the Allen & Muir facsimile of the Quartos, identified by conventional act and scene divisions, and the lineation of the original texts. Indirect references will be to the lineation of the Riverside edition, and will not include the notation "Q1" or "F1."
- [3] This artificial exuberance helps explain the many twentieth-century productions of the play which amplify the text with the techniques of *commedia del'arte*, trapeze artistry, and even juggling.
- [4] In *WT* the shipwreck appears in conjunction with a bear *_ex machinus*, another hackneyed plot device which is "Like an old Tale still" (*WT* F1 5.2.60). Fabian's extravagant tales of Aguecheek's prowess leave Cesario stricken "as if a Beare were at his heeles" (*12N* F1 3.4.283), and of course Theseus selects the animal as the most atrocious for his image, "How easie is a bush suppos'd a Beare?" (*MSND* Q1 5.1.20). The ravenous bear also seems rather artificial in *Mucedorus*.
- [5] *_CE* has fewer theatrical words than any of Shakespeare's comedies, and fewer than one-third the average in the romances. The theatrical words the play does contain are essentially neutral in context, like "part" or "play," although occurrences of "Tragicke" (*_CE* F1 1.1.63) and "play the Porter well" (*_CE* F1 2.2.211) are slightly more significant.
- [6] Partially or entirely depending, of course, upon the textual authority of the quarto, *The Taming of A Shrew*, regarded for many years as either a "source" or a "bad quarto." I prefer the closure offered by *_A Shrew*, but recognize that Shakespeare may have preferred to resist closure (no doubt his "negative capability" exceeded my own). It may be that he saved the material from *_A Shrew*'s concluding lines for Bottom in *_MSND*:

Slie: Whose this? *_Tapster*, oh Lord sirra, I have had
The bravest dreame to night, that ever thou
Hardest in all thy life.

Tapster: Nay tarry *_Slie* for Ile go home with thee,
And heare the rest that thou hast dreamt to night.

(*_A Shrew* 19.10-12, 21-2 -- Bullough 1:108)

- [7] Sidney Homan, *When Theatre Turns to Itself*, p 69.
- [8] The masque also appears outside the comic genre in *Romeo and Juliet* (1595-6) (which of course has many other affinities with comedy), *Timon of Athens* (1607-8), and *Henry VIII* (1612-3).
- [9] Consider, as token extra-generic examples, Joan de Pucelle (Joan of Arc) (*H6*), Richard III, Aaron, Titus Andronicus, Friar Laurence (*RJ*), Claudius, Iago, and Edmund (*KL*) -- and the scope could be widened, as James Calderwood suggests, to include "all the kings" (16), and ultimately any character who gives instruction, orders, or direction to another.

Lengthy passages of narration also conjure up scenes and action before the eyes of the audience, and in this sense become dramaturgic: examples include the speeches of Grumio (*TS* 4.1.72-84), Oliver (*AYLI* 4.3.98-156), and Prospero (*Temp* 1.2.53-184). I have not thought it advisable to attempt a synthesis of all these aspects of internal direction, however, and in my defense I cite Edward Hubler's remarks:

It is not surprising, then, that even the most informed studies of comedy restrict their subject matter; they whittle it down to size, which is to say to the size of the whittler.

(Hubler 58)

- [10] The references occur at *CE* F1 1.2.99, 4.3.11, and 4.3.64. It is intriguing that Shakespeare's only other uses of the word occur three times in *1 Henry VI* and three times in *The Tempest*. This suggests an even stronger link with the later romance.
- [11] Solinus uses the word as he observes,
- These are the parents to these children,
Which accidentally are met together.
- (*CE* F1 5.1.359-360)
- [12] An "Angel" portraying Vincentio seems an intriguing premonition of *Measure for Measure*. There are only two Vincentios in all of Shakespeare's works, although there are several Angelos (*CE*'s goldsmith, *MM*'s deputy, and *Othello*'s "signior" - at Q1 1.3.20). Unfortunately, *MM*'s Vincentio is named only in the F1 cast list, considerably weakening any argument about the significance of his name.
- [13] I am indebted to Ann Pasternak Slater's compelling study, *Shakespeare the Director*, for my understanding of Shakespeare's implicit stage directions.
- [14] Frye also seems to be ignoring the conventions of tragicomedy: he neglects the wounded and presumed dead heroine, Dorothea, in 4.4 of Greene's *The Scottish History of James IV* (1590), and the attempted murder of Bellario / Euphrasia in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster*

(1609).

- [15] Compare the desire of Philaster, in the depths of his despair, to find a land without women (_Philaster 3.2).
- [16] Studiosness seems to be one of the characteristics of friars for Shakespeare: consider Friar Laurence, who has a study adjoining his cell (_RJ 3.3.76) and is remarkably knowledgeable in plant lore. Shakespeare nonetheless made friars the central dramaturges of _RJ, _MAAN, and _MM -- perhaps because of their independence from the other characters, their mysterious, almost magical providential connections, and of course their ability to marry couples -- an essential characteristic for any comic playwright.
- [17] Sonnet 66, lines 9-11. Quotations from Shakespearean poetry are taken from the editions in G. Blakemore Evans' _Riverside Shakespeare, because a convenient facsimile of early editions was not available.
- [18] The best explanation I have encountered for the Barnardine / Ragozine complication, except perhaps the one proposed here, is that Shakespeare creates a situation in which Vincentio can spare Barnardine in order to restore our sympathy to the Duke before he proceeds to lie to Isabella (Gelb 29). Of course, the two explanations are not mutually exclusive: Shakespeare may well kill two theatrical birds with one Ragozine. As Philip Edwards makes clear,
- If Shakespeare had suddenly found himself getting too fond of the reprobate to kill him off, he could easily have scratched him out of the play and gone on with Ragozine. But no, he _wanted him in, as a character who refuses to obey _his, the dramatist's behests, and as the condemned prisoner who refuses to play a part in the Duke's scheme for outwitting Angelo.
- (Edwards [14])
- [19] The etymology of Prospero's name is in dispute, of course. It would be interesting to verify Robert Egan's claim that "_prospero is the Italian for _faustus" (Egan 97). It seems self-evident that the name would suggest prosperity to an English audience. Shakespeare's usage of "prosper" may suggest a providential association in his mind: for example, "Heauen prosper the right" (_MWW F1 3.1.23); "Heauen prosper our sport" (_MWW F1 5.2.12); "the Lord blesse you, God prosper your af-faires" (_2H4 Q1 3.2.259); "Kind Gods forgieue me that, and prosper him" (_KL Q1 3.7.94); "Oh! you haue, I know, petition'd all the Gods for my prosperitie" (_Cor. F1 2.1.172-173); "his euent, with a praier they may proue prosperous" (_MM F1 3.1.517); and "To the protection of the prosperous Gods" (_Timon F1 5.1.227). Of course, Shakespeare makes use of the word in 83 other contexts.
- [20] The 1989 Stratford Festival production, following what I

suspect is a well-established critical tradition, laid enough emphasis upon the rhyme words of the song (bred, head, and nourish

d) that they drew laughter from the audience.

If the audience understood the hint, no doubt Bassanio would too.

- [21] The most obvious references include *_Temp* F1 1.2.448,452, 2.1:187, 2.1:323, 3.3:19,22,93, and 4.1.65. It is also intriguing to notice the parallels between the performances staged by Ariel and the folkloric magic performed by Sacrapant in George Peel's *_The Old Wives Tale* (1590?). Sacrapant summons several Furies to carry off the brothers over a feast (p 60-1) and to carry off Huanebango (p 69). Jack, while invisible, pinches Eumenides (p 79), much as Ariel baits Caliban by imitating Trinculo's voice. (References to *_OWT* are to Patricia Binney's Revels edition).
- [22] The song is sung by the Queen's attendant in *_Henry VIII* (or *_All is True*, if one follows Oxford's argument) at F1 3.1.4-15. Although Shakespeare probably worked with a collaborator on this play (requiring the authorship of these lines to be demonstrated), Shakespeare uses the same images to describe Orpheus' magic at *_2GV* 3.2.77-80 and *_MV* 5.1.70-88.
- [23] Critics argue that Theseus and Hippolyta present us with an "image of harmonious control over brute impulse" (Hunter 100), and I agree that to some extent this is true. The conjunction of these three attitudes to music within a single scene could not have been accidental, however.
- [24] I think this example is in some way indebted to the wording of Alexander Leggatt's comments on *_TS* in *_Shakespeare's Comedy of Love*, page 56.
- [25] Petruchio's domination of Kate is only perceived as acceptable by modern audiences if she is considered a willing collaborator in the final scene.
- [26] Consider Launcelot Gobbo's determination to "try confusions" with his "more then sand blinde, high grauell blinde" old father (*_MV* 2.2.29,28). Despite the mock recognition scene which follows, the humour here, as throughout the play, is indeed dark.
- [27] This is not to say that the audience's lust for blood does not influence Shakespeare in *_Titus Andronicus* or *_Julius Caesar*, but my focus here is comedy.
- [28] Unfortunately this effect is not especially limited to the comedies and romances -- but as Richard Fly observes, "Shakespeare has a way . . . of partially validating and then more-than-partially discrediting most all methodologies that presume to contain him" (Fly 137).
- [29] And it is intriguing to note the reappearance of the death-on-sight motif, as Mistress Ford tells Falstaff, "If you goe out in your owne semblance, / you die Sir {Iohn},

vnlesse you go out disguis'd" (_MWW F1 4.2.57-8).

- [30] Anne Barton memorably suggests that "Lucio is like an unruly extempore actor crept without permission into the Duke's tidy morality drama" (Righter 179).
- [31] Vincentio claims that Lucio's "slanders I forgiue" (_MM F1 5.1.566), but five lines later asserts indignantly, "Slandering a Prince deserues it" (_MM F1 5.1.571). Likewise, Prospero's pardon of Antonio seems undermined by his emotions:
- For you (most wicked Sir) whom to call brother
- Would euen infect my mouth, I do forgiue
Thy rankest fault; all of them: and require
My Dukedome of thee, which, perforce I know
- Thou must restore.
- (_Temp F1 5.1.142-146)
- [32] Of course, it does appear that any character in disguise can display similar interest. While Benedick, who does not seem to be a dramatist in any significant way, is masked, he pretends he does not know Benedick, and makes the mistake of asking Beatrice "Whats he?" (_MAAN Q1 2.1.117). He is profoundly disturbed by the response he receives -- and the audience, at least, learns something about his affection for Beatrice even at this early stage of the comedy. Mucedorus, however, seems at least partially in theatrical control of his situation, as he is disguised as a hermit and asks Mouse for a description of himself as shepherd: "What manner of man was he?" (Fraser & Rabkin, sc.14 l.50).
- [33] The argument is strengthened if Shakespeare did indeed act in his own plays, thus becoming another dramatist in disguise.
- [34] The stock device is not limited to the comedies: Romeo and Juliet meet almost nowhere else (eg _RJ 2.2); and Ophelia sings of St. Valentine's Day in her madness: "And I a mayde at your window / To be your Valentine" (_Ham Q2 4.5.46-7).
- [35] Ironically, it is Benedick whom Beatrice accuses of "deuising impossible slaunders" (_MAAN Q1 2.1.123), and Hero whom she overhears planning to "deuise some honest slaunders" against her (_MAAN Q1 3.1.86).
- [36] The essence of Rosalind's plot also appears some fifteen years earlier in John Lyly's _Gallathea (1583-5), in which Phyllida says to Gallathea, "let me call thee mistress" (_Gall. 4.4.20) while both are in male disguise. And although Rosalind claims that "It is not the fashion to see the Ladie the Epi-logue" (_AYLI F1 Epi.1), Gallathea does indeed speak the Epilogue to her play. (References to _Gallathea are to the edition by Norman Rabkin in Fraser & Rabkin).

- [37] R.W. Chambers points out that Shakespeare corrects the error of *Promos* and *Cassandra* by refusing to marry *Isabella* to *Angelo* (Chambers 104), but fails to notice that Shakespeare then goes on, just as arbitrarily, to marry *Isabella* to *Vincentio*.
- [38] Daniell slyly remarks that *Vincentio*'s "'What's mine is yours, and what is yours is mine' reads to modern ears more like sexual harassment" (Daniell 117). Gelb wonders how a marriage can be both reward for *Mariana* and punishment for *Angelo*, and foresees marital difficulties.
- [39] *Leontes* and *Lear* have more in common than alliterating names. Both plays are pre-Christian, both focus on issues of blindness, aging, and time, and through both the word "nothing" echoes like thunder. Both discard a daughter, only to be reunited in a final scene which inverts its sources: in *KL*, this means that *Cordelia* dies, but in *WT* it means that *Hermione* miraculously survives. *Lear* hovers over *Cordelia*'s body in the final scene, desperately catching at any sign of life, just as *Leontes* is spellbound by the lips of the supposed statue of *Hermione*.
- [40] Critical agreement places only the collaborative plays *Henry VIII* (1612-3), *Cardenio* (1612-3, no longer extant), and *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (1613) after *The Tempest* (1611).
- [41] *The Roaring Girle* 1.1. Harbage 114, quoting Adams, *Shakespearean Playhouses*, p. 279.
- [42] The July 1989 production of *The Tempest* by Toronto's Skylight Theatre suggested this observation. Even without a crush of groundlings standing in the yard, the crowd filling the amphitheatre at Earl Bales Park seemed to increase the confusion and activity in the play's opening scene. The phrase is Richard Fly's (Fly 134).
- [43] Perhaps it is indicative of *Vincentio*'s problematic status that he professes to hold a very different view of the audience:
- I loue the people,
 But doe not like to stage me to their eyes:
 Though it doe well, I doe not rellish well
 Their lowd applause, and Aues vehement:
 Nor doe I thinke the man of safe discretion
 That do's affect it.
- (_MM F1 1.1.72-77)
- [44] In particular, one senses that the two speeches by *Romeo* and *Friar Laurence* when end *RJ* 2.2 and begin 2.3 are options, choric utterances which can be spoken by either performer. Certainly Shakespeare's plays have been interpreted in remarkably diverse ways throughout their stage histories, although that would seem only partially attributable to Shakespearean ambiguity.
- [45] *Hamlet* is a notable exception, for metatheatricity is at

the fore, and dramaturges include Claudius, Hamlet, and the ghost.

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