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Shakespeare’s Player-Dramatists Staging Recognition Scenes

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Sr. Maria Frassati Jakupcak, O.P.

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Art to Enchant: Shakespeare's Player-Dramatists Staging Recognition Scenes

Sr. Maria Frassati Jakupcak, Ph.D.

Director: Michael Mack, Ph.D.

In the mid and late twentieth century, scholars became fascinated with the way Shakespeare uses theatrical metaphors. The introduction of the term "metatheatre" in the 1960s launched a school of criticism that examines Shakespeare's plays as self-consciously theatrical. To clarify some of the ambiguity surrounding the term "metatheatre," this dissertation examines a class of characters I have denominated "player-dramatists." The player-dramatists are characters who present any fiction intended for an audience inside the play. The dramas of the player-dramatists range from formal plays-within-plays, as in *Hamlet,* to other kinds of showmanship involving an audience, as in Don Pedro's loud conversation staged to be overheard by Benedick. In every case, the player-dramatist attempts to hide some part of his or her artifice from the audience within the play. When the "in-play" audience comes to recognize that an artifice has been used, Shakespeare's player-dramatists use this recognition to accomplish various goals. In the earliest plays, from *Comedy of Errors* to *Much Ado About Nothing*, the player-dramatists are largely concerned with changing behaviors in their in-play audience, almost to the point of seeming didactic. In the middle plays, from *As You Like It* to *All's Well That Ends Well*, the player-dramatists use the recognition for a greater variety of ends; occasionally the end is related to audience behavior, but increasingly the player-dramatists use drama for private purposes of their own. Sometimes these player-dramatists overestimate the power of drama and try to use it for ends to which it is not suited. In the Jacobean plays from *Measure for Measure* to *The Tempest* the player-dramatists have a much greater impact on their audiences than their predecessors. This impact is related to the way in which the player-

dramatists draw their in-play audiences into taking active part in the drama. These player-dramatists become increasingly successful as they move from using drama as a mere tool to shape an audience and begin to treat it as an opportunity for the audience to reshape itself. Although the typical effect of recognition in the late plays is a profound sense of wonder, the latest player-dramatist recognize the limitations as well as the power of drama. I conclude that the study of player-dramatists reveals something of Shakespeare's understanding of his own drama. Like the player-dramatists, he often beguiles theater audiences into responding to the action of the play in ways that can and should lead to self-recognition, insofar as the audience is willing.

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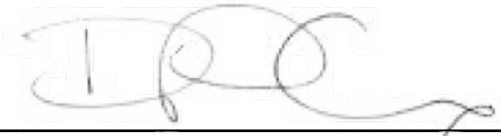
Michael Mack, Ph.D., Director



Daniel Gibbons, Ph.D., Reader

Tobias Gregory, 4-29-20

Tobias Gregory, Ph.D., Reader

To the Honor of Almighty God
And under the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary
And Our Holy Father, Saint Dominic

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Chapter One: Introduction

At the end of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, after the problems of the various lovers have bee brought to a happy conclusion, Theseus inquires after a "masque" or "Music" that will allow the happy couples to "beguile / The lazy time."[1] He settles at last on

> A tedious brief scene of your Pyramus
> And his love Thisby; very tragical mirth.
> (5.1.56-57)

The play-within-the-play, put on by Bottom, Quince, and the rest of the "rude mechanicals" has been in development for the duration of *Midsummer* itself, and it is everything Theseus hopes it will be (3.2.9). The Prologue, the self-aware moon, the courteous lion, the chink in the wall; all provide ready fodder for the wit of Theseus and his guests, who keep up a running commentary that enhances the hilarity of the scene. In terms of the main plot of the play, *Midsummer* does not, strictly speaking, need Bottom and his players to perform their play. Their performance is a delightfully gratuitous addition to the end of the play.

Peter Quince's play is a particularly fine instance of a common phenomenon: there is nothing portrayed more commonly in Shakespeare's dramas than drama itself. His portrayal of dramatic situations cuts across all generic boundaries of his canon, from history to tragedy to comedy to romance, Shakespeare regularly builds his plays around characters who stage dramatic productions for the sake of an audience. These characters who stage dramas inside the plays form a class sometimes called "Shakespeare Surrogates." This term, while appealing in some ways, has limitations. First, as used by Graham Bradshaw, it implies a direct correlation

[1] Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* 5.1.40-41. G. Blakemore Evans, ed., *The Riverside Shakespeare*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974. All quotations from Shakespeare are from this edition unless otherwise noted and will be cited parenthetically with the title of the play and the relevant act, scene, and line numbers.

between Shakespeare and these directorial characters, as though what the characters do is identical with what Shakespeare would do.[2] More recently the term has been used by Sonya Freeman Loftis to refer to modern playwrights, especially Brecht and Shaw, whose adaptations of Shakespeare she interprets as an effort to replace him with themselves.[3] Accordingly, to avoid confusing either Shakespeare and his characters or Shakespeare and modern dramatists, I have chosen to denominate these characters "player-dramatists."[4] The player-dramatists run the full gamut from obviously directorial characters like Bottom to more nuanced examples like Leontes or Iago. For my purposes, the definition of a player-dramatist is any character operating on the level of the play (hence "player") who presents any fiction intended for an audience inside the play (hence "dramatist"). This drama may be a formal play-within-a-play, as in *Hamlet*, or at least a piece of showmanship involving an audience, as in Don Pedro's loud conversation staged to be overheard by Benedick. As narratologists speak of "embedded narratives,"[5] it may be useful to consider the player-dramatists as architects of "embedded dramas," rather than of plays-within-plays, since not all of these dramas are immediately recognizable as such.

A broad definition of embedded drama means that practically every play yields characters who might be called player-dramatists. To limit the scope of this study, I have focused on a

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[2] "Shakespeare's Surrogate Dramatists" in *Shakespeare Studies (Tokyo Japan)*, Tokyo: Shakespeare Society of Japan, vol. 29: 1994, 37-60.
[3] *Shakespeare's Surrogates: Rewriting Renaissance Drama*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
[4] I am not the first to use this term; in the nineteenth and early twentieth century it was used as a way to refer to someone who, like Shakespeare, was both an actor and a playwright. William Poel, for instance, uses the word this way to refer to Shakespeare himself in his 1913 *Shakespeare in the Theatre* when he compare him to editor Nicholas Rowe, whom he calls a "poet-dramatist." I myself use the term as defined above.
[5] As, for instance, William Nelles, "Stories within Stories: Narrative Levels and Embedded Narrative. (After Genette: Current Directions in Narrative Analysis and Theory)." *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 25, no. 1 (1992): 79. In narratology the clashing of different levels of narrative is referred to as "metalepsis," and, while the term could perhaps be usefully applied to the situations discussed in this dissertation, I have not used it since it is seldom applied in the context of drama.

single kind of embedded drama, one that is most appropriate to the needs of the player-dramatists: recognition scenes. This dissertation examines player-dramatists staging recognition scenes as they occur chronologically across Shakespeare's entire canon, beginning with *The Comedy of Errors* and ending with *The Tempest*. In this chapter, my concern is to define the terms of my discussion. Accordingly, I will first examine the idea of recognition, particularly Aristotle's treatment of it. This will lead into a discussion of the player-dramatists and how the term "bisociation," coined by Arthur Koestler, offers a way to understand the player-dramatists and explains why they offer a particularly rich example of recognition. Next, in light of Koestler's distinctions, I will examine some medieval plays that use both recognition and player-dramatists in ways similar to Shakespeare's. Finally, I will provide an overview of the ways Shakespeare uses recognition and outline the remaining chapters.

I begin with Aristotle because he is the first to discuss recognition systematically. He does this in his *Poetics*, where he explicitly links recognition, *anagnorisis* (*ἀναγνώρισις*), with wonder, *to thaumaston* (*τὸ θαυμαστόν*).[6] In recent years, Aristotle's use of the term *anagnorisis* has garnered considerable scholarly interest.[7] However, before considering what Aristotle says, it is important to consider the term more broadly and note what he does not say. Aristotle lays no

[6] For a discussion of the history of the term wonder, see Cunningham, J. V. *Woe or Wonder; the Emotional Effect of Shakespearean Tragedy.* Denver: University of Denver Press, 1951, 62-105. Cunningham's interest is in establishing how exactly Shakespeare understood wonder in relation to the ends of tragedy, and his history of the development of the term is very thorough.

[7] Terence Cave in his 1988 *Recognitions: A Study in Poetics* devotes considerable space to the historical evolution of the term and to Shakespeare (New York: Clarendon Press, 1988.); Barry Adams 2000 book *Coming-to-Know: Recognition and the Complex Plot in Shakespeare* specifically considers how recognitions function in Shakespeare, though he restricts Aristotle's meaning to recognition of persons (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2000); a 2009 work edited by Philip Kennedy and Marilyn Lawrence was dedicated to *Recognition: The Poetics of Narrative: Interdisciplinary Studies on Anagnorisis*. New York: Peter Lang, 2009; the University of Edmonton, Alberta also hosted a conference on *anagnorisis* which was published in 2013 as. *Recognition and Modes of Knowledge: Anagnorisis from Antiquity to Contemporary Theory* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 2013), edited by Russo, G.T.; both later works feature Piero Boitani, a religious critic who often considers the topic of recognition.

claim to having invented the concept of recognition; rather, in the *Poetics* he is simply describing something he sees in the dramas of his day. The idea of recognition exists apart from Aristotle's writing about it; he himself cites Homer in addition to Sophocles, particularly the famous episode of Eurycleia recognizing Odysseus's scar in Book XIX of the *Odyssey*. In addition to Hellenistic examples cited by Aristotle, there are biblical instances of recognition as well. For example, there is an Old Testament episode when King David recognizes the severity of his crimes through the story told by the prophet Nathan. In his *Apology* Sir Philip Sidney describes this scene in terms of recognition since, after hearing the story of the rich man who stole a poor man's sheep, David comes "as in a glass to see his own filthiness."[8] Likewise the resurrection accounts of the New Testament, such as the appearance of Christ on the road to Emmaus, are also examples of recognition. Recognition, the noetic move of suddenly coming to know, has been a crucial element of literary representation from the very beginnings of both the Hebrew and Hellenistic traditions. Aristotle's discussion of recognition, as a thorough treatment of the subject, can be helpful for clarifying any particular instance of coming-to-know. Even if the instance in question was not directly influenced by what Aristotle wrote, Aristotle's keen observation of the phenomenon is likely to provide useful distinctions.

Looking more closely at what Aristotle does say, then, he first mentions recognition in *Poetics X* in relation to the complex plot:

[8] See Sidney, Sir Philip. *An Apology for Poetry,* ed. R.W. Maslen New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, 96. Sidney is concerned especially with using this episode to defend the use of fiction, but it is still an obvious example of recognition since David comes to know that the man in Nathan's story is, in fact, himself.

> I call "simple" an action which is continuous…and unitary, but whose transformation (*μετάβασις*) lacks reversal (*περιπετείας*) and recognition (*ἀναγνώρισις*); "complex," one whose transformation contains recognition or reversal or both.[9]

The three terms here, *metabasis*, *peripetia*, and *anagnorisis*, are tightly linked. John MacFarlane argues that *peripetia and anagnorisis* are subclasses of *metabasis*, although Robert Janko argues that *peripetia* is distinguished from *metabasis* because the change involved in reversal is sudden.[10] In whatever way Aristotle meant these terms to relate to each other, in *Poetics XI*, he explicitly links *anagnorisis*, in particular, to knowledge. He says: "Recognition, as the very name indicates, is a change from ignorance to knowledge, leading to friendship or to enmity, and involving matters which bear on prosperity or adversity."[11] The link between *anagnorisis* and knowledge is helpful because it suggests that *anagnorisis* refers to an interior cognitive process and *peripetia* to an external reversal of fortune.[12] On this reading, the moment in *The Winter's Tale* when the play takes a sudden structural turn from tragedy to comedy (via the infamous

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[9] Aristotle, *Poetics. X* 1452a15. trans. Stephen Halliwell,. All quotations from Aristotle are taken from the Loeb edition, Jeffery Henderson, ed. *Loeb Classical Library 199*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

[10] For a thorough history of treatments of the terms, see MacFarlane, John. "Aristotle's Definition of 'Anagnorisis'." *The American Journal of Philology* 121, no. 3 (2000): 367-383. MacFarlane explicitly makes the case that both *peripetia* and *anagnorisis* are subclasses of *metabasis.* The marvelous, *to thaumaston* is sometimes pointed to as the distinction between *metabasis* and *peripetia* (when these two terms are not conflated together) but it is mostly associated with the powerful effects on the audience, as in 6.17, 14.18, and 16.11, where the latter two incidents explicitly concern *anagnorisis.* See "Aristotle's Definition of *Anagnorisis.*" 371-373. Janko, Richard, trans. *Aristotle: Poetics I with The Tractatus Coislinianus, A Hypothetical Reconstruction of Poetic II, The Fragments of the On Poets.* Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987.

[11] Aristotle, *Poetics* XI, 1452a30. Aristotle privileges "recognition between people," as in when one person realizes the identity of another, but he does concede that there are various "kinds of recognition" that can occur in relation to "inanimate and even chance things." Ibid., 1452a35-37.

[12] Barry Adams, relying heavily on Gerald F. Else's translation of *Poetics*, offers an extended discussion of the criticism surrounding both terms. He particularly discusses the argument in the criticism about whether *peripetia* refers to a reversal in the mind of the character or in the structure of the plot, and who it is that comes to know in *anagnorisis*; Adams himself concludes his consideration of both terms with a distinction similar to the one I have made here. *Coming-to-Know: Recognition and the Complex Plot in Shakespeare.* New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2000, 22ff.

bear) can be considered a *peripetia*, while the moment when Bassanio becomes aware that the lawyer at his trial was, in fact, Portia, can be considered a coming-to-know, an *anagnorisis.*[13] The outcome of these changes is different in each case. A reversal is a structural movement; once it has happened, the play simply continues, as the shepherd picks up Perdita and the play moves on. Recognition, however, causes some further effect distinct from itself: in Bassanio's case a purification and clarification of his love for his wife. [14] For Aristotle, the ideal is for recognition and reversal to coexist, and they often do, but each movement does something slightly different.[15] In terms of dramatists, those using *peripetia* do so for the end-goal of reversing a fortune; I want to argue that when Shakespeare uses *anagnorisis* he does so for the purpose of creating wonder in his audience. A further discussion of Aristotle's views of recognition will help to make the terms of my argument clearer.

In *Poetics XVI* Aristotle outlines five different kinds of *anagnorisis*, moving in order from what he considers the least artistic to the greatest.[16] Since recognition is a universal phenomenon, as noted above, Shakespeare's plays can be used to illustrate loosely each of the types of recognition Aristotle discusses, even if, as Terence Cave rightly points out, "there is no reason to believe that [Shakespeare] knew the *loci* on anagnorisis and was trying to put them into effect or transform them in some new way."[17] However, applying Aristotle to Shakespeare

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[13] For discussion on this point, see Hunt, Maurice. "'Bearing Hence' Shakespeare's 'The Winter's Tale'." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 44, no. 2, Tudor and Stuart Drama (2004): 333-346.
[14] Sometimes the further purpose may actually be a reversal. MacFarlane's thesis about *metabasis* accounts for this by considering the two moments as conceptually distinct but one in number ("Aristotle's Definition of *Anagnorisis*." 378).
[15] Aristotle, *Poetics* XI, 1452a30: "The finest recognition is that which occurs simultaneously with reversal, as with the one in the Oedipus."
[16] See Aristotle, *Poetics XVI* 1454b19-1455a21.
[17] *Recognitions: A Study in Poetics*, 272. Cave points out that a loose definition of *anagnorisis* was available to Shakespeare in a 1591 statement of Sir John Harrington ("an agnition of some unlooked for

(which Cave himself does) will reveal both that Shakespeare used recognition in ways familiar to Aristotle, and also that Aristotle's taxonomy is not an exhaustive treatment of the subject.

Aristotle's first kind of recognition is recognition by signs such as birthmarks, scars, or other tokens; Viola's reunion with Sebastian at the end of *Twelfth Night* is a caricature of this type of recognition. The second kind is contrived means, that is, means that do not arise from the plot itself. Petruchio's introduction of the wager about obedient wives is one of these. The plot to reveal Kate as obedient is simply conceived by him; it is not necessary to the story of the reformed shrew. Third is recognition via memory. Polonius seeks to employ this type of recognition when he sends Reynaldo to spy on Laertes; by baiting his listeners with falsehood, Reynaldo is supposed to stir up true memories in his audience. Aristotle's fourth means of recognition is reasoning, both true and false, and will be discussed in greater detail below. Finally, Aristotle's fifth and "most artistic" type of recognition is one that arises plausibly from the incidents themselves. Aristotle's chief example here is the recognition at the end of *Oedipus*. Shakespeare's *Othello* which gradually builds to the inevitable revelation of Iago's treachery, is a good example of this kind of recognition.

Aristotle's fourth means of recognition, reasoning, is the most applicable to this study, and particularly his discussion about false reasoning or *paralogic.*[18] As with much of this section of the *Poetics*, Aristotle's term here is notoriously difficult to parse and open to varied interpretations, and the more so because his exemplar text, *Ulysses the False Messenger*, is lost. Aristotle defines *paralogic* as "recognition which depends on the audience's mistaken

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fortune either good or bad, and a sudden change thereof") but thinks it more likely that Shakespeare's practice of recognition is "demonstrably derived from the arsenal of New Comedy" (Ibid., 273, 272).

[18] As regards "true" reasoning, it is difficult to see the difference between events that logically follow and recognition that arises from the incidents itself; I have accordingly limited my discussion to *paralogic* which is a different case.

reasoning."[19] Terrence Cave, who penned one of the most thorough books of the twentieth century on the subject of recognition, explains that *paralogism* "consists in inferring an antecedent from an inadequate consequent."[20] Aristotle calls paralogical recognitions "compound" (*συνθετὴ*) recognitions, in the sense that there is a true recognition, but that this recognition is based on a fallacy.[21] When any audience deduces something because of a false premise created by the poet, coming to know this falsity is, itself, a recognition. If the audience recognizes the contrivance that has driven the conclusion, that is, recognizes the false premise as false, they must reevaluate their initial conclusion in light of the new evidence.[22]

This fallacious logic leaves the audience open to a type of recognition over and above the recognition being orchestrated: the recognition of the artifice. Even if a standard recognition scene is being orchestrated, learning that there was an orchestration can always provide an additional recognition. The recognition of the artifice as such is a sort of coming-to-know at which Aristotle only hints.

In his insightful book *Reason Diminished: Shakespeare and the Marvelous*, Peter G. Platt sheds some light on this point when he draws attention to the way Aristotle thinks about wonder as a stimulus for discovering rational explanations. In *Poetics IX* Aristotle speaks of how "the awesome [θαυμαστὸν]" is most increased when events seems to happen by design and "not to occur randomly."[23] Platt ties this to a passage from Aristotle's *Rhetoric* when Aristotle speaks of how men may enjoy "all that is well imitated, even if the object of imitation is not pleasant"

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[19] Aristotle, *Poetics XVI* 1455a13.
[20] Cave, *Recognitions*, 249.
[21] Aristotle, *Poetics XVI* 1455a13.
[22] Perhaps a useful paradigm here would be the phenomenological idea of the hermeneutic circle. James Kearney makes a case for a phenomenological interpretation of Aristotle in "'This is above all strangeness': King Lear, Ethics, and the Phenomenology of Recognition." *Criticism* 54, no. 3: 455-467.
[23] *Poetics IX* 1452a, 5, 11.

because “the inference that the imitation and the object imitated are identical” is a moment of learning, and “learning and admiring [θαυμάζειν] are pleasant.”[24] Platt argues that this shows that “Wonder and the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge were fundamentally linked in the Aristotelian scheme, and this dynamic was often triggered by an encounter with art.”[25] Platt further draws attention to *Poetics XXIV*, where Aristotle says that “the chief cause of awe” is “the irrational,” by which, Aristotle goes on to explain, he means “false inference;” he then explains that “awe is pleasurable” and ought to be allowed to poets.[26] For Aristotle, the act of learning, passing from ignorance to knowledge, is linked to pleasure because wonder gives way to understanding which, for Aristotle, is a higher pleasure.

J.V. Cunningham argues much differently from Platt in regard to Aristotle’s view of wonder, contending that the whole purpose of drama, and particularly recognition, was to create wonder. Among many examples Cunningham cites a passage from *Poetics XIV* where Aristotle describes the sorts of incidents that will cause pity and fear. Aristotle says that “the act done in ignorance, and followed by recognition” is to be preferred because “the recognition is thrilling.”[27] Platt’s contention is that Aristotle tries to tame wonder with reason, Cunningham’s that Aristotle thought the purpose of drama was to produce wonder. However, although these men view Aristotle differently, they are agreed in their that Shakespeare is a master at creating wonder in an audience. My contention is that both Shakespeare and his player-dramatists use the recognition of an artifice as one way to create wonder in their respective audiences.

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[24] Aristotle, *Rhetoric I*, 1371b-1272a. 125. All quotations are from *Rhetoric* trans. J.H. Freese, in Jeffery Henderson, ed. *Loeb Classical Library 193*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015.
[25] Platt, Peter G. *Reason Diminished: Shakespeare and the Marvelous.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997, 3.
[26] *Poetics XXIV*, 1460a 14, 22.
[27] *Poetics XXIV*, 1454a 3, 4. See *Woe or Wonder*, especially 60ff.

For Shakespeare's use of this device, consider *The Winter's Tale*.[28] By the end of the play, the audience has repeatedly been told that Hermione is dead. In this instance, Shakespeare draws his audience into a paralogical situation because he conceals the truth of Hermione's condition: specifically he hides from the audience Paulina's ability, whether natural or magical, to produce a living Hermione. When the statue of Hermione steps down from her podium in response to Paulina's request, the audience recognizes both that Hermione is alive and that some kind of artifice has been used. But the movement is not the resolution of wonder into reason, but rather an increase in wonder such as that described in *Poetics IX*: the recognition of a plan increases the wonder rather than decrease it. The audience could not wonder, in the sense "having curiosity," about Hermione's death because it was an established fact. Shakespeare creates the recognition here by keeping information from both the audience in the play and the audience watching the play. In fact, it is always ignorance or unknowing that opens the door to *anagnorisis.* Terence Cave playfully parses the word as "not not-knowing."[29] When Hermione proves to be alive after all, by whatever means, it is necessary for audience members to "not not-know," that is, to go back and reevaluate their assumption that the queen is dead in the light of her presence at the end of the play. The work of reconciling these two realities – what we know and what we thought we knew – is part of what produces the overwhelming awe I want to argue is characteristic of the way Shakespeare uses recognition.

Although Shakespeare orchestrates a recognition of the artifice at the end of *The Winter's Tale*, he does not do so often. This is explained chiefly through the exigencies of the theater:

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[28] This play will be treated more fully in Chapter Four.

[29] "Aristotle might be taking 'ana-' as a double negative, 'an-' and 'a-'being different forms of the same prefix." Cave, Terence "Recognition and the Reader." *Comparative Criticism* Vol 2, Cambridge University Press, 1980, 49-69. 51.

when an audience knows they are watching a play, they have already recognized the theater, the chief artifice involved. Shakespeare does, however, showcase this kind of recognition frequently by means of his player-dramatists. It is much easier for a player-dramatist to hide his or her artifice from an in-play audience than it is for Shakespeare to hide his artifice from the people in the theater. Accordingly, when Shakespeare uses this sort of recognition, the recognition that an artifice has been used, it is almost always in the hands of a player-dramatist staging an embedded drama for an in-play audience. In-play audiences like Benedick and Beatrice, Orlando, Angelo, and others all see, in short, that they have been duped. By being made to take fiction for reality, when the in-play audiences come to know of the artifice as such, they have the overwhelming task of sorting out and organizing a lot of information in a short amount a time. This is what produces the characteristic moment of awe created by recognition: having to reconcile so many things at once causes the audience members to pause and to reevaluate their situations. It is Aristotle's joy of learning both magnified and compressed that produces a characteristic astonishment.

The foregoing consideration of recognition is chiefly about theatrical theory, but a consideration of Shakespeare's theatrical practice leads to the other key concept discussed in this dissertation: the player-dramatists. The player-dramatists and their corresponding recognition scenes allow Shakespeare to dramatize, either directly or analogously, the entire creative process involving a playwright, actors, and an audience. This is particularly interesting because, although the player-dramatists seem to act with spontaneity and respond to events as they arise, they are actually operating in situations controlled by Shakespeare. All of the problems they face (as when Barnardine refuses to die for the sake of Duke Vincentio's drama), and all of the means

used to overcome these difficulties (as when Friar Francis orchestrates Hero's false death), as well as all of the solutions they come to (Helena's marriage to Bertram, Leontes's repentance) are situations and solutions chosen and ordered by Shakespeare. Although Shakespeare should not absolutely be conflated with his player-dramatists, a comprehensive examination of Shakespeare's player-dramatists staging recognition scenes ought to yield some insight into Shakespeare's view of the dramatic process and how it works. It ought, in short, to help articulate some of the elements that most define Shakespeare.

It must be acknowledged at the outset that, as a player-dramatist is not identical with Shakespeare, so too a dramatization of drama is not identical to drama. Any dramatist is only concerned with the audience to whom a play is addressed, but a player-dramatist has an extra layer of audience of which he or she may or may not be aware. So, for instance, near the end of *Antony and Cleopatra,* Cleopatra learns that she is to be paraded through the empire as part of Caesar's victory march in Rome. Thinking of the debasement this will cause to her, Cleopatra confides to Iras her vision of how the two of them will be presented as a spectacle on the stages of Rome:

> Thou [Iras], an Egyptian puppet, shall be shown
> In Rome as well as I. Mechanic slaves
> With greasy aprons, rules, and hammers shall
> Uplift us to the view. In their thick breaths.
> Rank of gross diet, shall we be enclouded,
> And forc'd to drink their vapor. . . Saucy lictors
> Will catch at us like strumpets, and scald rhymers
> Ballad 's out a' tune. The quick comedians
> Extemporally will stage us, and present
> Our Alexandrian revels: Antony
> Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see
> Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness
> I' th' posture of a whore.
>
> (5.2.208-221)

Clearly, there are two audiences involved here. For the sake of clarity, I make a distinction between the "in-play audience" and the "in-house audience" or "theater audience." The listening Iras, a character on the same level of understanding as Cleopatra, is the in-play audience. The "[m]echanic slaves" she imagines in the theater, totally outside and above the world of Cleopatra the character, reflect the actual in-house audience. Cleopatra is obviously aware of her in-play audience, and she may or may not be fully aware of the in-house audience. But even if Cleopatra the character is not aware of the audience in the theater, Shakespeare certainly is. This awareness partly explains why Shakespeare's characters reflect on drama itself so often across his plays: Jaques proclaiming "All the world's a stage" (*As You Like It*, 2.7.139), Hamlet commenting on "periwig-pated fellow[s who] tear a passion to tatters" (3.2.9-10), the boy playing Cleopatra mourning how he "shall see / Some squeaking Cleopatra boy [his] greatness" (5.2.220-221), Prospero referring to his "insubstantial pageant" (*Tempest*, 4.1.155). The trope of an actor referring to his life as a play offers a good starting point for articulating how embedded dramas function in Shakespeare.

It was not until the second half of the twentieth century that critics began to talk about Shakespeare's self-referential moments in a systematic way. Robert J. Nelson in his 1958 *Play Within A Play: The Dramatists Conception of His Art*, is one of the first to discuss this device as a form of "theater reflecting on itself."[30] Anne Barton's 1962 *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play* discusses how ideas of audience/play interaction evolved over the medieval and early modern period, positing that Shakespeare's use of theatrical metaphors is a way to bridge the gap

[30] Nelson, Robert James. *Play within a Play: The Dramatist's Conception of His Art: Shakespeare to Anouilh.* New York: Da Capo Press, 1971,10.

between these two groups.[31] Lionel Abel coined the term "metatheatre" in his 1963 *Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form*, which likewise gave rise to the adjective "metatheatrical."[32] Abel defines metatheatre "as resting on two basic postulates (1) the world is a stage and (2) life is a dream."[33] He theorizes that the plays of Shakespeare and Calderon are the first to give a playwright's consciousness to the characters in the play itself. Abel's criteria for what constitutes metatheatre is so broad, however, that by 1965 Dieter Mehl complains, in his discussion of *Forms and Function of the Play within the Play*, of the "bewildering variety of forms" that metatheatre takes.[34] In an attempt to clarify, Mehl takes a structuralist approach to discussing the issue, focusing specifically on formal plays within plays. James L. Calderwood, in his 1971 *Shakespearean Metadrama*, suggests that each moment of self-consciousness on the part of a character is simultaneously present both in the character and the author, an idea he dubbed "duplexity."[35] Robert Egan's 1975 *Drama within Drama: Shakespeare's Sense of His Art* attempts to refocus metatheatrical criticism by examining the idea of overlapping consciousness of character and author. Egan accordingly focuses only on those characters who most closely resemble Shakespeare because they are explicitly engaging in dramatic activity.

Abel was the first to try to account for why Shakespeare used metatheatre so often. In exploring the question, he explicitly associates the idea of metatheatre with Brecht, and the term

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[31] Barton [Righter], Anne. *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1962, 24.
[32] Abel, Lionel. *Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1963.
[33] Ibid., 105.
[34] Mehl, Dieter. "Forms and Functions of the Play within a Play." *Renaissance Drama* 8, (1965): 41-61,42.
[35] Calderwood, James L. *Shakespearean Metadrama; the Argument of the Play in Titus Andronicus, Love's Labour's Lost, Romeo and Juliet, A Midsummer Night's Dream, and Richard II*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971,12.

has kept some Brechtian baggage ever since.[36] The Brechtian school suggests that Shakespeare's self-reflexive artificiality is aimed at creating *verfremdungseffekt* or "distancing effect," freeing the audience from "the illusion of being the unseen spectator at an event which is really taking place."[37] The audience members are, in this view, so caught up in a realistic presentation that they must be continually shocked into the consciousness that what they are watching is fictional, usually by an actor who breaks "the fourth wall."[38] The shock reestablishes the distance between the play and reality.

Although it is possible to apply a Brechtian understanding of the relationship between fiction and reality to Shakespeare, ultimately this can only serve as a criterion for what Shakespeare himself thought he was doing with his "metatheatre" if there is some evidence that he understood himself in Brechtian way. However, Brecht's system "assumes that realism and a self-forgetful absorption into its fiction are the baseline modes of drama and spectatorship," and this does not map neatly onto Shakespeare's plays.[39] Consider, for instance, the Prologue of *Henry V*. After wishing for "for a muse of fire" to "ascend The brightest heaven of invention" Shakespeare's lines lament the "unworthy scaffold" and the "wooden O" of the theater as insufficient to the grandeur of the material he wants to present (*Henry V*, Prologue 1-2, 10, 13). While this is clearly self-referential theater, there is no pretense of realism. Quite the reverse. The speech draws attention to the physical limitations of the theater, those that most emphasize the fictional and constructed nature of the play. But since this speech is given before the

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[36] See *Metatheatre*, 86-107.
[37] Brecht, Bertolt, and John Willett. *Brecht on Theatre; the Development of an Aesthetic*. 1st ed. New York: Hill and Wang, 1964, 92.
[38] Ibid., 70.
[39] Purcell, Stephen. "Are Shakespeare's Plays Always Metatheatrical?" *Shakespeare Bulletin* 36, no. 1 (2018), 25. For an additional discussion of the "unwarranted bias in favor of a naturalistic dramaturgy" see Adams, Barry B. *Coming-to-Know*, 52 and note 26.

audience has even seen the characters in whom it is supposed to be caught up, it cannot possibly cause *verfremdungseffekt*. This effect is predicated on the idea that a play is so much like reality that an audience actually mistakes it for reality. But in this case Shakespeare foregrounds the fiction at the beginning of the play when the chorus explicitly asks the audience to employ their "imaginary forces" to the material at hand (*Henry V*, Prologue 18). The Chorus asks this before a connection requiring detachment can even be formed. "Metatheatre," at least in Abel's Brechtian sense of the word, is insufficient for describing what is happening in this scene.

Stephen Purcell has recently argued that a much better way to describe such moments in Shakespeare is to use a term coined by Arthur Koestler in his 1964 book *The Act of Creation*: "bisociation."[40] To bisociate, according to Koestler, is to hold "two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference" in the consciousness at the same time.[41] I agree with Purcell's assessment and have used Koestler's term in favor of metatheatre, expanding Purcell's consideration. The appeal of the term "bisociation" is, first of all, precision. Metatheatre is a vague term: even Lionel Abel himself thought the application of it "loose and sometimes erratic."[42] However Koestler aims to be scientific and outlines what he calls the "basic pattern" of "all creative activities."[43] The result is a more precise term than "metatheatre." The precision is related to the way Koestler distinguishes between what he calls different "matrices." Specifically in relation to aesthetic experience the physical theater is the matrix of "Now and Here" and the fiction the matrix of "Then and There."[44] By observing both matrices simultaneously, the audience becomes aware of the distance separating the reality of the players

[40] See "Are Shakespeare's Plays Always Metatheatrical?"
[41] Koestler, Arthur. *The Act of Creation.* New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966, 35.
[42] Abel, Lionel. *Tragedy and Metatheatre: Essays on Dramatic Form*. Holmes and Meier, 2003, v.
[43] Koestler, *The Act of Creation*, 21.
[44] Ibid., 306.

from the fiction they are portraying, moving between "Now and Here" and "Then and There" with "lightning oscillations of attention from one to the other."[45] Koestler does not actually use the word "bisociation" in this context, but in describing the clash of matrices he is using the same language he uses for bisociation.

This oscillation between the two matrices happens for the in-house audience during the *Henry V* prologue. Rather than hide constructed nature of the play, Shakespeare, as mentioned above, foregrounds it to create this back-and-forth movement. By describing the physical theater, he reminds the audience of the artifice, but then he explicitly invites them to employ their own imagination to fill in the gap between fiction and reality in order to make up for what is lacking in his presentation of the various historical situations. In the absence of real battlefields and kings, he says it is up to the "thoughts" of the audience to "deck… kings" and "carry them here and there" (*Henry V*, Prologue 23, 28, 29). In practice, the mechanics of bisociation imply that the reality of the theatergoers and the fiction of the play can mutually enrich one another: in the clash between reality and fiction, each side informs the other. The theater thus becomes a kind of saturnalia,[46] a "green world"[47] where actors and audience mutually bring their skills to bear on the material before them.[48] The people watching *Henry V* are not supposed to be passive

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[45] Koestler, *The Act of Creation* 306.

[46] Koestler specifically invokes the saturnalia in his section of *The Act of Creation* called "Standing on One's Head," 191-199. For further discussion of the saturnalian pattern of Shakespeare's plays, see C.L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and Its Relation to Social Custom*,1959. Reprinted Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011.

[47] Frye, Northrop. *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays.* New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957. 182

[48] I am drawing here on Mikhail Bakhtin's understanding of carnival. In *Rabelais and His World* he describes it thus: "In fact, carnival does not know footlights, in the sense that it does not acknowledge any distinction between actors and spectators. Footlights would destroy a carnival, as the absence of footlights would destroy a theatrical performance. Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it. During carnival time life is subject only to its laws, that is, the laws of its own freedom. It

spectators of an ultrarealistic presentation, but co-creators of kings and princes. If we are to believe the Chorus, then the imaginative work of the audience has as much to do with what they get out of the play as Shakespeare's imaginative work does. Another advantage of the term bisociation, then, is that, as opposed to Abel's understanding of metatheatre, it indicates a more active role for the audience. Shakespeare is counting on his audience to be continually comparing and correcting impressions as plays develop, reconciling what they see, the "Now and Here," with what they already know about the "Then and There."

Koestler's term also makes it clearer why the specific recognition that involves being surprised that a given fiction is fictional is nearly impossible to create in the in-house audience; having known of the distance between "Now and Here" and "Then and There" all along, the audience cannot come to know it. This is not to say that this awareness of the in-house audience cannot be circumvented. Indeed, as mentioned above, Shakespeare does just that with the statue scene in *The Winter's Tale* or, in a different way, with Prospero's storm at the beginning of *The Tempest*. But although this move is possible between theater audience and Shakespeare, it is much easier for a player-dramatist to hide his or her artifice from an in-play audience than it is for Shakespeare to do so. However, when Shakespeare does manage to do this, as he does in the case of *Winter's Tale* when the information that Hermione is alive enters quite suddenly into a context in which she was presumed dead, the wonder associated with recognition is the effect of a flash of awareness in which the in-house audience must catch-up with the dramatist. This recognition is sudden because, rather than have the in-house audience alternate between two matrices over the course of the whole play, Shakespeare has hidden one of the matrices in order

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has a universal spirit; it is a special condition of the entire world, of the world's revival and renewal, in which all take part. Such is the essence of carnival, vividly felt by all its participants." Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World.* 1st Midland book ed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.

to reveal it at the most propitious moment. When this second matrix is revealed, an illumination crashes upon the in-house audience, just as Iago's lie crashes on Othello. Koestler calls this sudden clash of matrices and attendant discovery "the Eureka process."[49] Stephen Purcell argues that the clashing of matrices is calculated to produce "*delight*" but it seems more consistent with Shakespeare's use of the device to say that it produces overwhelming awe.[50] It is the great number of things that must be sorted out that produces the wonder. Although Aristotle's discussion of paralogic implies all of this, Koestler's framework makes it easier to distinguish why it is the player-dramatists who can use this method more easily than Shakespeare himself.

A final advantage of the term "bisociation" is that, applied to Shakespeare's plays, it suggests a much stronger kinship between Shakespeare and his medieval forebears than the twentieth-century notion of metatheatre would indicate. Although medieval plays "cannot be thought of as a *source* [for Shakespeare] in the way we generally use the term" these plays, at least some of which Shakespeare probably saw in his youth, are yet part of what formed his imagination.[51] This is important because medieval plays do not obviously understand the interaction of fiction and reality in terms of alienation and detachment. Medieval dramatists, though occasionally self-referential, do not seem to assume that their audience members have forgotten that they are watching a fiction. In fact, the default mode of medieval drama is almost diametrically opposed to the modern "distancing effect" model. The habitual mode of the medieval dramatists is to use wonder.

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[49] Koestler, *The Act of Creation,* 107.
[50] Purcell, 19, emphasis original.
[51] O'Connell, Michael. "Vital Cultural Practices: Shakespeare and the Mysteries." *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 29, no. 1 (Winter, 1999): 149-168, 149, emphasis original.

In his book *Woe or Wonder: the Emotional Effect of Shakespearean Tragedy*, J.V. Cunningham argues that although Aristotle did not invent the idea of wonder as an outcome of drama, "most of the subsequent history of the concept of wonder can be derived from the Aristotelian texts."[52] Cunningham traces this history from Plato all the way up to the Elizabethan period. He notes especially that Aristotle became influential again in the medieval period when his writings were recovered in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and assimilated into scholastic philosophy by Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas.[53] Whether or not the scholastic theories of wonder directly impacted theatrical practice, Cunningham claims that "[t]he marvelous event, and so the marvelous story, provoke…wonder" and that "[t]he explicit recognition of this effect is common throughout the literature of the Middle Ages."[54]

An examination of several well-known medieval plays will help to illustrate both how the medieval dramatists used the interplay between "Now and Here" and "Then and There" to create wonder, and also how these dramatists occasionally used player-dramatists to bring this about. Ultimately, this will make it clear how Shakespeare's approach to staging embedded dramas has much more in common with the medieval mode than the twentieth-century one.

The morality play *Everyman* is a good place to begin to consider medieval drama because of the distinctive way morality plays work in terms of audience awareness. The play is not supposed to be watched passively, as though Everyman were a real man upon whose life an audience is allowed to eavesdrop. Rather, Everyman is, as his name indicates, an allegory for each of us. The audience is supposed to see, not only a "Then and There" specific to Everyman, but one that reminds them of their own "Now and Here." In this case, Everyman has forgotten

[52] Cunningham, *Woe or Wonder*, 68.
[53] Ibid., 78-83.
[54] Ibid., 78.

that he is going to die. The "myghty messengere" of God, Death, demands "rekenynge" from Everyman who, hitherto, has thought little of his own death.[55] The implication for the audience is that they, too, have forgotten that they will one day die. Everyman repeatedly realizes that nothing in his life has prepared him for his inevitable end and nothing can prevent it. His story is fictional, but Death is, in fact, a real part of the lives of everyone watching. The audience knows that Everyman is not a real person, but at the same time, since death really is part of the "Now and Here" for the audience, each member of the audience does well to hearken to the "Then and There" of Everyman's story.

What is particularly interesting about morality plays like *Everyman* is that they rely heavily on the audience to make meaning of the play. Anne Barton argues that the morality plays are "a kind of sermon with illustrations, not a development of the symbolism of the Mass."[56] The meaning of the plays is accordingly abstracted and intellectual, only analogous to real life. Barton further contends that the morality plays, as distinct from the mystery plays, were the first to frame the interaction of reality and fiction such that "the audience itself assumed possession of Reality, while illusion and imperfection became the property of the stage."[57] The dramatist of *Everyman*, then, assumes a distance between audience and actors that earlier plays did not. True, he obviously assumes that the audience will conflate the "Then and There" with the "Now and Here," that is, assumes the audience will see themselves in Everyman, so there is some idea of the interplay between fiction and reality, but Barton points out that the part the audience played in the mysteries "was a somewhat second-hand part, depending as it did upon a re-duplication in

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[55] "Everyman" in *Drama in English From the Middle Ages to the Early Twentieth Century*. Edited by Christopher J. Wheatley. Catholic University of America Press, 2016, 57-80, line 63, 99.
[56] Barton [Righter], Anne. *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1962, 24.
[57] Ibid., 28-29.

the person of the central character."[58] The play itself is largely felt to be distinct from the audience.

In contrast to the morality plays, the mystery plays functioned on a much more immediate relationship between the actors and the audience. Such is the case of *The Crucifixion* from the York cycle, a mystery play earlier than *Everyman*. *The Crucifixion* tells the true story of Christ's crucifixion, but it imagines the particular part played by the men struggling to crucify him. The dramatist here uses his play much differently than modern dramatists. Anne Barton argues that the audience of the mystery plays, playing the role of Mankind, had an essential role:

> The identity of the audience with its part was the unquestioned, essential fact of mediaeval religious drama. Every moment of the mystery cycle was deigned to affirm the theological involvement of Mankind with the events represented on the stage, to render each spectator vividly aware of his inheritance of guilt and the possibility of his redemption by stressing his participation in the most significant moments of Biblical history.[59]

Whereas modern realistic theater foregrounds the "Then and There" of the fictions so much that the "Now and Here" identity of the actors as individuals outside the play is nearly forgotten, *The Crucifixion* is engineered to emphasize the reality of the actors so much that the audience's attention is distracted from the fact that these men are presenting a play. The recognition at the end of this play is ultimately of much more rhetorical weight than the ending of *Everyman*.

The surprising recognition at the end of this play is accomplished by a sophisticated instance of bisociation. First, the staging of the play, presented on a wagon elevated slightly above the audience, allows the actors to put part of the play, the "Then and There," out of sight. Due to the way the stage wagons used in York were constructed, when the soldiers lay Jesus on

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[58] Ibid., 28.
[59] Ibid., 19.

the cross to crucify him, he disappears from the sight of the audience.[60] This lack of a direct sight line alone might not cause the audience to forget that the cross is there, but the forgetfulness is augmented by distraction as well. The play is performed by the Painters and Pinners and, when the nail maker produces "hammeres and nayles large and lange" to give "goode speede" to the business at hand, he is essentially advertising his product, as he does again when he holds up a "stubbe" that "will stiffely stande Thurgh bones and senous" and proclaims that "This werke is wele, I will warande."[61] In the original context, the audience is distracted from the fiction by the "Now and Here" reality of a local tradesman, doubtless known to the audience as such, who is self-consciously displaying his wares. Since those watching cannot see the actor playing Jesus, the utter ineptitude of the soldiers crucifying Christ, who have considerable comic trouble performing their task even though portrayed by local tradesmen trained to the work, adds to the hilarity of the scene.[62] The audience is very probably drawn in to laughing at the real men they know acting in such a ridiculous fashion that they have temporarily overlooked the fact that they are watching a play about a serious subject matter: the terrible agony endured by Jesus.

The manipulation of the awareness here is unquestionably masterful. When the cross is finally raised, the effect is astonishing because, in the course of watching the scene, the members of the audience have not simply watched someone else forget and then remember, as they would with *Everyman*, but they have forgotten and remembered themselves. Like *Everyman*, the play invites an application of the fiction to the lives of those watching, but in this case the audience

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[60] For a discussion of the staging, see Christopher J. Wheatley. *Drama in English From the Middle Ages to the Early Twentieth Century*. Catholic University of America Press, 2016, 48-49.
[61] "The Crucifixion (York Cycle)." In *Drama in English from the Middle Ages to the Early Twentieth Century*. Edited by Christopher J. Wheatley. Catholic University of America Press, 2016, 48-56, line 30, 29, 102-4.
[62] see Wheatley, 49.

has actually been drawn by the play into a specific action, that of laughter. Rather than relying on the audience to take the play as they ought, the dramatist here relies on the faults of his audience: he can count on frivolous displays of tradesmen to distract those watching from the serious nature of the material. Rather than circumvent a distractible audience, the dramatist makes this very fault an asset, using it to draw the audience into an action inappropriate to the context. And because the audience was laughing at a fictional presentation of something that actually happened, it creates an uncomfortable feeling that when Jesus prays his father to "Forgiffis þes men that dois me pyne," his prayer is not just for the Roman soldiers who crucified him, but also for those who have laughed their way through the representation of his crucifixion.[63] Rather than presuming an awareness in the audience, as *Everyman* does, this play creates an awareness; the audience becomes convicted of their own sinfulness. Indeed, the *Crucifixion* is part of the Corpus Christi cycle, which is, at bottom, a catechetical work and therefore designed more heuristically because for a wider audience than *Everyman*, whose imagery is aimed at a fairly prosperous merchant class. In the contemporary context of the play, it would have been assumed that the engagement with the fictional play brought the audience into direct contact with Jesus, the reality the play represents.

By foregrounding the "Now and Here," this medieval dramatist presumes that his audiences will become so caught up in the preposterous showiness of their friend the pinner that they forget that he is portraying something serious. The sudden remembrance of the "Then and There" of the play is what causes the recognition. In fact, both of these medieval plays involve a coming-to-know of something previously unknown or forgotten: Everyman has forgotten death,

[63] "The Crucifixion (York Cycle)," line 260.

the audience of *The Crucifixion* has forgotten what is being represented. The fundamental mode is that of discovery, a noetic move. In modern theater, the "Then and There" is emphasized until the "Now and Here" is forgotten; the breaking of the fourth wall, in whatever form that comes, calls attention to the forgotten distance between these two matrices. In medieval theater, on the other hand, the case is different and sometimes exactly contrariwise. Either the audience is always supposed to be aware of both fiction and reality, as with *Everyman*, or it is the "Then and There" that is forgotten in the face of a more prominent "Now and Here," as in *The Crucifixion.*

One last medieval example explicitly deals with the kind of recognition Shakespeare uses because it also features a player-dramatist. *The Second Shepherds Play* from the Towneley manuscript contains an embedded drama similar to the kind that Shakespeare uses. In the play, which is a portrayal of the lives of the shepherds eventually involved in the Nativity, a man named Mak steals a sheep. The shepherds of the play already know that Mak is the sort who will "make vs. . . a ly," but after he steals the sheep, the drama that is subsequently staged is actually conceived by his wife, Gyll.[64] The "good bowdre," that is, trick, she comes up with is to swaddle the stolen sheep like a baby and then lay him in a cradle and pretend that she has just gone through childbirth.[65] Initially, the shepherds are fooled by this ruse, and walk away a bit shamefaced. But when they return to give the new baby gifts, they inspect him more closely and discover the "frawde."[66] Mak tries furiously to convince the shepherds that the sheep is a baby "foreshapyn" by "an elfe," but the sheep is undeniably not a baby.[67] The shepherds are not going

[64] "The Second Shepherds Play (Wakefield/Towneley Cycle)." In *Drama in English from the Middle Ages to the Early Twentieth Century.* Edited by Christopher J. Wheatley. Catholic University of America Press, 2016, 26-47, line 116.
[65] Ibid., 332,.
[66] Ibid., 594.
[67] Ibid., 619, 616.

to be fooled again, but evidently the fact that their sheep was not actually lost gives them the ability to take Mak's sheep stealing offense lightly, and, rather than turn him over to the law, they show him mercy and merely "cast hym in canvas."[68]

What happens here is that the shepherds do, initially, take fiction to be reality. They are so convinced, in fact, that it takes mounting evidence to persuade them that the baby is actually their stolen sheep. When Daw initially notices that the baby "has a long snowte" Coll's immediate response is not to recognize the baby as their sheep, but rather to say it is "merkyd amys," and ought not to be stared at.[69] However, after Gyb realizes, with a sudden "Ay, so!" that the baby is "lyke to [their] shepe," the game is up.[70] Suddenly, in the light of the recognition of the trick, the shepherds see things that they failed to note before, for instance that the "foure feytt" have been swaddled down, that the baby is "hornyd," and that he has the "eere marke" of one of the sheep.[71]

For the theater audience, who is in on the trick, the dramatic irony here makes the scene comic because the audience has known of the artifice the whole time. The shepherds themselves, however, do not see it as comic. In the light of new knowledge, they are forced to go back to the beginning of the trick and see everything relating to the device in a new light, to bisociate retroactively, as it were. They eventually come to the same understanding of the artifice that the theater audience has possessed the whole time, but they come to it all in a moment.

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[68] "The Second Shepherds Play" 628. For a full history on this unusual punishment, see Susan E. Deskis, "Canvassed, or Tossed in a Blanket: Tracing a Motif from the *Second Shepherds' Play* Through the Seventeenth Century." *Notes and Queries*, Volume 54, Issue 3, September 2007, 325–328.
[69] "The Second Shepherds Play" 585, 586.
[70] Ibid., 589.
[71] Ibid., 599, 601, 611.

Although medieval dramatists took it for granted that their audiences would understand that they were watching something fictional, Mak and Gyll never intended the shepherds to see the artifice. The two conspirators did not want their fiction to be revealed as such because such a revelation would mean that they would have to give up the sheep. They were simply lying. If the artifice had never been discovered, the shepherds would have lost their sheep and the lie would continue. However, the fact that the lie comes to be known makes Mak and Gyll unwitting player-dramatists. The embedded drama begins when it is presented to the shepherds and so creates an in-play audience, but it is when the artifice is revealed to the shepherds and they come to understand their identity as audience that the lie of Mak and Gyll becomes an embedded drama. Without the recognition, it would simply continue to be a lie; it is the recognition of the artifice that makes it a drama for the shepherds.

Shakespeare has several characters who, like Mak and Gyll, begin as liars but, when their lies are discovered as such, also manage to end up causing recognition: Don John, Iago, and to some extent Maria are all examples of the same thing. It must be said, then, that what happens to the shepherds, as what happens to Claudio or Othello, looks structurally similar to the kind of metatheatrical move planned by modern theater. These in-play audiences initially take fiction for reality and are later disabused of this notion. However, the effect in the cases mentioned is not distancing and disillusionment, but rather a reevaluation of their previous actions. The difference between an in-play audience taking fiction for reality and an in-house audience doing so is that, for the in-play audience, actual actions have been taken based on false premises. In this case, the shepherds suppose that Mak was telling the truth, and they accordingly want to give his new baby gifts. The later Othello thinks his wife unfaithful and accordingly murders her. Because

they are in the play as characters and not simply watching the play from the theater, these characters are able to take actions that have consequences for others in the play. A modern audience watching a modern play may conceivably forget, for a moment, that what they are watching is fictional, but this forgetting will have no bearing on anyone else. So, while the shepherds or Othello, like a modern audience, come to know that a supposed reality is fictional, the fact that they have taken action based on this mistake makes the effect much more pronounced: with their new knowledge, the shepherds do not simply sit back and muse on the dream-like nature of reality; rather, they demand the return of their sheep. Othello does not feel distanced from his life but so painfully present in it that he immediately ends it. In these cases, the in-play audience is inherently more active than the in-house audience. The in-play audience members must, because they are on a level with their player-dramatist and have taken an active role in their own deception, take an active role in their own un-deception. For them the effect is, as in *The Crucifixion*, a recognition that causes action; but although *The Crucifixion* creates an awareness in the in-house audience, the embedded dramas generally cause actions in their in-play audience. However, in both cases, the audience gains greater self-knowledge

Thus far, separate discussions of paralogic, bisociation, and medieval drama have all led to the same place: Shakespeare's player-dramatists staging recognition scenes that involve the in-play audience coming to know that something they have taken for reality was, in fact, created by an artifice. Fortunately, this specific situation is much easier to see than it is to define with precision. It simply involves analyzing an instance in which Shakespeare dramatized drama, keeping in mind that the process involves a dramatist, actors, and an audience. The particular element that sets this subset of scenes dramatizing drama apart is, as mentioned above, the way

they use wonder. In the instances I have in view, the sudden experience of wonder is created by a realization in the in-play audience that something thought to be real is, in fact, fictional. The in-house audience experiences this as a species of dramatic irony. Because the in-house audience knows of the artifice the whole time, the interest they take in the play is driven by watching eagerly for the in-play audience to catch on.

Bertrand Evans, in his 1960 *Shakespeare's Comedies*, came up with a term to describe this type of dramatic irony: "discrepant awareness."[72] Although he first uses the term in his work on comedies, he defines it succinctly in his 1979 *Shakespeare's Tragic Practice*, explaining that discrepant awareness is when "the dramatist opens a gap between the audience's awareness and the participants' unawareness and then proceeds to exploit it for such incidental effects as it can be made to yield."[73] Evans builds his whole study around this idea, explaining that disguise, for instance, is "*one of several means by which Shakespeare creates a structure of discrepant awarenesses*," and irony "*one of the effects that result from exploitation of discrepant awarenesses*."[74] Hugh Richmond has recently relied on Evans's work while exploring the role spectator expectations have upon Shakespeare's "creation of distinctive and memorable artifacts" that please his audiences.[75] In Richmond's view, discrepant awareness pleases the in-house audience because it makes those watching the play feel superior to the characters in the play.[76]

This dissertation overlaps with Evans' works to some extent since he makes a connection between awareness and control, "both control in the world that is represented by the play and

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[72] Evans, Bertrand. *Shakespeare's Comedies.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960, viii.
[73] Evans, Bertrand. *Shakespeare's Tragic Practice.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1979, vii.
[74] Evans, Bertrand. *Shakespeare's Comedies,* ix, emphasis original.
[75] Richmond, Hugh M. *Shakespeare's Tragedies Reviewed: A Spectator's Role.* New York: Peter Lang, 2015, 2.
[76] See particularly Richmond's discussion of Iago in the chapter, "*Othello*: Iago's Audience."

control of the dramatist's representation of that world."[77] He also acknowledges that "awareness and control become inextricably bound up with one another" as Shakespeare's career progresses.[78] I agree with much of what Evans has to say. The player-dramatists as I describe them are, indeed, architects of discrepant awareness. Evans calls them "practisers," and says that they are "foremost among the means by which Shakespeare creates discrepancies in awareness."[79] However, although Evans is interested in many of the same characters that I discuss, his concern is with all the methods Shakespeare uses to create discrepant awareness. By contrast, I am focused on describing the player-dramatists because they are the means Shakespeare uses to dramatize drama. The player-dramatists are not simply characters who create discrepant awareness for the in-house audience, but characters who create wonder in their in-play audience. I am primarily interested in investigating how Shakespeare portrays the motives and methods of his player-dramatists, and in noting which dramas achieve their goals and which do not. Evans is chiefly concerned with structure, I with examining Shakespeare's dramatized dramas and what these might tell us about his view of drama. Also, Evans speaks of discrepant awareness in terms of more and less without ever clearly defining his criteria. Koestler's term *bisociation* is more precise because it suggests a way to quantify how wonder can be more or less. Each layer of artifice discovered adds, as it were, another matrix into the recognition: the more matrices, the more profound the wonder.

Sarah Dustagheer and Harry Newman have recently pointed out a danger of any work examining a concept related to metatheatre: "Abel, Righter [Barton] and Calderwood continue to

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[77] Evans, Bertrand. *Shakespeare's Comedies*, ix.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid, 3.

dominate because studies focused exclusively on metatheatre are now relatively rare."[80] Their theory is that the concept has become "an absent-present in a field where early modern theater is seen as intrinsically self-reflexive, always concerned in some way with 'the idea of a play.'"[81] In practice, what this means is that in any new work on metatheatre there is an emphasis on using criticism from the 1960s, 70s, and 80s because that is when issues pertaining to metatheatre were in scholarly vogue. This is true of this dissertation. However, my intention is that this dissertation will, as Dustagheer and Newman suggest, "interrogate old theoretical paradigms…in order to extend our understanding of what metatheatre is and what it does in early modern drama" and give a fresh perspective on some of these ubiquitous and therefore under-interrogated ideas.[82]

To return to the player-dramatists, although Shakespeare's player-dramatists stage recognition of the artifice in many different specific ways, Shakespeare's methods can generally be broken down into two basic categories: hiding and showing. The difference has chiefly to do with the sort of ignorance addressed since "the nature of the recognition will inevitably depend on the mode of ignorance that precedes it."[83] However, sometimes the distinction has to do with whether the player-dramatist is interested in causing someone to be an actor in a drama or an audience of one. In the case of hiding dramas, the player-dramatists create the ignorance directly. Recognition simply occurs when what is hidden is revealed. This sort of situation is most often used when a player-dramatist wants to cause someone to act in a certain way, often by leaving them to suppose they are unwatched. In instances of showing, it is a matter of using a preexisting

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[80] Dustagheer, Sarah, and Harry Newman. "Metatheatre and Early Modern Drama." *Shakespeare Bulletin* 36, no. 1 (2018): 3-18, 10.

[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Cave, *Recognitions*, 70.

ignorance or obfuscating some existing knowledge. These situations generally create audiences rather than actors, and they are generally sophisticated, since the coming-to-know is more complicated than a simple presentation of something previously unknown; it is much easier to overcome ignorance than misapprehension.

For those player-dramatists who create recognition by hiding something, one of the most commonly used methods is a false death. There are any number of player-dramatists who stage someone else's death, such as Friar Francis and Juliet, Friar Lawrence and Hero, or Duke Vincentio and Claudio. But there are also cases, such as Helena or Prospero, in which the person who is presumed dead himself uses this presumption as matter upon which to build a recognition. The false death generally creates a recognition charged with Christian overtones of resurrection, though in the case of Friar Francis and Juliet, things obviously go wrong. Another method of hiding information many characters use is disguise: Portia, Rosalind, Feste, and even Polixenes all assume disguises they mean to shed at the appropriate moment. When the audience comes to know of the disguise, they recognize that one person was simultaneously two: Ganymede is Rosalind, Sir Topas is Feste. Disguise may also accompany a situation of "noting," that is, when the player-dramatist is present as an unseen observer. Duke Vincentio combines these when he assumes the role of Friar Ludovico in order to keep tabs on what Angelo is doing in his absence. But this device "noting" may also be used without disguise, such as when Claudius and Polonius spy on Hamlet and Ophelia to learn about Hamlet's feelings for her. The last way player-dramatists hide information is the bait-and-switch. This happens when something expected is replaced with something unexpected. Examples include the bed tricks, Claudio's supposed marriage to a fictional niece of Leonato's, and Phebe's love for the fictional Ganymede. In these

cases, the true nature of the event is kept from the in-play audience until the recognition is necessary.

In the cases of hiding just discussed, the player-dramatist is directly responsible for creating ignorance in his or her audience. However, there are many reasons why an in-play audience might, independent of the actions of a player-dramatist, already be ignorant of something. When this happens, that the player-dramatist is able to use such an ignorance as a starting point for creating recognition. The player-dramatists are orchestrating the recognition, but unlike when they hide information, the in-play audience is already in a state of ignorance. The artifice of creating recognition in these cases generally involves showing an image or visual sign in such a way that the ignorance increases. There are several ways Shakespeare's player-dramatists do this. The first involves tokens of various kinds: rings, letters, and handkerchiefs. Aristotle imagines tokens themselves to bring about recognition, but Shakespeare's player-dramatists more often use them to create or augment the confusion before a recognition, as Portia does with the ring or Iago does with Desdemona's handkerchief. Much more often than tokens, however, player-dramatists show images of human behavior, either by acting themselves or by causing others to do so. Exaggeration is a common way to do this. Sometimes this is malicious, as when Iago orchestrates a situation that will show Cassio as an angry drunk, or when Leontes sees more than is there when he observes Hermione and Polixenes. But this can also be done as a way to both distract and hold a mirror up to an audience, as when Petruchio acts as a shrew to Katherine, or Benedick and Beatrice each hear of the other's extravagant love and their own pride. Liars may display behavior maliciously, as when Don John shows the Prince and Claudio a scene at Hero's window, or when Iago places Othello where he can see Cassio's discussion of

Bianca and take it for a discussion about Desdemona. Things may be shown with noble motives, as when Friar Francis plans to "blaze" the marriage of Romeo and Juliet, or when Paulina lays the innocent Perdita before the king, but this is also generally the method used to seek out unknown information, as with the false picture of Laertes Reynaldo is supposed to present in order to learn of the young man's behavior, or Hamlet's "Mousetrap" to catch the conscience of the king. When the ignorance is that of a moral failing or other character trait, occasionally player-dramatists appeal to the emotions, calling on their audience to examine the image of their own hearts, as Isabella does to Angelo.

Obviously there are cases when hiding and showing happen in conjunction with the same recognition. Hermione's situation could be called a false death; Benedick and Beatrice are, as their play title suggests, noting; Rosalind seeks information while in disguise; Portia can only use the token of the ring because she was previously in disguise. But the distinction in methods of causing recognition is still useful for highlighting what kind of ignorance is being addressed in each recognition.

It is worth noting that Shakespeare's dramatization of drama makes it clear that not all audiences respond to recognition in the same way. Recognitions all produce wonder, and although Aristotle says that "learning and admiring [θαυμάζειν] are pleasant" not every experience of wonder is pleasant.[84]. Cunningham points out that wonder is always "startling" and concedes that this may please or displease.[85] Koestler accounts for the difference in audience response this way:

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[84] Aristotle, *Rhetoric I,* 1371b-1272a. 125. All quotations are from *Rhetoric* trans. J.H. Freese, in Jeffery Henderson, ed. *Loeb Classical Library 193*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015.
[85] Cunningham, *Woe or Wonder*, 73.

> When two independent matrices of perception or reasoning interact with each other the result…is either a *collision* ending in laughter, or their *fusion* in a new intellectual synthesis, or their *confrontation* in an aesthetic experience… the same pair of matrices can produce comic, tragic, or intellectually challenging effects.[86]

This sounds complicated, but his example of what he calls "emotional climate" makes it clearer:

> The fat man slipping and crashing on the icy pavement will be either a comic or a tragic figure according to whether the spectator's attitude is dominated by malice or pity: a callous schoolboy will laugh at the spectacle, a sentimental old lady may be inclined to weep. But in between these two there is the emotionally balanced attitude of the physician who happens to pass the scene of the mishap, who may feel both amusement and compassion, but whose primary concern is to find out the nature of the injury.[87]

Essentially, the exact same action may produce different effects based on the attitude the audience brings to the drama. The wonder created by the recognition is powerful but not necessarily pleasant and predictable; it might delight some and enrage others. This is key because it means that, while the player-dramatists can have the best motives and the best dramaturgy, it is not always in their power to produce a desirable end for their audience. They can control the play, but not the material the play is working upon: the audience.

In relation to audiences, examining the effects of the embedded dramas on in-play audiences offers an advantage over studies of Shakespeare's contemporary theater audiences in that it is far less conjectural.[88] Since the audiences are fixed, present in the play, their responses to the dramas they observe are relatively straightforward: Bassanio is amazed, Malvolio is incensed. Occasionally responses are a bit more mysterious as, for instance, in the case of

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[86] Koestler, *The Act of Creation*, 45.
[87] Ibid.
[88] See, for instance Jennifer A. Low and Nova Myhill, *Imagining the Audience in Early Modern Drama, 1558-1642* 1st ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. While the use of "Imagining" in the title is supposed to refer primarily to the playwright imagining his ideal audience, the authors also have to do a considerable amount of imagining when it comes to the composition of the Early Modern audience. I do admire Fiona Banks's collection of essays *Shakespeare: Actors and Audiences.* London: Bloomsbury Publishing Incorporated, 2019, for its thoroughness and attention to different aspects and problems of audience studies.

Isabella, who infamously ends *Measure for Measure* in silence. Whether the response is self-evident or nuanced, however, it is still visible in the play, which is not true of historical reconstructions of Shakespeare's contemporary audiences. A further advantage of studying how Shakespeare portrays drama is that when he shows fictional audience reactions, Shakespeare is not presenting his real audience, but his imagination of audiences. Ultimately, a careful study of Shakespeare's dramatization of drama suggests that drama is a tool for creating self-knowledge. The self one comes to know may not always be pleasing, but like the dramatist of *The Crucifixion*, Shakespeare's player-dramatists are not afraid to use self-knowledge to produce powerful effects.

Although there are many possible ways to organize a study of Shakespeare's player-dramatists staging recognition scenes, I have arranged the following study chronologically with an eye to discovering how Shakespeare's presentation of drama may have changed over time. I use close reading to examine recognition scenes staged by player-dramatists in thirteen plays over the course of Shakespeare's career. Even a consideration of so many different plays, most of which contain not just one but multiple player-dramatists staging recognitions, does not provide an exhaustive treatment of this topic; indeed, the particular situation I am describing is so ubiquitous that an exhaustive treatment is hardly possible. However, as not every instance is equally revealing of Shakespeare's thought process, such a treatment is not necessary. I have selected particularly interesting examples of the situation: interesting, because of where they fall in the canon, as with *Comedy of Errors* and *The Tempest*, or because of the great number of player-dramatists in the play, as with *Much Ado about Nothing* and *Twelfth Night*, or because there was something odd about the case involved, as with *Hamlet* and *The Winter's Tale.* My

chapters are divided into early, middle, and late plays. This division is mostly for the sake of convenience, though there are also some commonalities evident in each group of plays that make them fit well together in a chapter.

In chapter two, the player-dramatists discussed are largely concerned with changing behaviors in their in-play audience, almost to the point of seeming didactic. First there is the Abbess in *Comedy of Errors* and the drama she arranges with Adriana, the shrew, in order to reform the young woman's behavior. Next is Petruchio and the similarly shrew-centered drama he plans for Kate in *Taming of the Shrew*, as well as the show he arranges with his wager at the end of the play. Friar Lawrence of *Romeo and Juliet* comes next and, though his comedy goes wrong, he is still able to accomplish a change in the Montague and Capulet families. In *Merchant of Venice* Portia's father tries to control his future son-in-law from beyond the grave, but it is eventually Portia who helps change Bassanio's behavior. Finally, there is *Much Ado about Nothing*, a play notable for having multiple different player-dramatists, sometimes with conflicting goals. It is also notable as introducing the first truly villainous player-dramatist, Don John.

In chapter three, the player-dramatists considered display a greater range of motives than simply impacting audience behavior. A number of them, beginning with Rosalind of *As You Like It,* use their dramas as a way to seek information. Rosalind's drama accomplishes all she wants it to, but when Hamlet and Polonius both use drama to discover information in *Hamlet*, the results are rather mixed. In *Twelfth Night*, Maria theoretically sets out to use drama didactically, but gets caught up in how entertaining it is to watch Malvolio make a fool of himself. This allows Feste an opportunity to use drama for revenge. Viola, meanwhile, is not able to direct much of her own

drama. Finally, *All's Well that Ends Well* provides a case of drama's being used to reveal Parolles's character to Bertram, and also brings up the difficulty that, while Helena cleverly uses drama to get what she wants, Shakespeare casts doubt on the wisdom of her decision.

Chapter four brings into greater focus the powers and limits of drama in terms of its effects on an audience. First is *Measure for Measure*; Duke Vincentio acquires more and more dramatic goals as the play goes on, bringing them all to fruition in the extended recognition scene of Act 5. *Othello's* Iago is the next major player-dramatist, though he is an anti-type and everything he does is opposite of his player-dramatist peers. Othello himself can be considered a player-dramatist of a sort, as can Emilia. Both Leontes and Paulina of *The Winter's Tale* are very successful with their respective audiences, though in the case of Leontes this is not to his advantage. Lastly, there is Prospero in *The Tempest*, who serves as a culmination of all that has come before.

In the end, it appears that Shakespeare had a highly realistic view of how much an audience impacts what a dramatist is able to do or not do. A dramatist can, perhaps, work magic, but he cannot change an audience against its will. In the conclusion, I will consider how this shows Shakespeare's need for a higher power than drama. Although his immediate predecessors fought about how drama ought to be used by a dramatist, Shakespeare clearly shows that drama can only work with the material the audience brings in to the theater, and the dramas of his player-dramatists reveal that real change and regeneration have to come from a source outside of drama.

Chapter Two:

Didactic Drama: Treating Faulty Wills in Five Early Plays

When the Abbess comes out of her convent at the end of *Comedy of Errors* to stop the execution of a criminal by revealing herself to be his supposedly dead wife, the effect is extraordinary. In a play where most of the comedy arises from the dramatic irony of the audience's having knowledge superior to that of the characters, the realization that the Abbess is the long-lost Aemilia is sudden to say the least.[1] This dramatic final recognition of Aemilia simultaneously fits Aristotle's qualification for the best *anagnorisis* and challenges it. On the one hand, it arises naturally from the plot: once her husband is before her, it is inevitable that Aemilia reveal herself to save his life. But, on the other hand, the frame story of Aegeon and Aemilia is missing from Shakespeare's source entirely; it is questionable whether an event so patched on to the story can be said to arise from the incidents themselves. There is also no evidence that this revelation was something Aemilia was planning in advance. The Abbess never hid her identity as Aemilia; she simply never had a motive to reveal herself because she never saw her family after being parted from them. The introduction of a character whose possible appearance has not even been hinted at is an *anagnorisis* indeed, though the artistic merit might easily be questioned.

In fact, in his 1969 introduction to *The Comedy of Errors*, Paul A. Jorgensen does question it, claiming that the ending "is simply a recognition of who, physically, is who."[2] His point is fair enough, so far as it goes; the surprise identity of the Abbess does produce an ending that is a bit overly tidy. However, Jorgensen's main objection is not about the sudden narrative

[1]As Anne Barton says, here "Shakespeare deals a shrewd blow at the seeming omniscience of the audience." "The Comedy of Errors" in G. Blakemore Evans, ed., *The Riverside Shakespeare.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974, 81.

[2] Jorgensen, Paul A. "Introduction to 'The Comedy of Errors'" in Alfred Harbage, ed., *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works.* New York, NY: Penguin Books,1969, 57.

jump, but a complaint that there is no "breakdown of an ego prior to self-knowledge."[3] Of the Antipholi and the Dromios this is probably true; they have no real recognition of their own characters. Nevertheless, to say, as Jorgenson does, that "No one learns more about himself or his neighbors as a result of the errors" is to overlook a recognition that happens prior to the end of the play: the self-knowledge gained by Adriana, a knowledge gained precisely through a breakdown of her ego.[4] This breakdown is caused by the Abbess, though not by the revelation of her identity as the Antipholi's mother. It comes about, rather, through a display of exaggeration arranged for Adriana's benefit. In this case the Abbess is, arguably, the first of Shakespeare's player-dramatists to stage a recognition scene.

Player-dramatists use recognition scenes for various purposes, but, in the first part of his career, Shakespeare's player-dramatists are, like the Abbess, generally concerned with reforming their audience in some way. Shrews like Adriana and Katherine, the feuding Montagues and Capulets, Portia's silly suitors, Bassanio the too-fond friend, the prideful Benedick and Beatrice, the jealous Claudio: these audiences all have faults in their wills that their respective player-dramatists try to correct or, in Claudio's case, exploit. Starting, then, with *Comedy of Errors*, this chapter will examine player-dramatists of recognition in five of Shakespeare's early Elizabethan plays: *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Merchant of Venice* and *Much Ado about Nothing.* What these early plays have in common, aside from their chronological proximity, is the way their player-dramatists so often use recognition in a didactic way, reforming, or at least trying to reform, faults in their audiences.

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[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid., 55.

In the case of the Abbess, the audience of her little drama is Adriana. The recognition scene staged by the Abbess in *The Comedy of Errors* takes place when Adriana is begging the Abbess for access to her husband who, apparently insane, is shut up in the convent. It is clear by this point in the play that Adriana is something of a shrew, though it is likewise clear that she has no real idea of how irksome her behavior can be. The Abbess and Adriana meet when Adriana chases the Antipholis she supposes is her husband into the Abbess's priory and then demands that the Abbess "Let [her] come in" so that she can "bind [her husband] fast" and "bear him home" (5.1.40-41). The Abbess proceeds to size up the situation by asking a series of questions about Antipholis's condition: Is he ruined? Grieving? Has "his eye stray'd his affection in unlawful love" (5.1.50-51)? When the Abbess gets an affirmative answer to the last question, she knows where she stands.

It is easy to mistake what the Abbess does here. G.R. Elliott claims that Adriana was "religiously beguiled by the older woman into confessing her fault."[5] The adverb is strange. The Abbess is certainly imperative, but construing a simple "you should" as religious seems a stretch (5.1.57). But though the beguilement is not overtly religious, the Abbess certainly is artful. Her method is to actively encourage Adriana into overstating her own petulance; twice the Abbess repeats, "Ay, but not enough," in answer to Adriana's descriptions of "reprehend[ing]" her husband for his supposed infidelities (5.1.58, 61, 87). Adriana, drawn out by the Abbess's encouragement, is finally led to say that Antipholis was kept from sleep, food, and peace both at home and abroad by her insistence that his behavior was "vile and bad" (5.1.67). After drawing

[5] Elliott, George Roy. "Weirdness in the Comedy of Errors." *University of Toronto Quarterly* 9, no. 1 (1939): 95-106, 105.

Adriana into this confession, the Abbess gives her a thorough dressing down and claims “thy jealous fits / Hath scar’d thy husband from the use of wits” (5.1.85-86).

It would be easy to take this assessment of Adriana at face value. Not only has she been a sullen shrew the whole play long, but she has also just described her jealous nagging in abundant detail. However, Luciana, a fairly reliable character in the play, claims that this portrait of Adriana is inaccurate. Luciana protests that Adriana “never reprehended [Antipholis] but mildly” (5.1.87). While acknowledging that her sister nags Antipholis, Luciana also sees that the Abbess has drawn Adriana into an exaggeration, creating an Adriana more shrewish than the original. The Abbess evidently thought that Adriana did not know herself, and she chose to address this ignorance with an artifice, presenting the young woman with an exaggerated image of a shrewish wife.

The Abbess, by drawing Adriana into exaggerating her fault, has created a small embedded drama, with Adriana herself portraying the part of the shrew. Adriana is already shrewish, but not quite so much as she was tricked into saying. The Abbess tricks her into playing a part. The motive for this is unstated, but the most intelligible reason the older woman has to intervene is to offer the exaggeration as a means of calling out the foolishness of Adriana’s behavior. The idea is that by recognizing the sort of person she might become, Adriana can reform the behavior that otherwise will inevitably lead to a bad end. Perhaps this treatment was religiously motivated, as Elliott claims, but it seems more likely to be simply an older woman’s intuition of a younger woman’s character, one suitable, in fact, to the relationship between a mother-in-law and her daughter-in-law that actually exists between the two of them, though neither woman knows it as yet.

Luciana is annoyed that her sister "bears[s]…these rebukes and answer[s] not," but Adriana's silence is telling (5.1.89). Since she has had no trouble defending herself in the rest of the play, likely she sees that Abbess's eighteen-line tirade against jealous wives is not wholly without application to her own case. When she says the Abbess "did betray me to my own reproof," this, along with her lack of self-defense, strengthens the impression that Adriana is experiencing the wonder characteristic of *anagnorisis* as a result of recognizing herself (5.1.90). However, this wonder arises, as it will many times in other plays, not from one recognition only but from two, here almost simultaneous. The first recognition is the recognition of the artifice, when Adriana recognizes the Abbess's trickery and so feels betrayed. The second recognition is the one primarily planned by the Abbess, when Adriana recognizes her previously unknown fault.[6] Adriana's line mentions both recognitions. First there is an accusation: "she," (i.e. the Abbess) "did betray," her with trickery, but Adriana also admits the fault, saying it is her "own" reproof, that is, it belongs to herself. As a recognition of self this scene succeeds: Adriana knows herself better. However, as an instrument for changing Adriana's character, it fails: Adriana is still acting shrewishly. Although she does not, in fact, speak again to Antipholis in a shrewish way, she also does not have an opportunity. And immediately subsequent to this "reproof," Adriana speaks of wanting to "lay hold on" her husband with a positively possessive intent (5.1.91).

Why does Adriana's recognition of herself not lead her to change her behavior? The Abbess is using a method many of the other player-dramatists will use: starting with Adriana's ignorance of her own character, the Abbess shows her an exaggerated version of her fault. This

[6] There is some question as to whether a recognition of self is a recognition of person or of fact, but I hold, with Barry Adams, that the taxonomy is less important than the noetic event. See Adams, 44ff.

exaggeration, by virtue of being created, adds a layer of ignorance that augments the final recognition: it is a recognition of both the fault and the artifice that revealed that fault. In Koestler's terms, the artifice is adding another "matrix" to the recognition. Adriana's current matrix of awareness will meet not just one more matrix, her true character, but two more, her true character and the Abbess's artifice. In theory, this explosion of awareness ought to increase the dramatic force of the recognition and thereby help advance the Abbess's purpose. But that is not what happens. Here the recognition of the artifice is, by all appearances, directly tied to Adriana's resentment at the success of the Abbess's theatrical method. This is indicated by Adriana's choice of the negatively charged word "betray" to describe what the Abbess has done. The young woman is betrayed, tricked, into revealing her shrewish nature, and when she vehemently pleads with the Duke for "Justice. . . against the Abbess," she is certainly not feeling the need to repent but rather, as Malvolio after her, the need to revenge (5.1.133). Like her yellow-stockinged successor, Adriana resents (and resists) the dramatic power of theater precisely because it has been dramatically powerful. The two recognitions are in conflict: she recognizes herself, but her resentment at the recognition of the artifice prevents her from changing her behavior.

Shakespeare's presentation of this interaction is particularly interesting in the light of the antitheatrical debates that dominated the decade before Shakespeare began writing, in which scholars and authors debated about what ends playwrights ought and ought not to use theatre to accomplish. The debates centered on the question of whether fiction itself is morally allowable or, since it is not strictly true, it ought to be considered lying. In the latter view, any good that theater might produce, such as the good end of reforming a vicious character, is negated by the

immorality of the means used. In presenting theater used for good ends, as Shakespeare's early work does, in the case of the Abbess and several others, Shakespeare supports the pro-theatrical side of the argument, not because he is directly engaging the argument, but because he is a professional playwright. However, Adriana's response to the drama, or rather her lack of reform, indicate that he is not naïve: theater does not, in and of itself, necessarily reform people. Before considering others of Shakespeare's early plays, a brief review of this debate will help contextualize what Shakespeare is doing in this early part of his career. Although his player-dramatists begin with a didactic focus, by *Much Ado about Nothing* the questions involved in the embedded dramas of the player-dramatists are more complex.

The chief speaker for the antitheatrical side of the debate, not by virtue of precedence but by virtue of clarity of argument, is Stephen Gosson. In 1579, Gosson published "a plesaunt invective against Poets, Pipers, Plaiers, Jesters, and Such like Caterpillers of a Commonwealth" called *The Schoole of Abuse.*[7] In this work, he supposes theater to be detrimental to the life of virtue because it can "slip downe into the hart, and with gunshotte of affection gaule the minde, where reason and vertue should rule the roste."[8] Here, Gosson reveals his fundamental distrust of the play-going public. He presumes that watching a play will necessarily cause people to give in to their passions. In his subsequent 1582 work, *Playes confuted in fiue actions*, Gosson develops his argument and explicitly ties the question of the morality of theater to the question of lying. He claims that all plays have Satan as their efficient cause because "stag plaies are the doctrine

[7] Gosson, Stephen. *The Schoole of Abuse*. London: Thomas Woodcocke, 1579, *Early English Books Online*. 1.
[8] Ibid., 15. It is worth noting that Gosson supposed that plays like his own were acceptable, in moderation.

of the Deuill."[9] According to Gosson, it follows, then, that formal cause, counterfeit, is the work of Satan. Gosson defines "The perfectest Image" as "that, which maketh the thing to seeme neither greater nor lesse, then in dede it is" and he accordingly objects to plays, in which, he says, "thinges are fained, that never were," or are hideously "amplified" away from reality.[10] Later Gosson borrows a definition from Aquinas ("*actus cadens super indebitam materiam*"[11]), and defines a lie as "an acte executed where it ought not." He says "This acte is discerned by outward signes," and defines "Outward signes" as "consist[ing] eyther in words or gestures."[12] Therefore, concludes Gosson, "to declare our selves by words or by gestures to be otherwise then we are," as actors do, "is an act executed where it should not, therefore a lye."[13] Gosson explicitly cites instances of young boys dressed up as women as a kind of lie. For him, then, there is no distinction between a falsehood and a fiction. For Gosson, those who go to plays are guilty by association because "*Poetes* that write playes, and they that present them upon the Stage, studie to make our affections over-flow, whereby they draw the bridle from that parte of the mind, that should ever be curbed, from runnings on heade: which is manifest treason to our soules, and deliuereth them cap|tiue to the deuill."[14] By conflating fiction with lying, Gosson implies that those watching a play are unable to distinguish between a representation of reality and a reality or, to use Koestler's distinction, between "Now and Here" and "Then and There."

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[9] Gosson, *Playes confuted in fiue actions.* London: Thomas Gosson, 1581. *Early English Books Online*, image 20-21/62.
[10] Gosson, *Playes confuted in fiue actions*, 34/62.
[11] *Summa theologiae*, 2a 2ae, quaest. 110, art. 3, response.
[12] Gosson, *Playes confuted in fiue actions*, 34/62.
[13] Gosson, *Playes confuted in fiue actions*, 42/62.
[14] Gosson, *Playes confuted in fiue actions*, 47/62.

In contrast to Gosson, Sir Philip Sidney, to whom Gosson dedicated *Schoole of Abuse*,[15] takes a different, more Aristotelian,[16] view of fiction. Sidney clears the poet of the charge of lying by pointing out that the poet is transparent about using artifice: "he nothing affirms" and "never maketh any circles about your imagination, to conjure you to believe for true what he writes."[17] Where Gosson praises images that are exact, Sidney praises the power of the poet to create "things either better than Nature bringeth forth" or even "forms such as never were in Nature."[18] Sidney argues that poetry has the power to lead people to virtue precisely because it need not be an exact copy of reality.[19] For Sidney, "a feigned example hath as much force to teach as a true example" and even more "since the feigned may be tuned to the highest key of passion."[20] Sidney praises the power of art to produce a "golden world," unrestricted by the laws of the "brazen" world we know. [21] Sidney, speaking about the exact same situation that makes Gosson sure that audiences will be adversely affected, takes a very optimistic view of how fictions may impact an audience: for him, the passion fiction excites is part of its power, not a liability.

Unlike Gosson, Sidney is able to distinguish between lying and fiction, and this distinction is one that holds for Shakespeare's player-dramatists. Even though the player-dramatists all initially keep their artifice hidden, there is a decided difference between those

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[15] For a history of criticism on the relationship between *Schoole* and Sidney's *Apology*, see Arthur Kinney's "Parody and Its Implications in Sydney's Defense of Poesie." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, Vol. 12, No. 1, The English Renaissance (Winter, 1972), 1-19.
[16] Payne, Paula H. "Tracing Aristotle's Rhetoric in Sir Philip Sidney's Poetry and Prose." *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 20, no. 3 (1990): 241-250.
[17] Sidney, *Apology*,103.
[18] Ibid., 85.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Sidney, *Apology*, 93, 86.
[21] Ibid.

player-dramatists who aim to hide their artifice, as Don John does, for instance, and those who, like the Abbess, do not. The term "feigning" can provide a useful distinction. The verb "feign" is rightly applied to Shakespeare's player-dramatists who intend their artifice to be discovered, or at least who do not mind if it is so, since these have no intention of finally deceiving their audience. The verb "lie" is appropriate to those player-dramatists who never intend to reveal their artifice, and so, like the villainous Iago, intend to deceive.

It is clear that both Gosson and Sidney believe that fiction has immense power, enough to change human behavior. Indeed, they even agree that fiction ought to be used for ends of moral improvement. However, they differ in how they approach the question. Gosson is suspicious of the power of fiction since "Tragedies and Commedies stirre up affections, and affections are naturally planted in that part of the minde that is common to us with brute beastes."[22] His attitude implies a distrust of audience members especially: it is they who are inappropriately stirred up by what they observe. Sidney likewise stipulates that poetry be put to "right use," that is, it has to be used according to its proper end "to teach and delight," but he is not suspicious of poetry itself.[23] Indeed, where Gosson presupposes a malicious influence, Sidney is confident in the power of poetry to do good. Where Gosson is skeptical, Sidney, in a way reminiscent of the dramatist of *Everyman*, trusts audiences to apply fictions to their own lives in the way that he intended. Shakespeare, as will become clear over the course of this chapter, takes a view different from either Gosson or Sidney, and his player-dramatists showcase a quite nuanced vision of drama. Although Shakespeare's player-dramatists often employ drama for heuristic reasons, particularly in the early plays, he shows the failure of this process at least as often as he shows its success.

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[22] Gosson, *Playes confuted,* 46/62.
[23] Sidney, *Apology,* 98.

Adriana's resentment of the Abbess's drama embodies Gosson's side of the antitheatrical debates: she resents the power of theater. Shakespeare's Abbess, if acting for the noble purpose of reforming the faulty behavior of a young woman, is clearly using drama for a noble purpose. She is not, as Sidney suggested, creating a virtuous exemplar, but her exaggerating the faults of her actor-audience is similar to the "imitation of the common errors of our life" that Sidney tags as the "right use" of comedy.[24] But Adriana's recognition and attendant failure to change demonstrate the difficulties that player-dramatists face when they aim at trying to change their audience's behavior. Causing a recognition of a fault is one thing, but actually changing a behavior in an audience is another. There is no necessary correlation between the two. The Abbess's embedded drama demonstrates that dramatic power is not necessarily predictable; as Koestler points out, the same recognition may produce different effects depending on the "different emotional attitudes which [it] arouse[s] in spectators of different mental age, culture, and mood."[25]

Granted that the Abbess, who reveals her artifice, is feigning and not lying, there is another possible explanation for why Adriana takes umbrage rather than reforming her behavior. When Sidney talks about the right use of comedy, he imagines a "beholder" who will be moved by the presentation of the "ridiculous and scornful" behavior. [26] Here, however, Adriana does not watch someone else exaggerate her fault: she is made to exaggerate it herself. Watching a fiction is one thing, but being unwittingly caused to participate in one is, Shakespeare seems to show, something different. As indicated above, the very success of the drama in revealing Adriana's behavior to herself was undercut by her resentment at the recognition that she was tricked into

[24] Sidney, *Apology*, 98.
[25] Koestler, Arthur. *The Act of Creation.* New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966, 46.
[26] Ibid.

looking ridiculous while exaggerating her own fault; Adriana does not have the necessary humility or sense of humor to bear a bit of ridiculousness. Benedick and Beatrice, who are also tricked into behaving foolishly, manage to endure it, but in that case there is a preexisting love that makes the humiliation easier to bear. Barring other strong emotions at work, then, a player-dramatist who wishes to change audience behavior would do well to show an exaggeration rather than to have the person they wish to change engage in the exaggeration. It is more likely to create resentment in a character if they are unwittingly performing in a drama than if they are merely watching one.

In *The Taming of the Shrew* Petruchio uses exaggeration, as the Abbess did, but he himself was the chief actor.[27] Rather than trick Katherine into exaggerating her behavior, Petruchio himself demonstrates the outrageous behavior, making Katherine his audience. This method could account for why he is more successful than the Abbess. The patterns established by Aemilia in *Comedy of Errors* are otherwise largely taken up in *Taming of the Shrew*: Petruchio, the player-dramatist, aims his drama at the shrewish Katherine with the intention of making her temper more pliable. That he accomplishes a change in her behavior makes him more successful than the Abbess, though in what manner she was changed remains open to debate.

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[27] The next logical player-dramatist to investigate is the Lord in the Induction to *Taming of the Shrew*. At this point, however, it must be reiterated that not all player-dramatists are dramatists of recognition. The Lord is a player-dramatist who has the ability to think on his feet in response to his audience, and the play *The Taming of the Shrew* is actually staged as a play within a play for Christopher Sly's benefit. However, if the Lord's purpose for Christopher Sly is didactically motivated, it is unclear exactly how. The fact that the frame drops away from the play means that it is difficult to gauge what end the Lord has in view; perhaps it is to reform Sly, perhaps it is just comedy, or perhaps the Lord enjoys showing off his craftiness; there is simply no way to know. Nor is Christopher Sly's reaction to the trick ever explored. There has been some suggestion in the criticism that the relationship between Petruchio and Kate mirrors that of the Lord and Sly (See for example Dale G Priest. "Induction, Theatricality, and Power in The Taming of the Shrew." *Shakespeare Bulletin: A Journal of Performance Criticism and Scholarship* 17, no. 2 (1999): 29-31) but since there is neither indication that the Lord intends his drama heuristically nor any mention of how Sly reacts to discovering the fiction, *Taming of the Shrew* is more usefully considered as a play in its own right and not a play-within-a-play.

Critical debate about *The Taming of the Shrew* tends to focus on the reading of Kate's final speech or, to put it another way, the question of whether Petruchio's drama was successful: does he tame Kate or not?[28] Exactly how and in what way she was changed is up for debate; perhaps she was seriously converted to Petruchio's point of view, perhaps she was speaking in irony by wielding a theatrical power she learned from him, or perhaps, as Elizabeth Hutcheon posits, she was a successful student of a humanist classroom.[29] Whatever the case may be, it remains true that the Kate who ends the play is different than the Katherine who begins it. It is likewise clear that the agent of her change is Petruchio and his drama.[30]

Petruchio does not start out as a player-dramatist but rather as a nondramatic poet. He plays with words and shows himself a master of "rope-tricks" from the moment he walks on stage and begins to toy with Grumio over the meaning of the word "knock" (*Shrew*, 1.2.112, 1.2.5ff). He boasts loudly of how he has come to "wive it wealthily in Padua" and so jumps at Hortensio's news of the "young and beauteous" Katherine, who is "curst," true, but who also has "wealth enough" to tempt Petruchio (1.2.75, 86, 89, 86). Grumio, who knows his master's

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[28] Lynda E Boose famously argues for a literal interpretation in her "Scolding Brides and Bridling Scolds: Taming the Woman's Unruly Member. *Shakespeare Quarterly* 42 (1991), 179-213. Marjorie Garber's *Shakespeare After All* (New York, 2004) also suggests that the speech must be taken literally. Ironic readings also abound; for a good summary of this view see Helga Ramsey-Kurz. "Rising Above the Bait: Kate's Transformation from Bear to Falcon." *English Studies* 88, no. 3 (2007): 262-281 or Wayne A. Rebhorn, "Petruchio's 'Rope Tricks': 'The Taming of the Shrew' and the Renaissance Discourse of Rhetoric." *Modern Philology* 92, no. 3 (1995): 294.

[29] Elizabeth Hutcheon's 2011. "From Shrew to Subject: Petruchio's Humanist Education of Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew*." *Comparative Drama* 45, no. 4: 315, is a notable exception to the trend of the criticism exemplified in the previous footnote.

[30] Criticism surrounding Petruchio clearly indicates that he is a dramatist. Suzanne M. Tartamella argues specifically that Petruchio "is better understood within the context of Shakespeare's dark-lady sequence" in the sonnets (450). Petruchio, on this reading, is a boorish equivalent of the sonnet's narrator and Kate is his "dark-lady." As the poet "writes" his lady, so Petruchio does Kate, a character he literally invents out of the Katherine the shrew. Tartamella, Suzanne M. "Reinventing the Poet and Dark Lady: Theatricality and Artistic Control in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*." *English Literary Renaissance* 43 (3): 446-77.

character and perhaps also his need for money, has some hope for Petruchio's success: "[If] she stand him but a little, he will throw a figure in her face, and so disfigure her with it, that she shall have no more eyes to see withal than a cat" (1.2.112-115). Grumio apparently imagines some sort of outrageous display, but when Petruchio outlines his plan to reform Kate, it is not by throwing a figure, but by killing her with kindness:

> [I will] woo her with some spirit when she comes.
> Say that she rail, why then I'll tell her plain
> She sings as sweetly as a nightingale;
> Say that she frown, I'll say she looks as clear
> As morning roses newly wash'd with dew;
> Say she be mute, and will not speak a word,
> Then I'll commend her volubility,
> And say she uttereth piercing eloquence;
> If she do bid me pack, I'll give her thanks,
> As though she bid me stay by her a week;
> If she deny to wed, I'll crave the day
> When I shall ask the banns, and when be married.
>
> (2.1.169-180)

It is not immediately clear that Petruchio means to use anything weightier than contradictions, but later in the scene it becomes clear that he is determined to flatter Katherine with exaggeration in the Petrarchan style. When she comes in he speaks of

> Kate like the hazel-twig [who]
> Is straight and slender, and brown in hue
> As hazel-nuts, and sweeter than the kernels,

and asks if

> ever Dian so became a grove
> As Kate this chamber.
>
> (2.1.253, 257-8)

Petruchio's intention to flatter is clear, but his motive is less so: Baptista has already agreed to marriage terms. There is, in terms of gaining Katherine and her fortune, no reason for Petruchio

to make himself agreeable to his betrothed. Since he does so, one can presume that he has a goal in mind beyond the mere marriage articles. Petruchio gives some indication of this goal by giving Katherine a new name: Kate. The plan seems to be to create a new woman, a Kate, by dint of exorbitant Petrarchan praise. But, like the poet of the sonnets, Petruchio grows skeptical of his poetic method. For one thing, it does not seem to create much change in Katherine: she still hurls insults at Petruchio and her father quite freely. The sweet and pliable Kate of whom Petruchio speaks is a fiction. Petruchio is simply praising Katherine for virtues wherever she holds the opposite vice, and contradictions are not especially convincing arguments. Petrarchan praise can yield beautiful poetry, but Petruchio realizes rather quickly that holding up a verbal image of a perfectly docile woman is not going to change Katherine to Kate.

Grumio has already provided an outline for a successful method: to change Katherine, Petruchio must not only cast a figure, he must *figure to disfigure*, that is, he must present a piece of art that will engage, and eventually recreate, his audience. When Petruchio shows up at the wedding dressed in "some odd humor" it becomes clear that he has chosen a dramatic performance as his new method (3.2.72). His plan is to present a character "[c]urster than she" so that Katherine appears "a lamb, a dove, a fool to him" (3.2.154, 157). This is not so different from the Abbess's method of exaggerating a flaw. Like her, Petruchio is beginning with Katherine's ignorance of her own character and, also like the Abbess, he presents a drama that will augment this ignorance with a new ignorance of the artifice he is using. However, there is an important difference. By becoming himself "more shrew than she," Petruchio is creating a more complete fiction than Aemilia; yes, he is showing Katherine her faults, but he, unlike Aemilia, acts them out himself rather than causing Kate to exaggerate them (4.1.85-6). He creates a

fictional character: Petruchio the over-particular fool. This character is what allows Petruchio to hide his artifice; Katherine knows so little of him that it is not immediately clear to her that this character of her husband's is an act.

Unlike Petruchio's poetic method, the drama succeeds at least insofar as it "kills her in her own humor," as evidenced when she capitulates to him on the road from Padua and finally acts in the submissive way she knows he wants (4.1.80). Kate's capitulation certainly indicates a recognition of sorts, but it is unclear that Katherine has recognized anything other than the necessity of acting according to the whims of an insane husband. Katherine does not immediately see herself in Petruchio's actions: all she knows is that, to get anything done, she must "say as [Petruchio] says" (5.1.11). Her air is that of one resigned, not of one betrayed, although when Hortensio hears Kate agree to think as Petruchio does he is convinced that "the field is won" (4.5.23). Kate does seem to have recognized the artifice, at least to some degree, because Petruchio draws her into a role: not only does she call the sun the moon, but she also changes her opinion from one moment to the next. Indeed, she apparently even enjoys discomfiting Vincentio by acting the part Petruchio has created for her, calling the old man a "Young budding virgin, fair, and fresh, and sweet" one moment and "a reverent father" the next (4.5.37, 48). What is notable here is that where Adriana resented, Kate plays along. This may be because Petruchio's method is less direct. While the Abbess draws Adriana herself into overstating her fault, and so causes resentment, Petruchio is the one magnifying Katherine's behavior, making his method more like the one Sidney describes. Kate is an audience, Adriana an actor. The end of reforming the shrew is the same for both the Abbess and Petruchio, but the means are different.

Although Kate has recognized that Petruchio is, in some way, playing a role and asking her to play one, it is not clear that she recognizes the fault – her own shrewishness – that prompted Petruchio to take up the artifice. Kate apparently becomes amiable, but Petruchio continues to act the part of a dramatist; it is therefore safe to assume that he has bigger plans for Kate than merely having her act in order to please her husband. This becomes obvious when, at Lucentio's feast to celebrate his union with Bianca, Petruchio starts to bait Hortensio about the latter's fear of the widow he has agreed to marry. The widow, in her turn, explains the jest to Kate saying,

> Your husband, being troubled with a shrew,
> Measures my husband's sorrow by his woe

and, to avoid any confusion, she tells Kate outright, "I mean you" (5.2.27-8, 32). Significantly, though it has been said repeatedly throughout the play, and though Petruchio has given her a taste of her own medicine, this is the first time anyone directly calls Kate a shrew in her presence. Petruchio did, indeed, use the word in his speech of 2.1, but he undercut it by speaking about how loving she was in private, if only her family could know. The fact is that, though the play is titled after her shrewishness, Petruchio has just orchestrated the first time Kate gets the accusation full in the face. If she was ignorant of how people saw her, she is ignorant no more.

Here, like the Abbess, Petruchio has used artifice. He first uses his wild behavior to cajole Kate into being at least compliant; he next indirectly insults the widow who eventually calls Kate a shrew in retaliation. In the first case he is obviously using fiction, but the second case is arguably something which arises from the incidents themselves; Petruchio could be sure that everyone thought Kate was a shrew. However, the fact that he introduced the insult in the first place suggests a measure of contrivance on his part. Indeed, it seems likely that his behavior

as shrew himself was calculated to prepare Kate to receive this knowledge as she ought: this recognition was the whole point of his act.

Since Kate almost immediately leaves the stage, it is impossible to know exactly what her reaction is. Does she have a moment of wonder in which she put the knowledge of her reputation for shrewishness together with the wild whimsy of her husband's behavior? Does she recognize that his behavior has been artfully arranged in order to magnify her own? There can be no certainty on this point. However, prepared as she was by the figure thrown via Petruchio's earlier drama, Kate knows what shrewish behavior looks like and might well have seen herself in it. The full scope of the artificiality of Petruchio's behavior may be dawning on her. In terms of Petruchio's ultimate dramatic purpose, though, all of this is irrelevant. Petruchio succeeds where the Abbess fails. Katherine's behavior is changed. This is certainly true because, moments later, when Petruchio demands that Kate return to the stage, she does so. Katherine never would have done this, but Kate does.

Kate's re-entry shows that Petruchio obviously succeeds as a rhetorician, but as a dramatist orchestrating a recognition of self he may or may not; it is simply impossible to judge Kate's inner state. However, Petruchio calls Kate back for a second recognition scene whose results are more certain: that of the wager. His goal in this scene is pecuniary, true, but his mercenary aims are irrelevant to his success in creating recognition. Petruchio arranges a theatrical display for the other men in the play to create an *anagnorisis.* Kate returns for Petruchio's bet with the other husbands: "Let each one send unto his wife, And he whose wife is most obedient…Shall win the wager" (5.2.66-7,69). Petruchio is not hiding his artifice. The wager is manifestly contrived by Petruchio himself to show off Kate's new obedience. Indeed,

no one but Petruchio, now convinced of Kate's docility, would even suppose the matter to be a contest.

And yet, in a sense, Petruchio is hiding an artistic product: Kate. The change in her character, at least insofar she shows herself willing to obey a single command, is something that he brought about himself. Petruchio has knowledge that the others do not, and this is what creates the recognition. Petruchio knows he has tamed Kate and, however one frames the result, the fact remains that the Katherine of the beginning of the play would never have come on stage asking meekly, "What is your will, sire, that you do send for me" (5.2.99-100)? The matter of this recognition scene is a fact: Petruchio taught Katherine. She was not so intractable as everyone in the play supposed. Hortensio especially, presumably still nursing wounds from the lute Katherine broke over his head, must have supposed Kate unteachable. The recognition is that Petruchio found a key to form Katherine into Kate. However, though primarily a recognition of fact, Katherine's teachability should teach the other characters, especially would-be suitors Hortensio and Tranio, something about themselves: they might have "tamed" Kate if they had tried, and indeed, they may need to come to Petruchio to get help with their own shrewish wives.

The state of Kate's interior life – whether she is truly changed – is unclear, so it is difficult to speak about Kate as an audience. However, Petruchio's willingness to address Katherine's ignorance about her temper does at least produce an observable effect, and the wager may also make Petruchio's artifice definitively obvious to Kate. When Petruchio gives her a chance to speak to the other "headstrong women" he is asking the titular shrew to school her sister and the widow in obedience (5.2.130). Kate must realize that this is hilariously unexpected and contrived. In any case, Baptista recognizes that the magnitude of Petruchio's feat is

impressive. Lucentio calls her docility "a wonder" twice, and, in the kind of amazement expected from an *anagnorisis* moment, Baptista offers

> Another dowry to another daughter
> For she is chang'd, as she had never been. [31]
> (5.2.106,114-15)

Even here, though, Petruchio wants to "win [his] wager better yet" and show off Kate's obedience thoroughly (5.2.116). It is difficult to tell just how one ought to read Kate's final speech. She might seriously have become obedient. However, there is something so exaggerated in her demonstration of how to place one's "hands below [one's] husband's foot" that, in conjunction with the fact that she has already shown herself capable of discomfiting Vincentio, it seems likely that she enjoys the show she is making.

The Abbess and Petruchio both caused a recognition in their respective shrews, but the results of Petruchio's drama are somewhat ambiguous since there is no way to instantly show the reformation of character in a way that is totally believable. A full reformation of Kate would have to be proven over time. Petruchio, at least, ends the play with a full purse and a tame wife, so he is obviously more successful than the Abbess. Part of his success seems to be related to his method. Where the Abbess executed her recognition and accusation almost immediately, Petruchio breaks his down into stages. He first shows Kate an exaggerated version of her fault rather than tricking her into exaggerating it herself, and he wears her down to a point of compliance. And then, though he arranges a direct accusation similar to the tirade the Abbess gives on jealous wives, he causes a character other than himself to give it, meaning that Kate's

[31] Baptista's gift undercuts the theory that the two of them were working together for this money since it was not part of the wager at all, but driven by Baptista's amazement. For a history of the criticism on this point, see Little, Megan D. "The Persuasion of 'These Poor Informal Women': The Problem of Rhetorical Training in the Taming of the Shrew and Measure for Measure." *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 33, no. 1 (2007): 83-108, especially pages 91-98.

annoyance is more likely to be directed at the widow than at Petruchio. And, finally, the wager gives both Petruchio and Kate a chance to show off a bit.

It seems likely that Petruchio is more careful and methodical in his planning than the Abbess because he is also more self-interested. He is didactic in that he wants to teach something, but, while the Abbess is interested in doing a good deed by correcting the behavior of a stranger, Petruchio is reforming a shrew not just for the sake of morality but also to make his own marriage bearable. The end is slightly different in each case: reforming a shrew for her own sake versus reforming a shrew for the sake of a peaceful home. Petruchio is planning on living with the results of his drama, but the Abbess is not. A self-serving dramatist may be more inclined to be careful than one who is simply didactic on principle. Petruchio is more focused on the means because he has more interest in the end, in how the results of the drama play out.

Although Petruchio's interest in his end led him to plan his means carefully, it is possible to focus on the end so much that compromising means are embraced in pursuit of it. This is a danger particularly illustrated by Friar Lawrence, a player-dramatist who focuses on the ends to the exclusion of the means. Like the Abbess, Lawrence begins with a disinterested end in view, that of bringing two warring families together. However, his focus on bringing about the right outcome for his audience, the warring Capulet and Montague families, leads him to imprudence in his choice of means; while he works at a comic resolution, he unwittingly (but perhaps predictably) helps to orchestrate a tragedy.

Friar Lawrence, like the other player-dramatists considered so far, does not begin with the desire to be a dramatist. Indeed, Bertrand Evans points out that the Prologue indicates that "Fate is the controlling practiser, and the entire action of the play represents her at work in the

details of her housekeeping."[32] The Friar "tries, but lamely, for he does not know enough of what" the audience knows by virtue of the prologue.[33] However, without the foreknowledge of the end, the Friar is bound to try and influence his situation for the good and so, like the Abbess and Petruchio, when he is presented with material for staging a recognition, he makes good use of it. He has, in fact, rather an eye for dramatic details. This interest in directing may be a symptom of a larger problem. Jill Kriegel has recently argued that Lawrence is a Friar who begins the play trusting in himself rather than God, and that "we watch him veer more and more toward a reliance on self and nature that mirrors Renaissance philosophy and science as they increasingly distance themselves from the Church."[34] Certainly the Friar is a man of contradictions; his very presence in the play begins with his discussion of opposites: light and darkness, night and day, womb and tomb, virtue and vice are all contrasted in his opening speech. The last lines he speaks before Romeo enters are particularly ironic in light of the actions Lawrence will take in the play:

> For naught so vile that on the earth doth live
> But to the earth some special good doth give;
> Nor aught so good but, strain'd for that fair use,
> Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse
> Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied,
> And vice sometime by action dignified.
> (2.2.17-22)

Lawrence is speaking specifically of the flowers he is gathering, and how one in particular could be either "poison" or "medicine," but in short order he will apply this principle to a much different situation (2.2.24). When Romeo presently confesses that his

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[32] *Shakespeare's Tragic Practice.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1979, 22.
[33] Ibid., 23.
[34] Kriegel, Jill. "A Case Against Natural Magic: Shakespeare's Friar Laurence as Romeo and Juliet 's Near-Tragic Hero." *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 13, no. 1 (2010): 132-145, 139.

> heart's dear love is set
> On the fair daughter of rich Capulet.
> As mine on hers, so hers is set on mine,
> And all combin'd, save what thou must combine
> By holy marriage

Lawrence is quick to seize the opportunity presented to him (2.3.57-61). He evidently sees the unexpected love between these two scions of warring houses as an opportunity and seeks "by action dignified" to bring something good out of it (2.2.22).

The Friar's actions are, at first, a bit hard to parse because they are so contradictory. Although he repeatedly counsels Romeo to moderation (as when he says "Wisely and slow. They stumble that run fast") he also marries him to Juliet almost right away, on the same day that Romeo has declared his love (2.3.94). This is odd since the Friar knows Romeo to be fickle; if he were thinking of the long-term happiness of the young people, the expected counsel would be to have Romeo to wait a day or two and see if this love for Juliet runs the way of his love for Rosaline. Bur rather than this, Lawrence makes "short work" of the marriage (2.6.35). He does not risk asking the Capulet and Montague families for consent they are unlikely to give, nor does he beg the intercession of the Prince, who could conceivably be an ally. Rather, Friar Lawrence acts on his own authority. He will not run the risk of missing his opportunity for this marriage. The motive he has here becomes intelligible when Friar Lawrence speaks of his desire to turn the "rancor" between Romeo and Juliet's "households" into "pure love" (2.2.90-2). The union of Romeo and Juliet is, for Lawrence, a means to an end. By presenting the marriage to the respective families, Lawrence evidently hopes to end the feud. It is a benevolent intention, certainly, but he fails to consider his own words: if "misapplied" even something virtuous, like the love between Romeo and Juliet, can turn to something vicious (2.2.21).

After Romeo kills Tybalt, it becomes increasingly clear that Friar Lawrence is not a skilled enough dramatist to bring about the comic ending he envisions. Not only is he putting his desire for the perfect ending above prudence, hastily marrying the young people, but he also has a terrible sense of his audience. Peter Herman argues that when speaking to the hysterical Romeo after Tybalt's murder, "Friar Lawrence defies a fundamental rule of forensic rhetoric - that in order to persuade, one must frame a speech to the audience."[35] Rather than fashion a speech Romeo can hear, Friar Lawrence gives a lecture on patience ("Adversity's sweet milk, philosophy") that Romeo, somewhat petulantly, ignores (3.3.55). The theater audience cannot witness this without beginning to wonder if Friar Lawrence is an effective enough dramatist to bring off this reconciliation of the Capulet and Montague families.[36] And it is just now, in the midst of this doubt, that the plan the Friar has in mind for accomplishing this reconciliation is revealed as *anagnorisis.* Whatever his previous method for making the marriage known to the Capulet and Montague families, it is not until after Romeo's banishment that he explicitly takes any actions toward planning this end.

The love between Romeo and Juliet comes about without the Friar's help, but the marriage is Friar Lawrence's way of making that love irrevocable. That Lawrence has this end, that is, irrevocability, in view, is proved when he sends Romeo off to consummate his union with Juliet, explicitly telling him to "ascend her chamber…and comfort her" (3.3.147). A consummated marriage is much harder to annul than one that is not consummated, so this move

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[35] Herman, Peter C. "Tragedy and the Crisis of Authority in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet.*" *Intertexts (Lubbock)* 12 (1-2):2008, 102.

[36] Herman's argument partially hinges on this recognition by the audience. His theory is that this futile moralizing is supposed to mirror the royal pronouncements made by Queen Elizabeth in the 1590s during the grain crisis, whose frequent repetition speaks to the fact that they were largely ignored.

proves that Lawrence is very concerned about keeping this marriage together.[37] Possibly Friar Lawrence had some self-interested political motive for this move,[38] but his stated intention for arranging the marriage is that of reconciling the feuding families. Before Romeo leaves, Lawrence explains his reasoning, warning the young man:

> stay not until the watch is set,
> For then thou canst not pass to Mantua,
> Where thou shall live till we can find a time
> To blaze your marriage, reconcile your friends,
> Beg pardon of the Prince, and call thee back
> With twenty hundred thousand times more joy
> Than thou went'st forth in lamentation.
> (3.3.148-155)

Friar Lawrence is planning on revealing the marriage at the right moment and not before. It is this "blazing" of the marriage that he expects to bring about the reconciliation of the Capulets and Montagues. The "twenty hundred thousand times more joy" that he anticipates certainly resembles the wonder caused by *anagnorisis*, and it is Lawrence's plan that this will "reconcile" the families. Because the families are ignorant of the marriage, learning that the young people are married is calculated to shock. Lawrence wants to use recognition of an artifice, here recognition of the fact that he has married Romeo and Juliet, for a specific end: to end the feud. He seeks, to quote a later Friar of Shakespeare's, to "let wonder seem familiar" to the warring Montagues and Capulets and so use the wonder of his *anagnorisis* to reconcile the families (*Much Ado about Nothing*, 5.4.70).

As a dramatist, Lawrence will take no chances that the marriage be revealed without his guidance, and it is here, again, that his focus on his vision of a perfect outcome leads him to

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[37] For an explanation on how marital law was understood in the period, see B.J. Sokol and Mary Sokol. *Shakespeare, Law, and Marriage.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
[38] See Benner, Gerry "Shakespeare's Politically Ambitious Friar." *Shakespeare Studies* 13: 47-58, 1980, for a discussion of Lawrence as a politically motivated figure.

imprudence. After Romeo's exile, Lawrence might have arranged for Juliet to go to Mantua, but that would have revealed the wedding just as much as would going to Prince Escalus, Paris, or the families to explain the facts of the case. Lawrence does not even risk telling Friar John what is in the important letter he sends to Romeo. Whatever motivates him to desire control of this dramatic situation, it leads him, rather than to reveal the marriage too early, to resort to the expedient of Juliet's false death. He is so focused on revealing the marriage at just the right time that he is willing to go to great lengths to keep it secret. And he not only has Juliet feign death; he gives her a drug that feigns it for her, and that quite believably.[39] When Juliet's distraught parents find her apparently dead, Friar Lawrence retains an eye for dramatic detail, telling Juliet's parents to prepare her for her funeral with "your rosemary…and in her best array, bear her to church" (4.5.79-81). Evidently Lawrence intends to use the fiction of Juliet's false death to further increase the power of his *anagnorisis* when he is able to present her to her family alive and well.

One of the ironies of this play is that the precise fault Friar Lawrence warns Romeo against is the very one with which he unwittingly causes a tragedy. Romeo becomes so focused on the end of marrying Juliet that he challenges death to "do what he dare" (2.6.7). In that case, Friar Lawrence knows that

> These violent delights have violent ends,
> And in their triumph die, like fire and powder,
> Which as they kiss consume.
>
> (2.6.9-11)

[39] For a discussion on how Shakespeare's representation of Juliet relates to Early Modern ideas about wandering wombs, see Kaara L. Peterson, "Shakespearean Revivifications: Early Modern Undead." *Shakespeare Studies* 32, (2004): 240-266.

Here Lawrence warns against a too-reckless focus on the end, seeing clearly that an end pursued at any cost will turn out badly. Yet, in his own case, Lawrence becomes so focused on using the revelation of the marriage to reconcile the families that he uses imprudent means to achieve it. He does not apply the knowledge that he has. Rather than using prudent means, he arranges things so that his chief actress is not acting at all, but is rather under the influence of a drug that does the acting for her. It is precisely this ruse that causes the tragedy since, ultimately, even Romeo is fooled by the drug and so kills himself in despair, provoking Juliet's suicide when she awakes and finds him dead. Lawrence's desire for the perfect ending, like Romeo's too-violent desire for marriage to Juliet, is ultimately self-consuming, destroying the very end it set out to achieve.

And yet, though a too-convincing fiction derailed the comic ending Lawrence becomes so focused on producing, he does still achieve the ultimate purpose to which the marriage was only an end: a reconciliation between the families. And this reconciliation is achieved, in part, through a recognition of the artifice. It is by no means certain that the comic ending Friar Lawrence was contriving could have brought concord to the warring families; the eventual recognition was not simply a recognition of the marriage but a recognition of the marriage and of the double suicide. The amazement caused by the recognition, then, is seemingly only attributable to Lawrence alone if he can be supposed to have planned a tragedy all along. This seems highly unlikely; the Friar was clearly going to great lengths to bring about a comic resolution. However, one of the reasons Friar Lawrence is successful in changing the families' behavior is that, in addition to the love between the young people, he can still cause a recognition of the fictions everyone has been operating under. It is still perfectly true that, where the feuding

families saw only animosity, Friar Lawrence was concealing concord and love. His long speech of Act 5, scene 3 reveals that, even despite the double-suicide, the family has been duped and comes to recognize the artifice. Lawrence's words alone would not be enough to prove all this, but after the letter from Romeo that "doth make good the friar's words" confirms that the families have been tricked, the two patriarchs do reconcile (5.3.286). The Friar's earlier words again prove true: the suicides are "so vile" but they also "to the earth some special good doth give" in that they reconcile the families (2.2.17,18). As Hugh Richmond has recently said, "It is true that *Romeo and Juliet* offers a civic resolution to the feud, but this conclusion still leaves most audiences rather depressed by the failure of the lovers to achieve any similar positive awareness, or personal resolution."[40] The end is a "glooming peace" because of the horrifying turn from comedy to tragedy, but the reconciliation Lawrence set out to cause does occur, and the drama does, in that sense, achieve the end which he envisioned for it, just not in the manner he envisioned it (5.3.304).

Friar Lawrence, ultimately, is constrained by the play he is in. He cannot not avoid the fact that he is a character in a tragedy and not a comedy, no matter what dramatic situations he attempts to contrive.[41] Lawrence strongly illustrates the chief differences between player-dramatists and actual dramatists: actual dramatists can bring about whatever ending they like, but the power a player-dramatist has over his or her dramatic situation is limited. No matter how hard Lawrence tries he cannot bring the play to the ending he desires. He can improvise to a

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[40] Richmond, Hugh M. *Shakespeare's Tragedies Reviewed: A Spectator's Role.* New York: Peter Lang, 2015, 50.

[41] In this necessary subservience to a plan greater than his own, Friar Lawrence offers one image of the problem of free will. While he is free to act, it seems that his actions avail nothing and that his destiny is pre-determined. This tension comes up with other player-dramatists, but is a question that follows upon the work of this dissertation rather than one integral to it.

certain extent, and apparently has the ability to change ideas or methods midcourse, as he does after Romeo's exile, but the results are out of his control. The appearance of freedom does not mean unlimited license or directorial power. Petruchio is more successful than the Abbess partly because he understands this better: the Abbess is unsuccessful because she orchestrates things in an absolute way that neglects the humanity of, and ultimately humiliates, Adriana. Petruchio takes his audience more into account and, though he does arrange an embarrassing accusation for Kate, he also prepares her for it in several stages. Friar Lawrence, somewhat like the Abbess, assumes that his good motives will carry the day. In one way he is more successful than the Abbess, since, even when the comedy is lost to him, the mechanism of revealing the artifice still fulfills the purpose for which he used the artifice. This was not true for the Abbess since, even after the recognition of her fault, Adriana still acts like a shrew. Lawrence was successful in regard to his audience, but his artifice, that is, the marriage and his desire to control when and how it was revealed, consumed his actors. His single-minded pursuit of a particular didactic end blinded him to the folly of his means. His view of the drama became unbalanced, and though he acknowledges the probability that the play has "Miscarried by [his] fault," he only sees this after it is too late (5.3.267).

This problem of an unbalanced view, that is, a view of drama that is incomplete and overly didactic, is explored more fully in *Merchant of Venice.* This play, like *Romeo and Juliet*, is concerned with contrasts, but here it is not primarily the contrast of love and hate. Rather, the binaries are justice and mercy, spirit and letter. Shakespeare uses player-dramatists – Portia's father and Portia herself – to explore the didactic possibilities of both these binaries. However,

through Portia's treatment of the rings, he ultimately shows that the most effective method for changing behavior involves embracing both sides simultaneously.

Portia is the primary player-dramatist of *Merchant*, but her father, though already dead before the action of the play begins, is a player-dramatist by virtue of the control he exerts on the world of the play from a position inside the play itself. His trial by caskets creates an amazing spectacle. Not only do the various discussions of the caskets and the trials themselves take up almost twenty percent of the text,[42] but they also provide opportunity for lavish staging and elaborate speech-making rather uncharacteristic of comedies. Consider, for instance, the direction for 2.1 in the First Folio: "Enter Morochus a tawnie Moore all in white, and three or foure followers accordingly, with Portia, Nerrissa, and their traine. Flo. Cornets." [43] The staging is very elaborate. Nerissa obligingly explains how Portia's father plans his drama. Evidently he was "ever virtuous," and, as a holy man, "at [his] death [had] good inspirations" (*Merchant of Venice*, 1.2.27-28). In this case the inspiration was "the lott'ry that he hath devis'd in these three chests of gold, silver, and lead" (1.2.29-30). Knowing that he will not be there to evaluate his potential sons-in-law, Portia's father creates a task designed to test Portia's suitors with a recognition ordeal. The young man "who chooses [Portia's father's] meaning chooses" Portia, whose picture is in one of the caskets (1.2.31). The idea is that Portia "will no doubt never be chosen by any rightly but one who [she] shall rightly love" (1.2.31-3). The task is risky for the suitors. Before they choose from the caskets, the suitors must

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[42] My count is 523 lines, though there is some question as just where to end the count in Bassanio's turn at the caskets – I ended just where he makes the promise of the ring, though there is good case for including the Nerissa/Gratiano episode. So, around 550 lines of 2736 according to the Folger total line numbers (FTLN).

[43] Shakespeare, William. "The Merchant of Venice" in *Mr. William Shakespeares comedies, histories, & tragedies: published according to the true originall copies*, (London: Isaac Iaggard, 1623), *LUNA: Folger Digital Image Collection*, 167.

> swear before [they] choose, if [they] choose wrong
> Never to speak to lady afterward
> In way of marriage.
>
> (1.3.40-42)

Later, the Prince of Arragon elaborates two other conditions:

> never to unfold to any one
> Which casket 'twas [he] chose

and, should he fail, "Immediately to leave" (2.9.10-11, 16). Here again is a case of a player-dramatist who, like Petruchio and his wager, seems up-front about his artifice. Portia'a father has obviously contrived the trial by casket and the radical commitment it demands. However, like Petruchio's audience, Portia's father's audience is partially in ignorance: in this case, they are ignorant of how the trial of the caskets is set up, and so the recognition is still a recognition of the design.

Portia is grateful that the lottery scares off the unwanted suitors she discusses with Nerissa and she "pray[s] God grant them a fair departure" (1.2.110-111). However, to the Moor, the first suitor the audience sees, she claims to resent the lottery since it "Bars [her] the right of voluntary choosing," and has "scanted" and "hedg'd" her to yield to her father's will, as expressed in the caskets (1.3.16-18). Whatever her reason for feigning dissatisfaction in this case, she does not flatter the Prince of Arragon with much talk at all. Both men choose wrongly, but the reasons why they do so are illustrative of how Portia's father wanted the test to work. Garry Harrington argues that the Moor chooses wrongly, but it is out of a too-great regard for Portia herself.[44] The Moor's trouble is that he does not see beneath the surface of things. He cannot see why one would "hazard" for mere lead (2.7.16). He spurns the lead as "damnation"

[44] For an interesting and sympathetic discussion of the merits of the Moor, see Gary Harrington. "'Shadowed Livery': Morocco in the Merchant of Venice." *Linguaculture* 2017, no. 1 (2017): 53-62.

and the silver as "sinful," but the gold he thinks a fit setting for "so rich a gem" (2.7.49, 54, 55). The rhyme inside the casket, held by "A carrion Death," points out that he sees only the "outside" without considering that it might "infold" (2.7.63, 68, 69). The Moor is sure of the value of Portia, but his choice is too "bold" and therefore unwise (2.7.70). The Prince of Arragon, in his turn, spurns the gold casket because he knows it must be calculated to appeal to

> the fool multitude that choose by show,
> Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach,
> Which Pries not to th' interior.
>
> (2.9.26-28)

Though this sounds wise, it is also rooted in pride: the Prince "will not jump with common spirits" and scorns to be ranked "with the barbarous multitudes" (2.9.32-33). However, ironically the Prince immediately decides that he can "assume desert" in regard to the silver casket, without even considering the lead as an option (2.9.51). The "blinking idiot" he finds is a suitable punishment for his pride: he was nothing but a fool "Silvered over" (2.9.54, 69). Portia points out that his desires made him imprudent when she calls him a "moth" that "the candle sing'd" (2.9.79). The Moor considers the outside too much; the Prince considers himself too much: neither man is able to see beyond the outward sign to that which is signified.

Portia is glad to be rid of both of these suitors because it is Bassanio who interests her. Portia makes this clear during her discussion with Nerissa at the end of 1.2, and this preference is verified by Bassanio's own assertion that "from her eyes [he] did receive fair speechless messages" during his previous visit to Belmont (1.1.163-4). Since Bassanio visited Belmont "in [Portia's] father's time," it is possible that Portia's father knew of her preference for the "Venetian…scholar and… soldier" (1.2.112-113). When Portia complains that "the will of a living daughter [is] curb'd by the will of a dead father," she may well have Bassanio in mind as

the man she would choose herself (1.2.24-25). However, Portia's father knew what he was doing. By putting her image in the lead casket, Portia's father ensured that many suitors would choose incorrectly, as both the Prince and the Moor do. This gives Portia an advantage she never mentions: after enough false choices, she knows which casket is the right one. So, when the man she actually loves comes along, although she insists that she will not break her word and be foresworn, Portia is able to influence his choice. She arranges music for Bassanio while he considers his choice and the first three lines end, respectively, with "bred," "head," and "nourishèd," all conspicuous rhymes for "lead."[45] Bassanio accordingly chooses correctly, humbling himself in a way that neither of the others could, and is thus revealed as someone who "choose[es] not by the view" (3.2.131).

Although Bassanio is less foolish than either the Moor or the Prince, this does not mean that he is without ulterior motives in Portia's regard. Bassanio is not revealed first as a lover, but as a debtor. He says to Antonio early in the play that he has

> disabled [his] estate by something showing a more swelling part
> Than [his] faint means would grant continuance.
> (1.1.123-25)

His

> chief care
> Is to come fairly off from the great debts
> Wherin [his] time something too prodigal
> Hath left [him] gag'd.
> (1.1.127-130)

It is only after speaking of his financial troubles that Bassanio speaks of Portia, and even then the first thing he has to say about her is that she is "a lady richly left" (1.1.161). The Moor and

[45] Also with "dead," which is what Freud's famous interpretation of this scene supposes Bassanio to be obsessed with. See Christian Smith, "Fortune and Caskets: Necrophilia in the Merchant of Venice." *Shakespeare Seminar* 12, (2014): 37, for a discussion of Freud's *Das Motiv der Kästchenwahl.*

Arragon gain some insight to their own characters and go away humbled, but it is at least worth asking if Bassanio is not exactly the sort of money-seeking suitor Portia's father, like most fathers-in-law, would want to weed out.[46] He is less caught up in externals than the Moor and the Prince, but in light of his pecuniary motive and the possible help he received, it is not clear that Bassanio unambiguously reveals his superiority among suitors. As a device for making Portia happy, which must have been at the bottom of her father's intention, the trial works. It does, in fact, weed out the suitors she dislikes and gives her the power of choosing the man she loves. However, just because she had the power of choice does not mean that her choice is irreproachable. Beyond his desire for her money, Bassanio's action with the ring, later in the play, shows that he perhaps places too much importance on the interior, on what is signified, and not enough on the sign itself.

For the moment, however, the caskets give Portia the advantage of Bassanio's wonder. When he chooses the correct casket, he has a recognition of how the artifice works and he expresses his wonder in standard fashion. He describes himself as "bereft of all words" and compares the blood in his veins to a "buzzing pleased multitude" whose sound is excited but inarticulate: "joy Expresse'd and not express'd" (3.2.175, 182-3). Ideally, this wondering awe should move Bassanio to be more loving toward Portia and make him more aware of the prize he has received, though, as later events in the play make clear, he still has more to learn.

Bassanio's further education is tied to the court scene. When Portia discovers how things stand between Bassanio and Antonio she sends her man, Balthazar, to her cousin "Doctor Bellario" evidently with a plan to help in the trial (3.4.50). Portia is the first player-dramatist to

[46] For comments to this effect, see Christian Smith, 44.

use a disguise, but she does not initially assume her disguise in order to stage a recognition for Bassanio, but for Shylock. Shylock is insistent upon his bond, to the point that he says

> If every ducat in six thousand ducats
> Were in six parts, and every part a ducat,
> I would not draw them. I would have my bond.
> (4.1.85-87)

Shylock is within his rights, according to justice: Antonio gave the bond and Shylock, making good on the legal bond, insists that he is "doing no wrong" (4.1.89). Indeed, even Portia admits that, in justice, the "strict court of Venice / Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant," and that is why she pleads so eloquently for mercy (4.1.204-5). Shylock demands the letter of the law. He will hear of no mitigation, and he delightedly calls Portia "a Daniel" when it seems that the young judge is going to side with him. Portia then leads him on, twice telling Antonio he must prepare his bosom for the knife, and twice saying that "the court awards it" (4.1.223, 300, 303). However, just when Shylock is set to take his pound of flesh, Portia surprises him with additional information. If, in cutting the flesh he sheds even "One drop of Christian blood," then Shylock is breaking the law (4.1.310). Portia has turned the tables on Shylock, becoming more faithful to the letter than even he could be, claiming that if he takes even "a hair" more or less than a simple pound of flesh, his life and goods are forfeit (4.1.331).

Shylock recognizes that he has been outdone in zeal for the letter of the law. He "pause[s]," and then he gives in; he asks for his "principal," that is, the money he lent Antonio, and tries to depart (4.1.335, 336). At this point, Bassanio is happy to pay him and send him on his way. It seems that all should be resolved: everyone has seen the folly of a too-great reliance on the letter of the law. However, Portia takes things further. She points out that Shylock has "contrived against the very life" of Antonio, and so is subject, under Venetian law, to having his

goods confiscated, half by the state and half by Antonio (4.1.360). His life, meanwhile, is the Duke's to dispose of. It is somewhat disconcerting that Portia, who just warned against a too-great focus on the letter of the law, now takes the law to its logical extreme. But it appears that she does this with an eye to teaching Shylock, by way of demonstration, the message of mercy he refused to hear in her direct instruction on that point. Certainly the Duke immediately uses this development opportunity to show Shylock "the difference of our [i.e., the Christian] spirit," and spares his life, and then Portia prods Antonio to be an example Christian by asking "What mercy can you render him, Antonio?" (4.1.368, 378). Antonio does, in one way, respond to this invitation. He asks that Shylock be allowed to keep half his goods, but he stipulates that these goods must be left to Jessica and Lorenzo. However, Antonio does not stop here: he also demands that Shylock "presently become a Christian" (4.1.387). This is unsettling. Demonstrating the Christian idea of mercy is one thing, forcing someone to embrace it by coercion is another. Shylock has come to recognize how Christians live, but it is not a particularly edifying picture. Like Adriana, Shylock has been manipulated against his will. He says he is "content," true, but this is undercut when he immediately adds that he is "not well" and must leave (4.1.394, 396). As a tool for teaching Shylock to consider more than simply the letter of the law, Portia's drama is undermined by its own method: she is theoretically teaching him about the spirit of the law, but then ends up enforcing his conversion – an external conformity – against his will, his interior spirit. She wins the case, but she does not win Shylock.

Portia's final drama is more unambiguously successful than her drama for Shylock. It is not clear that she originally had a recognition for Bassanio in mind, but it becomes clear that Portia must use *anagnorisis* because, after the marriage of the two principals (and the doubling

of that match in their servants), there is still the problem of Antonio's claim on Bassanio. The problem is not that of the bond to Shylock, but the bond between the two men. Portia disposes of the first without revealing her identity as the lawyer. But during the trial, when Bassanio says that he owes Antonio "most in money and in love," this is problematic (1.1.131). During the trial scene Bassanio gives a speech that is troubling for a romantic hero, and more so for his heroine:

> Antonio, I am married to a wife
> Which is as dear to me as life itself,
> But life itself, my wife, and all the world
> Are not with me esteemed above thy life.
> I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all
> Here to this devil, to deliver you.
>
> (4.1.282)

Gratiano's suggestion that he wishes his sainted wife were dead so that he could beg her heavenly prayer is likewise problematic. This is not the proper attitude of husbands, and their wives know it. At some point in these proceedings, Portia decides to use the ignorance created by her disguise to stage a recognition.

Since Bassanio and Gratiano do not know that the men to whom they gave their rings were really their wives, the disguise causes the ignorance that permits a recognition. Disguise is a method Shakespeare returns to again and again. While the women do not explicitly elaborate on their motivations either for participating in the trial or subjecting Bassanio and Gratiano to the recognition, it is clear that the wives want to address their husbands' misplaced priorities.[47]

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[47] Although my own reading is concerned with player-dramatists, it is common to read this play according to either feminist or queer theory. Karen Newman's "Portia's Ring: Unruly Women and Structures of Exchange in 'The Merchant of Venice'." (*Shakespeare Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (1987): 19-19) is a good example of the feminist approach to the play. Newman concerns herself with power structures, particularly. Likewise, Amy Greenstadt's. "The Kindest Cut: Circumcision and Queer Kinship in the Merchant of Venice." (*ELH* 80, no. 4 (2013): 945-980.) is a good example of a queer theory reading. My own reading is that the actions here are mostly predicated on the grounds of comic convention rather than on power structures: Bassanio simply needs to put Portia first to be a respectable romantic hero.

There is a real comic problem to be overcome: these husbands do not have the proper commitment to their wives. As Bertrand Evans says, "Like other heroines of the comedies, Portia and Nerissa teach their men a lesson by taking advantage of their unawareness."[48] The rings are an exterior sign, certainly, but that does not mean that they are unrelated to that which they signify. Portia and Nerissa, perhaps taking a cue from Portia's father, address the problem by means of a recognition ordeal, that of the rings. Any recognition using the means of tokens such as rings and letters will seem a little arbitrary, but what the women do here is very clever. Portia's father may not have been able to reveal his future son-in-law's character, but Portia herself sees to the formation, or reformation, of her husband's character. The recognition she stages at the end of the play is like Petruchio's for Kate in that it has several stages. First, just after the ordeal with the caskets, Portia gives Bassanio a ring, making it an emblem of her house, servants, and self. She then enjoins him that that he may not "part from, lose, or give away" the ring without communicating the "ruin of [his] love" (3.2.172-3). She has a chance to test how faithful Bassanio will be to this promise after she has saved Antonio from Shylock. Bassanio presses the lawyer, with some importunity, to take a remembrance from him. Portia, accordingly, asks for the ring. Bassanio is horrified and explains that he cannot give it up since his wife "made [him] vow that [he] should neither sell, nor give, nor lose it" (4.2.441-2). Portia feigns offense, insisting that Bassanio's wife must be "a mad woman" to attach so much importance to something so trifling (4.2.445). She does, however, leave without the ring and initially supposes that Bassanio can keep his promise in the face of tremendous pressure. This conviction is shaken

[48] Evans, Bertrand. *Shakespeare's Comedies*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960, 65.

when, in the next scene, Gratiano catches up with her and presents the ring after all. Nerissa plots to get a similar ring from Gratiano, and Portia lays out the plan for the drama they will stage:

> We shall have old swearing
> That they did give the rings away to men;
> But we'll outface them, and outswear them too.
> (4.2.15-17)

Nerissa is the one who initiates the final recognition, since it is she who first accuses Gratiano of giving away her ring to a woman. Of course, this whole episode is delightful to the theater audience because they know that Gratiano has, indeed, given his ring to a woman and the "judge's clerk" will, indeed, "ne'er wear a hair on 's face" because Nerissa was the judge's clerk (5.1.57-58). Portia begins the same routine on Bassanio, furious with him.

Portia and Nerissa do not simply look to change behavior in their audience; they actually draw their husbands into committing a fault. Each man had a sense that he should not give away his wife's ring and yet did so anyway. This shows both themselves and their wives that they are not as faithful to their word as they ought to be. The fault is a real fault. This same pattern will be repeated later by both Bertram and Angelo. In the case of Bassanio and Gratiano, their infidelity is significantly less serious than Bertram's supposed seduction of Diana or Angelo's of Isabella, but their means of deliverance is the same: their wives. When Portia and Nerissa produce the letter that proves that they were, in fact, the judge and the clerk, their husbands experience a profound recognition, both of what they have done wrong and of how the disguises of their wives have saved them; this is exactly what happens later with Bertram and Helena, Angelo and Isabella. Here, it is Antonio who responds, "I am dumb," indicating the overwhelming awe recognitions are calculated to produce (5.1.279).

Here again, the wives cause a recognition of character alongside a recognition of the artifice that precipitated it. Bassanio and Gratiano must imaginatively go back to the trial and see the fine young lawyer as Portia, and it is the sudden catching up of what they know now with what they thought they knew that causes the wonder. Both men have learned that they are not so faithful as they thought themselves. Upon a first trial, both failed to keep their word to their wives. However, the recognition that their wives have orchestrated this test for them likewise helps them to see that their wives have not only saved them from wrongdoing, but are exceptionally clever and resourceful. Since the men's final lines are about jumping into bed with their wives, it makes it clear that the ruse has worked, and the husbands have gotten their priorities in order. They know now that the external sign of the rings is tied to the internal love it signifies. The reformation of the two men is experienced as more satisfactory than the forced conversion of Shylock because of the balance of sign and signified that was lacking in his case.

Portia and Nerissa, in the case of their husbands, are the most unambiguously successful of the player-dramatists considered so far. The Abbess causes a recognition but not a reformation. Petruchio causes a reformation, but the recognition is uncertain. Friar Lawrence causes a recognition and a reformation, but in the process he inadvertently helps orchestrate a tragedy. Portia's father makes his daughter happy, but the impoverished son-in-law he gains is perhaps not the one he would have chosen himself. Portia, however, clearly rectifies the understanding of her husband; his own tendency to weakness is exposed, but she also saves him from his own weakness. Unlike Shylock's recognition, the recognition here does actually connect interior and exterior, sign and signified. The trial of the caskets was perhaps intended to

do this for Bassanio, but with questionable results. Here, it is clear that this embedded drama has both taught Bassanio about himself and made him deeply appreciate his wife.

Why did Portia's final drama not go the way of the Abbess's? It seems a similar case: the Abbess causes Adriana to exaggerate a fault; Portia causes Bassanio to commit a fault. Possibly the difference is in the fact that Adriana is led into confessing more shrewishness than she actually exhibits, whereas Bassanio is simply guilty, without exaggeration. Petruchio uses exaggeration, but he presents the exaggeration himself. Here it is likely that the love between Bassanio and Portia is a deciding factor in making this drama successful. Although Bassanio could resent being caught in his fault, as Adriana does, he loves his wife and that makes her easier to forgive.

Such love that can overlook embarrassment is an important part of the story of Benedick and Beatrice in *Much Ado about Nothing.* Although both characters are led into preposterous behavior, in the end they do not resent it because they are so pleased with the outcome of their mutual love. *Much Ado* offers a particularly wide range of success for its player-dramatists, and it also provides the first villainous player-dramatist, Don John. *Much Ado about Nothing* is awash in examples of metatheatrical activity.[49] Bertrand Evans points out that, beginning in the

[49] *Much Ado about Nothing* has long been known as a metatheatrical text, and the issue of performance is well-known in the criticism. Barbara Lewalski goes so far as to divide the play into four "masques": the party for Don Pedro's troops, the performances for Benedick and Beatrice, Margaret's window scene, and Hero's death (Lewalski, B.K. "Love, Appearance and Reality: Much Ado about Something." *SEL: Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 8 (2, 1968): 235-251). Richard Henze points out the large role deception has in the play, categorizing dramatic events in the plot as either "proper" or "wrong" deception (Richard Henze, "Deception in Much Ado about Nothing." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900 11* (2, Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama, 1971), 187). More recently, Jean E. Howard has said that, "At its center *Much Ado* seems to dramatize the social consequences of staging lies," (Howard, Jean E. *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England*. (London: Routledge, 1994),59) while Nova Myhill has done extensive study on spectatorship, i.e. "noting," within the play (See Nova Myhill, "Spectatorship

last act of *Merchant* and carrying over into this play, "Shakespeare leaves no room for doubt that his preference is for dramatic effects, comic and other, that are created by exploitation of discrepancies in awareness."[50] Indeed, this play both recapitulates the situations of the player-dramatists who have come before and looks forward to notable figures who will come later. In terms of player-dramatists of recognition, the play offers at least four: Don Pedro, Don John, Friar Francis, and Leonato, who stage plays for Benedick and Beatrice, the Prince and Claudio, and Claudio, respectively. The case of the dramas aimed at Claudio is particularly interesting as he is the first in-play audience to be specifically targeted by multiple dramatists. Claudio also demonstrates how human failings make audiences vulnerable to dramatists with bad intentions.

The Claudio/Hero plot is derived from Shakespeare's sources,[51] but it is Shakespeare's own Benedick and Beatrice who are the most memorable part of the play and who provide the matter for the first recognition scene. Don Pedro orchestrates the first staged recognition for them. His stated motive is to pass the time before Claudio and Hero's wedding (cf. 2.1.363-4), but his real purpose is to "bring Signior Benedick and the Lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection th' one with th' other" under his "direction" (2.1.365-7, 370).

If the Prince's motive is well known, nevertheless, the matter of this recognition is less so. It is tempting to say that Benedick and Beatrice do not realize that they love each other, and

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in/of "Much Ado about Nothing." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 39 (2, Tudor and Stuart Drama, 1999): 291-311).

[50] Evans, Bertrand. *Shakespeare's Comedies*, 68.

[51] See Barton's "Much Ado about Nothing" in in G. Blakemore Evans, ed., *The Riverside Shakespeare.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974, for a brief account of the sources. Bandello's novella *Tirante il Bianco* is generally thought to be the source of the Hero/Claudio plot, and C. T. Prouty (*The Sources of Much Ado About Nothing*, (New Haven, 1950)) asserts that the deception part of the plot comes from Ariosto or Spencer. See also Joaquim Anyó; *Tirante il Bianco* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Notes and Queries*, Volume 53, Issue 4, 1 December 2006, Pages 482–484, and "More on the Sources of *Much Ado About Nothing*," *Notes and Queries*, Volume 55, Issue 2, 1 June 2008, Pages 185–187.

that this ignorance is what the prince sets out to remedy with his recognition drama. However, a close reading of the play belies this idea, since it reveals a history between Benedick and Beatrice. After Leonato's masque, wherein Beatrice and Benedick mutually antagonize each other, Don Pedro rebukes Beatrice for having "lost the heart of Signior Benedick" (2.1.276-7). This implies that she, at one point, had his heart, which hints at a romantic past between them. Her enigmatic speech in response to Don Pedro's admonition confirms this view: "Indeed, my lord, he lent [his heart] me awhile and I gave him use for it, a double heart for his single one. Marry, once before he won it of me with false dice, therefore your Grace may well say I have lost it" (2.1.278-282). Critics argue that the couple's perpetual skirmishing reveals a profound affection between the two antagonists, however much they would rail to the contrary.[52] Richard Henze, while not denying the shared history, argues that Benedict and Beatrice have suppressed their feelings for one another and that "Don Pedro depends on Benedick's and Beatrice's self-deception" when he stages his drama.[53] On this reading, the move from ignorance or suppression of feelings to acknowledgement of them would constitute the matter of the recognition. But, given the history between the two lover-antagonists, Don Pedro cannot be said to cause a recognition of their love for each other. Benedick and Beatrice already know they love each other, they just refuse to admit it. The Prince's purpose must be to address and cure the problem

[52] Stephen Dobranski posits a complex pre-history of the pair involving Beatrice bearing and then losing Benedick's child. Dobranski himself admits that his claim is not provable, but he does help highlight Beatrice's marked interest in Benedick; her first line in the play is spoken to inquire of Benedick's safety, she thereafter says that she "know[s him] of old," and he is likewise the first topic she introduces into discussion just before the masque (Dobranski, Stephen "Children of the Mind: Miscarried Narratives in Much Ado about Nothing." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 38 (2, Tudor and Stuart Drama), 1998, 233-250).

[53] Henze, 189.

causing the “merry war” that blocks the love between the two (*Much Ado*, 1.1.62). This problem appears in Don Pedro’s treatment of it: pride.

Don Pedro’s recognition is of the showing kind, built on a preexisting ignorance, in this case, the ignorance of pride. It is accomplished in the first part by means of a play in two acts for the benefit of Benedick and Beatrice alone. The first act takes place just after Benedick has railed against love, bragging that “till [love] have made an oyster of me, he shall never make me such a fool” as Claudio (2.2.25-6). Already his pride is evident in his boast. Don Pedro’s method is, of course, the loud, staged discussion that paints a verbal picture of a Beatrice both sick with love for Benedick and embodying the ideals Benedick has just been speaking of as attractive in women. Whatever the state of Beatrice’s heart, the three men know full well that their story of her lovelorn actions is fictional. The fiction is not that Beatrice is in love with Benedick, but that she is tormented by this love. Don Pedro, upon being urged to tell Benedick of Beatrice’s love, accuses Benedick of having “a contemptible spirit” and admonishes him to “modestly examine himself, to see how much he is unworthy of so good a lady” (2.3.180-1, 2.2.207-9). Benedick’s problem, according to Don Pedro, is not so much that he does not know he loves Beatrice, but rather that he is too proud to show it.

Benedick’s reaction exhibits the wonder proper to a recognition, and the recognition that Benedick has of Beatrice’s love for him is like that of Adriana and Kate of their shrewishness; while he comes to know something that is true, he comes to know it via fictional means. Don Pedro does intend to deceive, but with the motivation of overcoming the pride blocking the two lovers from each other. And though he does not reveal his artifice right away, he allows it to be revealed in the end when it will advance his purpose. In this case, the Prince’s feigning creates a

particularly fine perspective for the audience in the theater since the comedy hinges on the paradox of pride causing humility. Don Pedro's drama is brilliant because he actually uses the pride of the lovers against them, as it were, even as Don John will use Claudio's jealousy against him.

At the end of Act 5, Benedick says his motivation for professing love for Beatrice was the fact that he was assured by the Prince, Claudio, and Leonato that "[she] was almost sick for [him]" (5.4.79-80). Hearing that Beatrice is suffering under her love for him, Benedick decides her love "must be requited" because it is pitiable and only he can ease her suffering (2.2.24). The speed of this decision is not surprising given preexisting romantic feelings; however, Benedick also begins to address the issue of his own pride. Benedick is willing to "hear how [he] is censur'd," and to decide, mere lines later, that he "must not seem proud," and "happy are they that hear their detractions, and can put them to mending" (2.2.224-30). Don Pedro's dramaturgy is masterful: Benedick is drawn into playing a part himself, the part of the knight in shining armor, no less, one perfectly suited to his pride. This is somewhat similar to what the Abbess does to Adriana. Don Pedro's plan is to trap Benedick into playing a part, even as the Abbess traps Adriana into acting the shrew. That Don Pedro is successful can probably be attributed to the love that makes Benedick's eventual humiliation bearable. For the moment, by making Benedick suppose that he can act as a savior to Beatrice, who supposedly "weeps, sobs, beats her heart, tears her hair, prays, [and] curses" in her love for him (2.3.147-8), Don Pedro both plays to Benedick's pride and opens him to the possibility of humility. Benedick's preexisting love for Beatrice is able to assert itself once his pride is satisfied that she has humbled herself first (which, of course, the audience knows that she has not). Benedick is, at this point, proud to act

the part of humility. It is not until the later revelation of Don Pedro's artifice that he is truly humbled.

Don Pedro's second act, performed for Beatrice by Hero and Ursula, is equally effective. Hero's imagined Benedick is "like cover'd fire, / Consum[ing] away in sighs and wast[ing] inwardly" in his love for Beatrice (2.2.77-8). Yet Hero claims that "nature never fram'd a woman's heart of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice," and she pretends to think it best not to tell her cousin of Benedick's love (3.1.49-40). What the ladies say about Benedick is not literally true. Beatrice, like Benedick, is quick to see the faults in her own character, once she has been satisfied that he is "well-nigh dead" for love of her and that she must act "to save [his] life" (5.4.81-2, 96). She, too, steps into the role of condescending lover the Prince has marked out for her. "Contempt, farewell, and maiden pride, adieu!" she says almost immediately after Hero and Ursula leave, finishing with a resounding, "Benedick, love on, I will requite thee!" This significantly places his love, and consequent step down from his pride, before her own requital; the latter is the condition of the former (3.1.109-111). Clearly, as with Benedick, there is also some residual pride to be overcome in her case. Thus, although these events are promising in terms of Don Pedro's goal of overcoming the pride blocking Benedick and Beatrice's union, the ultimate achievement of this union is tied up both with revealing this artifice and with the other recognition dramas: that of Borachio and Don John, that of Friar Francis, and that of Leonato. The confluence of these recognitions is what ultimately ends the play and resolves Benedick and Beatrice's mutual pride.

Borachio and Don John's drama steps out of the realm of feigning and into that of outright lie. I have classed them as player-dramatists because, when their lie is revealed, they

become unwitting agents of recognition. The two men conspire to build a false conclusion, knowledge of Hero's infidelity, on the basis of false evidence, the window scene. Their intent is clearly to deceive. Up until now, all of the player-dramatists of recognition have had, if not success, at least laudable intentions. Don John has nothing of the kind. In fact, he explicitly tells the theater audience that he is "a plain-dealing villain" (1.2.32). Just as Don Pedro's drama succeeds because it plays on the pride of Benedick and Beatrice, so too is Borachio and Don John's play powerful with Claudio because of his jealousy. They know of his tendency toward jealousy because, during Leonato's masque for the troops, Claudio reveals it to them. In the course of just ten lines' conversation with Don John and Borachio, he becomes convinced that the Prince, his friend, "woos for himself" and has stolen Hero from him (2.1.174). Though the end of the scene resolves this, the ease with which Claudio takes Don John's bait is unsettling. In fact, Claudio's supposed loss of Hero in this scene, brought about by the deception of Don John, is a microcosm of the main plot line. Shakespeare's "play-within-a-play" commonly contains a miniature version of the larger plot, as in Hamlet, and that is true in this case as well: Hero appears to have been lost to Claudio, but in fact it was all a misunderstanding and the happy couple is reunited.

It is after this, when Don John is looking for "Any bar, any cross, any impediment" to the marriage of Claudio and Hero, that Borachio suggests he can provide Don John with what he wants, though "not honestly" (2.2.4, 9). When Don John accepts these false means to achieve his ultimate purpose of foiling the marriage, Borachio outlines the plan of his drama to be performed for the benefit of the Prince and Claudio.[54] He will arrange that his audience sees him "at

[54] This part of the story is likely derived from Canto V of Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, available to Shakespeare in Sir John Harrington's 1591 translation. See Barton, "Much Ado about Nothing."

[Hero's] chamber-window," speaking with Margaret, whom he will call Hero (2.2.42-3). Borachio says "that jealousy shall be call'd assurance" when Claudio and the Prince witness this scene (2.2.49).[55]

Borachio, like Don Pedro with the pride of Benedick and Beatrice, sees Claudio's jealousy as an opening for staging a successful drama. As Borachio plans this drama, "the poison" in it is for Don John "to temper" (2.2.21). Don John is the one who must go to Claudio and the Prince and prepare them for what they are about to see. This preparation is necessary because, unlike the recognition of Benedick and Beatrice which, though brought about by feigning, is fueled by their preexisting attachment, Don John, like Iago after him, invents a situation of ignorance and subsequent revelation using purely false means. He builds his drama upon the false premise that Hero is cheating on Claudio. The "truth" that Claudio and the Prince come to know is therefore simply a lie.

Perhaps because of the dubious character of this recognition, Don John spends extra time masterfully preparing his audience for what they are about to see. He will present them with an image, but he must make sure that they see it in the way he means them to. His method is devastatingly effective. Rather than telling Claudio outright about an impediment to his marriage, he speaks to his brother and allows Claudio to overhear. Even when speaking of the matter of his false *anagnorisis*, he merely says, "the lady is disloyal," without naming Hero (3.2.104). This indirect manner draws his audience into a heightened state of curiosity; by leaving information out or by leaving it vague, he increases their desire to know. This is exactly the method Iago will later use with Othello. Claudio wants to verify that they are speaking of

[55] There is a strong resemblance here to Iago. See Chapter 4.

Hero, to which Don John replies, not merely with an affirmation, but with a further vague accusation: “Even she – Leonato’s Hero, your Hero, every man’s Hero” (3.2.106-7). Don John’s indirections and narrative gaps leave a lot of space for imagination, and he already has a sense of the jealous direction Claudio’s imagination is likely to go. He further sets Claudio and the Prince up for accepting Borachio’s window scene as true by repeatedly invoking the sign of sight, which he intends to use. He tells them to “wonder not till further warrant,” that is, not to take his word for it, but rather to go with him and “see [Hero’s] chamber window ent’red even the night before her wedding day” (3.2.111-114). Don John makes it a point of honor for the Prince and Claudio to trust in sight: “If you dare not trust that you *see*, confess not that you know. If you will follow me, I will *show* you enough, and when you have *seen* more, and heard more, proceed accordingly” (3.2.119-122, emphasis added). Borachio was clearly right in thinking that Claudio’s jealousy would lead him to jump to conclusions: almost the moment Don John first begins speaking, Claudio says, “If there be any impediment, I pray you discover it” (2.2.93-4). His jealous nature makes him susceptible to all of Don John’s machinations.

Don John spends considerably more time preparing his audience than any other player-dramatist of recognition thus far. Part of this is because the visual sign he is about to show is relatively innocent. The fact that this scene is often staged to show a man entering Hero/Margaret’s window can make it hard to remember that the text gives no warrant for this. Certainly such a staging makes it easier for the theater audience to justify the explosive anger of Claudio and the Prince. However, this staging ignores Borachio’s later line that claims Margaret is “just and virtuous in any thing that [he] did know by her” (5.1.302-3). Like Don John’s intimations to Claudio, this scene is left open to the viewers’ imagination. Borachio is the first to

detail the event in 3.3 and he says that Margaret "leans me out at her mistress' chamber-window, bids me a thousand times good night" (3.3.146-7). Note that he does not mention entering the window. The next person to talk about the scene is Don Pedro. After Claudio has asked Hero what man was at her window, the Prince confirms that he and Claudio "did see her, hear her, at that hour last night talk with a ruffian at her chamber-window" (4.1.90-1). What the men actually saw, according to their own words, was a woman they supposed was Hero speaking from her chamber window; while this is perhaps strange, it is not necessarily scandalous in itself. Don John knew that his sign was lacking in strength, and hence he prepared carefully before showing it. The men did, indeed, see the sign, and Don John's liberal stirring of Claudio's jealousy causes them to take it in just the way Don John wishes.[56] The terrible and public denunciation of Hero is just the sort of discord Don John wanted to cause. Up to this point, his false recognition has been successful and, indeed, would remain so if it were not for subsequent events.

A couple of notable effects follow from the denunciation. The first is that, structurally, the denunciation provides Benedick and Beatrice with a chance both to confess their love to each other and test the strength of it. When Benedick stays to comfort the weeping Beatrice, he is drawn into a confession of his love for her and she reciprocates. The Prince's goal of building a mountain of affection has been realized, but it will take the later recognition of the artifice to fully resolve the problem of their mutual pride, since it is only in that light that the two manage to confess their love in public. However, this love is immediately put to the test when Benedick asks his lady for a task and she says, "Kill Claudio" (4.1.289). The relationship almost does not survive this test, but Benedick is eventually willing to put his ladylove before his friendship and

[56] Borachio adds false testimony to this, but it is clear that the men were already disposed to believe the worst even before they heard from him.

agrees to challenge Claudio. He is already acting like a humbler man, different from the one who began the play with professed scorn of womankind.

The second effect is related primarily to the theater audience; those watching witness the success of a recognition they know is mistaken. This cannot but raise the idea that the intentions and purpose of the dramatist make a big difference in the ultimate effect of a drama. Indeed, since Don John built this whole episode on the lie of Hero's infidelity, the fact that his staged recognition is both successful and false implies that not all drama can be trusted. The theater audience is left to question, if not the morality of fiction itself, at least the morality of the intentions of those who stage it. True, it can have good effects, as witnessed by Don Pedro's drama, but when Don John can manipulate his audience to the extent that Claudio spectacularly denounces Hero on her wedding day, causing her to faint in horror, the theater audience might well wonder if Gosson is right to suppose that theatre must be "the doctrine and invention of the Deuill."[57] Don John, if not satanic, is at least a plausible representation of a medieval vice character.[58]

Shakespeare balances the selfish motives of Don John's drama with a further effect of that drama, yet another recognition scene. The drama staged by Friar Francis is much different in intent to Don John's. Francis sets out to have Hero recognized as innocent after he makes quite sure of that innocence through his own observation of the lady (cf 4.1.155-169). The Friar outlines his plan to Leonato just after Hero wakes from her faint:

> Your daughter here the [princes] left for dead,
> Let her awhile be secretly kept in,
> And publish it that she is dead indeed.

[57] Gosson, *Playes confuted in fiue actions*, 17/62.
[58] On the ability of the Vice character to maintain direct contact with the audience, see Barton [Righter], Anne. *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1962, especially pages 54-57.

> Maintain a mourning ostentation
> And on your family's old monument
> Hang mournful epitaphs, and do all rites
> That appertain unto a burial.
>
> (4.1.201-209)

What Francis is doing, like Lawrence and even Don John before him, is creating a fiction: Hero's death. His plan is that, when Claudio recognizes that Hero has died upon his accusation,

> Th' idea of her life shall sweetly creep
> Into his study of imagination,
> And every lovely organ of her life
> Shall come apparelle'd in more precious habit,
> More moving delicate, and full of life,
> Into the eye and prospect of his soul,
> Than when she liv'd indeed. Then shall he mourn,
> If ever love had interest in his liver,
> And wish he had not so accused her;
> No, though he thought his accusation true.
>
> (4.1.223-33)

Friar Francis is not trying to treat Claudio's jealously directly, but rather trying to work around it. He is not supposing that Hero's fictional death will disabuse Claudio of the ideas formed by his jealousy, but rather the friar hopes that it will overpower this jealousy and cause Claudio to repent of it.[59] Michael Mack points out that, in the passage above, Friar Francis suggests that the Hero who exists in Claudio's mind is "not just Hero as [he] had last seen her" but, rather, an image of her "*whole* life," so that the resulting "general image has a vividness, an *enargia*, more lively than the living image."[60] Friar Francis sees that Hero might be more effective as an idea, or ideal, than as a living woman, and so he acts accordingly. Hero must "die to live" (4.1.253). Francis is not yet discussing a plan to reveal that Hero is actually alive. Instead, he hopes that

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[59] But his plan is contingent on an *if*: "*If* ever love had interest" in him. Friar Francis knows the rhetorical power of drama, but he also knows that it does not create e*x nihilo*; there has to have been a preexisting quality of love in Claudio if this drama is to be effective.

[60] Michael Mack, *Sidney's Poetics.* Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005, 59. Emphasis original.

when Claudio hears that Hero "died upon his words," this recognition of his part in her death will create an image of an idealized Hero (4.1.223). It is this idealized, indeed, fictional Hero who is the purpose of this recognition. The recognition itself is Claudio's recognition of his own agency in Hero's death, but Friar Francis is counting on the wonder characteristically produced by *anagnorisis* to produce an idealized image of Hero. Interestingly, Francis's design stops here. He does not plan what to do next because he is unsure how things will turn out. This is the only step he can see at present, and after that he supposes that

> success
> Will fashion the event in better shape
> Than [he] can lay down in all likelihood.
> (4.1.234-6)

Presumably, Francis has some sort of dramatic revelation of a living Hero in view, but he does not mention it at this point.

Shakespeare neatly balances the suspicion planted in the theater audience by Don John's villainous actions by having Friar Francis do exactly the same thing that Don John does. Each man uses a fiction to create a fiction, but each does it for a much different end. Don John presents the window scene in order to build his false case that Hero is guilty of profligacy. Friar Francis presents Hero's death so that Claudio's recognition of his helping to kill Hero will create an overpowering image of Hero's goodness. Francis clearly means to use this first recognition of Claudio's to begin a second one that will reveal the artifice and bring definitive healing to the situation. Don John, on the other hand, means not to reveal his artifice and, in fact, pays Borachio to keep it quiet. Francis means to feign, Don John to lie.

Like Friar Lawrence before him, Francis's drama does not come off exactly as he planned. There is almost no time for Friar Francis's design to develop before Hero is cleared

from guilt by Dogberry and the guards. Prior to Borachio's confession, there was no indication that Claudio experienced the kind of imagining Francis hoped he would, but it was also less than 200 lines of stage time. Once Claudio learns that Hero is innocent, however, and that he has consequently accused her falsely, he mourns with just the wonder Francis predicted, if not quite at the same moment he predicted it: "Sweet Hero," says the repentant Claudio, "now thy image doth appear in the rare semblance that I lov'd it first" (5.1.252-2). Claudio's use of the word "image" hearkens back to the Friar's mention of the "eye and prospect of his soul" (4.1.229). This reformation of Claudio having been accomplished, that is, his repentance of accusing Hero falsely, Francis's purpose has been effected, but it was the recognition of Don John's artifice that caused this change in Claudio. Friar Francis was merely trying to circumvent Claudio's jealousy, but the humiliation of finding that he had accused Hero falsely reveals to Claudio the horror of what he has done in a much more effective way than Francis anticipated.

The play affords one last recognition scene, this one built on Hero's false death as Francis evidently envisioned, but apparently planned and executed by Leonato.[61] What Leonato plans is a recognition that Hero is, in fact, alive, but he adds a level of artifice to the recognition that Hero's false death creates. He claims that his

> brother hath a daughter,
> Almost the copy of [his] child that's dead

and that he wants Claudio to marry her (5.1.288-89). When Hero is eventually unveiled, Claudio will recognize both that Leonato's claim about his niece was a ruse and that Hero has in fact been alive the whole time. The wedding to the non-existent niece is the fiction Leonato uses to help reveal the fiction of Hero's death in the most dramatic way. Indeed, at the actual unmasking

[61] Indeed, there is some confusion over whether this is planned by Francis or Leonato; Leonato is the one who lays out all of the pieces, but Francis is the one who says he can "qualify" all of the amazement.

Claudio is so overcome that all he can manage to say is “Another Hero!” (*Much Ado*, 5.4.62). Leonato never says exactly what end he had in view, but it seems to have been a new start for the young couple; indeed, Hero herself says at the moment of her unveiling,

> when I lived I was [Claudio’s] other wife,
> And when [he] loved, [he] was my other husband

indicating a kind of new beginning of their relationship (5.4.61-2). The principal effect of the drama is revealed in this line. The old relationship, the one including a jealous Claudio, has died, but a new one has come. Now that Claudio knows what it is to be mistaken, he will perhaps, like Bassanio, think twice before acting hastily in the future. This whole episode has given Claudio the experience of what jealousy could do to him, how it could destroy his life, without actually having to have his life destroyed. He gets the same kind of vicarious experience that fiction is able to give to the theater audience, or to those reading a story, taking in all of the effects imaginatively.

There is one loose end that Shakespeare ties up at this point: the pride of Benedick and Beatrice. When Benedick asks Leonato for Beatrice’s hand, he is told that his conviction that Leonato’s “niece regards [Benedick] with an eye of favor” was a truth “the sight whereof” he

> had from [Leonato],
> From Claudio, and the Prince.
>
> (5.4.22, 24-26)

Benedick pauses to think this answer “enigmatical” but does not fully put the pieces together until he and Beatrice are called on to profess their love publicly. They have already confessed their love in private, but when it comes to a public proclamation, they are both reticent. Neither wants to be the first to admit defeat. When it comes to it, both refuse to acknowledge their own love, referring rather in what they have overheard about the other’s love via Don Pedro’s

embedded drama. They both protest that the actors they saw must have been "deceived" (5.4.76, 78). The truth of the artifice is beginning to dawn on both. It seems that this pride almost gets the better of them except that Hero and Claudio intervene and produce the love notes. Since they are simultaneously provided with mutual physical evidence of their love, their "own hands against [their] hearts," Benedick and Beatrice are able to submit to one another in love, not merely in private, but also publicly, at last (5.4.91-92). Their mutual pride has been overcome. When Beatrice playfully says that she "yield[s] upon great persuasion" for she "was told that [Benedick was] in a consumption," it indicates that the two now-acknowledged lovers realize that they have been practiced upon (5.4.95-6). Although they do not yet know that Don Pedro, specifically, was their dramatist, they do recognize that the whole situation is contrived. It is this that finally helps them acknowledge their love in public; they both realize that they have already been caught and that resistance is futile.

Although the standard comic ending would be for the cast to welcome Don John back into the fold and have him join in the common happy ending, this play significantly cuts Don John out. It does not show him being punished, but the fact that they will "devise…brave punishments" for him "to-morrow" is slightly disconcerting in terms of comic convention (5.4.128, 127). However, in contrast to the later exit of Malvolio, which sits less easily with an attentive theater audience, Don John's villainy was such that the theater audience does feel the justice of this ending. Liars should not get happy endings, even if their lie serves, as Don John's unwittingly does, some good end. There is no indication that Claudio could have overcome his jealousy without Don John's drama, though it needed Friar Francis's fiction to help bring about a

happy ending. Still, if the difference between feigning and lying needs underlining, Don John's being cut off from the comic resolution provides just such an underline.

Part of the difference between what Don John does and what the others do is a matter of intention; where the others wanted to reform, Don John wanted to destroy. It is accordingly tempting to distinguish liars from feigners by the morality of their purposes, but this is a too-easy distinction that Shakespeare's player-dramatists resist. The greatest difference between Don John and the other early player-dramatists has to do with a structural distinction between feigning and lying, not a moral one. A lie, by its very nature something false trying to pass itself off as true, cannot reveal its own artifice if it is to remain effective. Once it is revealed as false it loses its power to influence, as it did for Claudio. When he learned the truth about Hero's innocence from Dogberry and the watch, Don John's lie utterly lost its power over him. It is the feigned death of Hero orchestrated by Friar Francis that opens his way to repentance. This makes it clear that feigning operates differently than lying. Not only is it possible that the revelation of feigning as such not destroy the dramatic purpose, such a revelation often advances this purpose. For instance, when Benedick and Beatrice hesitate to proclaim openly what they have acknowledged in private, a recognition that they have been tricked actually serves Don Pedro's original purpose of humbling the too-proud lovers. In this case, the revelation of the artifice does not undermine the end, as it does with a Don John's lie, but rather serves to help accomplish it. The recognition of the artifice, then, provides the most striking distinction between feigning and lying. In *Much Ado* Shakespeare demonstrates that while the recognition of the artifice destroys the power of a lie, both a standard recognition and a recognition of the artifice causing the recognition can serve rhetorical ends, at least where behavioral changes are in question.

In the five plays I have considered so far, there is a fairly consistent pattern of recognition scenes being used for didactic purposes. These purposes seem to get more complex and nuanced over time, with *Comedy of Errors* being the simplest (one player-dramatist with one goal) and *Much Ado* the most complicated (many player-dramatists, sometimes with conflicting goals). All of the player-dramatists are alive to the fact that drama can be used to accomplish change in an audience. The Abbess to Adriana, Petruchio to Kate, Portia to Bassanio, Friar Lawrence to the feuding families, Don Pedro to Benedick and Beatrice: all of these dramatists use feigning with the behavioral goals in mind. Even Don John's villainy, though obviously an outright lie intended for malicious ends, is still aimed at behavioral results in Claudio. However, the fact that drama can be applied to behavior does not mean that it necessarily produces predictable results. Where the Abbess fails, Don Pedro succeeds: their method is much similar – causing their audience to exaggerate a fault – but Don Pedro is able to cause meaningful change in his audience and the Abbess is not. No one expected Petruchio to tame Katherine, and yet he does. Don John is manifestly using theater for a bad end, but his purpose is thwarted. Friar Lawrence is trying to use feigning for a good end and, though his purpose is accomplished, he is also responsible in some way for the deaths of Romeo and Juliet. In the hands of Shakespeare's player-dramatists, then, theater is sometimes effective and sometimes ineffective, sometimes in the service of good ends, sometimes in the service of bad ones.

Much Ado about Nothing is a significant step forward in Shakespeare's use of embedded dramas in part because it is willing to display the theatrical process as both helpful and potentially destructive. This dual potential of drama was somewhat clear in earlier plays: Portia's father means to help get the right match for his daughter, but he put his daughter in danger of

marrying a man she did not love. Petruchio corrected Kate's faulty behavior, but this might only be self-serving. However, in this play the range of situations to which drama can be applied is much more directly explored. Whatever the cause of the didactic focus for the embedded dramas of the earliest plays, by *Much Ado* Shakespeare has certainly shown theater used for good ends, but he is also willing to show that in the wrong hands theater can, in fact, be dangerous. Don Pedro uses drama to heal pride and Friar Francis uses it to heal jealousy, but these are presented operating alongside the villainous Don John, a man who has staged a drama that can unquestionably be called a lie and which was staged for self-confessedly vicious purposes. The player-dramatists of this play are not only more varied than their earlier counterparts, they are also more adept. Although the player-dramatists of this play are still primarily concerned with addressing (or increasing) moral faults, they manage to accomplish these ends in ways that do not come across as heavy-handed as the Abbess or Petruchio. They are more successful in producing their desired outcomes in their audiences partly because they are more attentive to their audiences than the earlier player-dramatists are. Don Pedro, for instance, acts to address pride in Benedick and Beatrice, and he succeeds because of a more thorough knowledge of his audience than the Abbess had of Adriana.

Ultimately, however, the success or failure of a drama cannot be attributable to the dramatist alone. Shakespeare's early plays make it clear that what the audience brings to a drama impacts how they receive it, as Benedick's pride influenced his ability to accept the part the Prince laid out for him. Claudio's case, however, shows that different dramatists can begin with the same character fault in their audience and achieve different ends: Don John uses Claudio's jealousy for ill, but Friar Francis's drama helps direct things so that the jealousy is healed. The

audience provides part of the material for the player-dramatist to work with, so any outcome of a drama is at least in some way tied to more than just the dramatists. What the audience brings into the play may, in fact, be a greater indicator of how a drama will impact them than anything the player-dramatist does.

Shakespeare's presentation of player-dramatists staging dramas shows his position distinct from that of either Gosson or Sidney. Like both men, Shakespeare knows that drama is a tool, but he has a more certain grasp of the range of things for which such a tool might be used. Shakespeare's early plays, although generally showcasing player-dramatists who use drama for good ends, also demonstrates that, because drama is produced and received by human beings with ever-changing motives, it cannot finally be reduced to fixed categories of good and bad, moral and immoral. The difference in the ends drama serves depends on many factors: the playwright, yes, but also the audience, and to some extent the actors. The next set of plays, *As You Like It*, *Hamlet*, *Twelfth Night*, and *All's Well that Ends Well*, continue to explore how the audience impacts a drama, but Shakespeare also begins to explore the consequences that arise when dramatists seek goals other than merely audience response to drama, raising further questions about what ends drama ought and ought not to be used to accomplish.

Chapter Three:

Self-Serving Dramatists in Four Middle Plays

One of the things that makes the various dramas in *Much Ado About Nothing* work is that all of the characters assume "eavesdropping offers unproblematic access to truth."[1] Claudio at the masque, Benedick and Beatrice, even Don Pedro and Claudio at the window scene: each of these characters presumes that "noting," that is, "to become aware of" by overhearing, is a legitimate avenue to real information.[2] Perhaps this is excusable in Benedick and Beatrice who, after all, rather want to be fooled, but one wonders why Don Pedro, who himself orchestrated the dramas that fool the two would-be lovers, is so thoroughly taken in by Don John's false window scene. It evidently does not occur to Don Pedro that the Hero he sees at the window might not be Hero, nor that Don John could be using the same technique he just employed himself. There is only once in this play when noting truly works the way the characters imagine it will: when the watch overhears Borachio boasting about what he has done to fool the Prince. What makes this case different is that Borachio did not know that he was being overheard. In every other case of noting in the play, those being overheard are conscious of their audience and performing to it: at the masque Don John pretends to be speaking to Benedick when he knows full well he is speaking to Claudio, Don Pedro situates his conversation about the love-sick Beatrice where he knows that Benedick will hear it. The noting never works as the characters who use it to seek information imagine it will because the audience of the embedded drama is unaware that they have become an audience and are watching a drama. The comedy, for the in-house audience, is

[1] Myhill, Nova. "Spectatorship in/of "Much Ado about Nothing." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 39 (2, Tudor and Stuart Drama, 1999): 291-311), 292.
[2] "note, v.2" 5b, *transitive*. "To become aware of; to notice or perceive mentally; to be struck by." OED Online. March 2020. Oxford University Press.

rooted in the dramatic irony that the in-play audience is unaware that it is an audience, unaware that they are watching a fiction. What Benedick and Beatrice, the Prince and Claudio take for truth is, in fact, a performance. The player-dramatist has hidden the artifice.

This hiding of an artifice is the fundamental thing that the player-dramatists of recognition all have in common. I have considered differences in the way in which the artifice is concealed and revealed, but the purpose the player-dramatist has in mind is also formative on the way the drama plays out. Generally speaking, in the early plays considered in the previous chapter each player-dramatist took up drama in order to produce a specific effect in the audience. This effect usually relates to some kind of behavioral goal: the Abbess changing Adriana's behavior, Petruchio changing Kate's, Friar Lawrence changing the feuding families. In *Much Ado*, the player-dramatists are likewise well aware of their audiences and performing with goals related to behavior: the Prince to overcome the pride of Benedick and Beatrice, Friar Francis to treat the jealousy of Claudio, and Don John to increase the jealousy of Claudio. Although most of the motives were good, and the recognition of the artifice planned to help improve or correct behavior, the case of Don John is different. He has no intention of revealing his artifice and, in fact, it is only discovered by mistake. The distinction between what he does and what the other player-dramatists do is partly a matter of the distinction between feigning and lying, but it is also related to motive. Whereas the majority of early player-dramatists have benevolent motives rooted in their audience (which causes the didactic overtone of these dramas) Don John's ultimate motive is simply destruction, so although Claudio's jealousy serves "for [a] model to build mischief on," his real motive is not related to Claudio but to himself (*Much Ado*, 1.3.46-7).

Shakespeare begins to explore player-dramatists who use drama for selfish ends in *Taming of the Shrew* with Petruchio's wager. Although it may still be part of the project to reform Katherine, the wager is primarily aimed at a pecuniary advantage. True, Petruchio is able to teach the other men, in a way, and he also wins the wager because he had brought about a behavioral change in Kate. However, Petruchio's main goal in this case is not rooted in changing his audience but in filling his pockets. Petruchio is not malicious in the way that Don John is, but the two men are alike in that they use performance to serve a selfish end. Shakespeare continues to experiment with this idea of self-serving drama in the next set of plays: *As You Like It*, *Hamlet*, *Twelfth Night*, and *All's Well that Ends Well*. While many of his early player-dramatists feign for more or less laudable purposes of moral reform, Shakespeare's middle plays explore what happens when player-dramatists use feigning for increasingly self-interested motives. Although the motives for which player-dramatists stage recognition in these plays still often includes moral reform, other motives arise as well and, increasingly, player-dramatists have motives for staging drama rooted in themselves rather than in their audiences. Rosalind, Hamlet, Polonius, Maria, Feste, even Helena: all of these player-dramatists use drama as a means to very specific, personal ends. Occasionally these ends are good, but more often they are indifferent, and sometimes they are outright destructive. But even when the end is a laudable one, in this set of plays Shakespeare repeatedly demonstrates that when the audience of a drama becomes a means to an end rather than an end in itself, the results are often problematic in some way.

Integral to Shakespeare's exploration of the dramatists who use drama for selfish ends is the cases of the those player-dramatists who achieve their ends not simply with performance for an audience, but who draw other characters into acting, unwittingly, in embedded dramas. The

Abbess did this to Adriana and it is part of why her drama is ineffective; Adriana takes offense at having been made to look foolish. The habitual method the player-dramatists use for drawing others into performance, however, is not the exaggeration the Abbess uses. Rather, it is a particular kind of noting that makes the player-dramatist part of the observing audience by drawing some other character into performance. This is usually done by arranging things so that the character in question assumes that he or she is unobserved, or at least unobserved by the people they most want to impress. This method begins to come up in the middle plays, and develops into greater importance in the later plays.

A player-dramatists who exemplifies what it means to use drama for a personal end rather than one tied to her audience is Rosalind of *As You Like It*. Surprisingly, Rosalind was not a focus of criticism on the play until the twentieth century. Anna Brownell Jameson does provide one of the earliest commentaries on her character in 1879, calling her more feminine than Beatrice, but otherwise "united with equal wit and intellect" to her predecessor, although Jameson complains that "as a dramatic character, [Rosalind] is inferior in force" to Beatrice.[3] Jameson also claims that Rosalind is "much more nearly allied to Portia in temper and intellect," although the two women are "as distinct as the[ir] situations are dissimilar."[4] Later critics have noted that Rosalind is far more spectacularly showy than Portia, and twentieth-century critics, in particular, have explored the implications of what Hugh M. Richmond famously dubbed Rosalind's "kaleidoscopic identity" with no clearly defined gender.[5] Whereas Portia uses a ring

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[3] Jameson, Anna Brownell. *Shakespeare's Heroines: Characteristics of Women, Moral, Poetical, & Historical,* Philadelphia: H. Altemus Co, 1899, 62.
[4] Ibid, 64.
[5] Richmond, Hugh M. *Shakespeare's Sexual Comedy: A Mirror for Lovers.* Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971, 138. Also, for a thorough critique on the narrowness of focusing on power structures and patriarchy

and a letter to create recognition that she had previously been in disguise, Rosalind disappears as Ganymede and dramatically re-appears in her women's weeds for the first time since she has been in Arden. The play is much more centered on Rosalind than *Merchant* is on Portia, and her power over her situation is such that Evans claims she "moves well beyond Portia [and] towards Prospero" in her character type.[6] And Rosalind is undeniably likable. Even George Bernard Shaw, though he was famously dismissive of *As you Like It*, once commented that the role of "Rosalind is to the actress what Hamlet is to the actor – a part in which, reasonable presentability being granted, failure is hardly possible."[7] Her drama, as Shaw indirectly says, centers on her physical person much more than any preceding player-dramatist's. Unlike Portia, who takes up her disguise with a decided end in mind, Rosalind is driven to take up a disguise by circumstances outside of her control. Her circumstances make her, both figuratively and literally, a liminal figure, living on the edge of Arden forest and without a clear identity.[8] She initially takes up her disguise as Ganymede in order to keep herself and Celia safe from forest brigands when they have to fly into exile.[9] Rosalind says that, without the protection of a man, the two girls would be in "danger" since "Beauty provoketh thieves sooner than gold" (1.3.108, 110).

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in the play, see Louis Martin, "As She Liked It: Rosalind as Subject." *Pennsylvania English* 22, Georgia Perimeter College, 2000, 91-96.

[6] Evans, Bertrand. *Shakespeare's Comedies*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960, 97.

[7] Shaw was generally dismissive of Shakespeare, and he said of this play: "It was in 'As You Like It' that the sententious William first began to openly exploit the fondness of the British Public for sham moralizing and stage 'philosophy.'" Shaw, George Bernard, "Toujours Shakespeare" in his *Dramatic Opinions and Essays with an Apology, Vol. 2*, Brentano's, 1906, 116. Edwin Wilson, ed., *Shaw on Shakespeare* (New York: Applause Theater and Cinema Books, 2001), 30.

[8] For a discussion on the location of Rosalind's Arden home, see Heather Dubrow, *Fringe Benefits: Rosalind and the Purlieux of the Forest.* Oxford University Press, 2006.

[9] Julie Crawford presents an insightful discussion of the relationship between Rosalind and Celia, and particularly the way Celia's actions echo those of the Old Testament Ruth, in Crawford, Julie. "The Place of a Cousin in *As You Like It*." *Shakespeare Quarterly 69, no.* 2 (2018): 101-128.

There is no indication that Rosalind took up the disguise so that she could stage the dramatic recognition scene that ends the play. In this way she is like Portia. Portia initially takes up her disguise for one reason, helping Antonio, but after that end is accomplished, the situation with the rings motivates her to stage a recognition for Bassanio's benefit. Although it is easy to spot the moment when Portia decides to use her disguise as part of a recognition scene, it is harder to distinguish the precise moment Rosalind decides to do the same. In fact, at first such a scene seems out of the question. When Rosalind hears from Celia that Orlando is in the forest, her first instinct is to get rid of her "doublet and hose" right away; once she knows she has a man to protect her and Celia, she has no desire to appear to her beloved as anything other than herself (3.2.219-20).

However, Rosalind quickly changes her mind on this point. Celia is still in the middle of explaining that she has seen him when Orlando enters, and Rosalind decides to "[s]link by, and note him" (3.2.252). Then, after observing Orlando with Jaques, Rosalind hears Orlando admit that "Rosalind is [his] love's name" and suddenly decides to forego a change of clothes and instead use his ignorance as an opportunity to "play the knave" with Orlando and act as a "saucy lackey" (3.2.296). This decision will eventually necessitate a recognition scene, but Rosalind never says directly why she decides on such a course. Hugh Richmond argues that her disguise gives her power since, "As with Prospero's feigned tempest, Rosalind is able to stage-manage a storm of emotional entanglements, confident of her power to resolve them because she is sharply aware of their artificiality and arbitrariness."[10] This may be true by the end of the play, but at this moment there are several intelligible motives for Rosalind's deciding to stay in disguise. The

[10] Richmond, Hugh M. *Shakespeare's Sexual Comedy*, 143.

burden of her first conversation with Orlando is that he is “no true lover,” since he has none of the “marks” of those who are in love, so it is possible that Rosalind intends to use her disguise as Ganymede to find information about the state of Orlando’s heart (3.2.302, 369). She is suddenly in a position to know how Orlando really feels, and also how he speaks of her when she is not present. By speaking to Orlando about herself in the person of someone else, she creates a situation in which Orlando will assume he is unseen by Rosalind and, accordingly, give an honest opinion. In a similar vein, the ruse gives Rosalind means for discovering more about Orlando’s character generally. After all, she has hardly spoken to Orlando, but she can now investigate how he acts toward people with whom he is not in love.

The plan to “physic” Orlando’s love is another motive, though it is not what it appears (3.2.358). Rosalind/Ganymede implies that the physic is meant to cure Orlando’s love, but obviously Rosalind desires to increase his love, not decrease it. She may simply want to enjoy Orlando’s wooing without the pressure of feeling that she has to work to please him; she can enjoy his love without feeling that a false move may destroy it. Whatever her reason for the delay in unmasking herself, the only thing that is certain is that Rosalind eventually makes the decision, though it is impossible to know just at what point, to draw Orlando into a deliberately choreographed recognition scene. Her ends, insofar as they are discernable, are self-serving: presumably she intends to use the revelation that Ganymede is Rosalind to increase Orlando’s love, but she never says this. If this it true, then she has a behavioral goal for Orlando, but it is not didactic in any serious way; rather it is calculated for her own benefit. Of course, Shakespeare himself can play on the delightful ironies that this disguise creates, particularly in regards to Orlando. The in-house audience is aware of Rosalind’s true identity, but Orlando is

not; Evans goes so far as to claim that "Shakespeare treats Orlando abominably" by keeping him so much less aware than Rosalind.[11] Perhaps this is what makes Rosalind's spontaneity so delightful to watch: she is clearly improvising as her "holiday humor" directs, and Orlando is fully ignorant of what is going on (4.1.69).[12]

Much Ado about Nothing showcased three dramas to the same audience, Claudio, but Rosalind's final unmasking in *As You Like It* is one revelation addressed, not just to Orlando, but to three different in-play audiences: Orlando, Phebe, and the exiled Duke. The matter of the recognition, that Ganymede is Rosalind, is the same for each, and the recognition of the artifice (in this case Rosalind's Ganymede disguise) is simultaneous with the recognition that Ganymede and Rosalind are the same person. This knowledge, however, impacts each audience differently, as each is in a different relationship with Rosalind: Orlando supposes Ganymede is only a stand-in for Rosalind; Phebe is in love with a man who does not exist; the exiled Duke has no idea that his daughter is nearby.

In the case of Phebe, specifically, Rosalind proves that she is not merely a self-serving player-dramatist. She shows both concern for others and a zest for thinking on her feet when she and Celia are invited to see "a pageant truly played," that is, Silvius' wooing of the pitiless Phebe (3.4.53). Rosalind, who saw the love-sick Silvius in 2.4, is interested in using the spectacle of his wooing for a particular purpose: as food for her own love of Orlando because, she says, "The sight of lovers feedeth those in love" (3.4.53). This, again, is self-serving. However, Rosalind

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[11] Evans, *Shakespeare's Comedies*, 95.

[12] This sort of improvisation is suited to, and characteristic of, the "green world" of Arden. As C.L. Barber says, "The Forest of Arden, like the Wood outside Athens, is a region defined by an attitude of liberty from ordinary limitations, a festive place where the folly of romance can have its day." Barber, C.L. *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and Its Relation to Social Custom*,1959. Reprinted Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011, 253.

also declares that she will be a "busy actor" in the "play" of Phebe and Silvius and she makes good this promise (3.4.60). After overhearing Phebe declare that she "will not pity" Silvius until such time as she experiences unrequited love herself, Rosalind/Ganymede decides that the time has come to intervene (3.5.33). Rosalind evidently begins simply with pity for Silvius, whose lovelorn state recalls her own separation from Orlando. She sympathizes with Silvius's plight and wants to help him win Phebe. Rosalind's initial approach is direct instruction. She tries to make Phebe understand the gift of Silvius's love by asking Phebe about her lineage:

> Who might be your mother,
> That you insult, exult, and all at once,
> Over the wretched?
>
> (3.5.33, 35-37)

There are various ways to read the rest of this speech. Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde*, Shakespeare's source text, calls Phebe the "fairest Shepheardesse in all Arden,"[13] and as the embodiment of pastoral tradition inherited from Theocritus,[14] it would be fitting for her to be beautiful. Shakespeare's Rosalind, while conceding Phebe's "inky brows," "black silk hair," "bugle eyeballs,"[15] and "cheek of cream," also tells Phebe straight out: "you have no beauty" (3.5.46-7, 37).[16] Rosalind continues by saying she sees "no more in [Phebe] / Than without candle may go dark to bed" and calling her "nature's sale-work" (3.5. 38-39, 43). If Phebe can be

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[13] Lodge, Thomas. *Rosalynde.* (London: Thomas Orwin and John Busbie, 1590), *Early English Books Online*, 46.

[14] On this point, see P.V. Kreider, "Genial Literary Satire in the Forest of Arden," in *The Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, Vol. 10, No. 4, October, 1935.

[15] On the complimentary, though bovine, nature of this description, see Blythe, David-Everett. 1982. "Ox-eyed Phebe." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 33, no. 1: 101-102.

[16] Since the First Folio reads "you hau no beauty" and there is some speculation that "no" is a misprint for "mo". For an extended discussion of this debate, see *As you Like It: A New Variorum Edition*, ed. Horace Howard Furness (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1890), p 202-3. Furness himself is inclined to the "no" reading, but he also takes the compliments at face value and assumes that Rosalind is "damning [Phebe] with very faint praise."

assumed to be pretty, if not perfectly pastoral, Rosalind is exaggerating her imperfections, even as the Abbess did Adriana's, to try to get her to see how lucky she is to have the love of Silvius. If she actually has no beauty, then Rosalind is simply being literal. Either way, Rosalind is directly upbraiding Phebe, asking her to examine herself and to accept the gift of Silvius's love. There is, as yet, no way for Rosalind to do more.

The nature of Rosalind's interference in the Silvius/Phebe affair, however, changes to a more obvious recognition drama when Rosalind realizes that Phebe "means to tangle [her] eyes too" (3.5.44). Phebe has fallen in love with Ganymede and this suddenly gives Rosalind a means exactly suited to helping Silvius. Using the false premise of her masculinity, Ganymede has a chance to help Phebe recognize she is "not for all markets" (3.5.60). Phebe experiences real rejection in the context of a fictional relationship. This is similar to the way that Bassanio and Claudio really commit faults, but here it is not a question of a fault, simply of a real emotion. Rosalind evidently means to cause Phebe to have pity for Silvius by teaching the shepherdess something she does not know: what it is like to be thwarted in love. Rosalind could not give her this experience on her own, but Rosalind-as-Ganymede can. By goading Phebe on, playfully tossing out an invitation to Ganymede's house "at the tuft of olives here hard by," but also in the same breath telling her to "look on [Silvius] better" Rosalind brings Phebe into Silvius' experience as an unwanted lover (3.5.75,77). This drama ought, then, accomplish two related recognitions for Phebe: the first is that she is lucky to have the love of Silvius, and the second is that unrequited love is, indeed, pitiable.

The second of these happens immediately: Phebe leaves off her hatred of Silvius and endures his formerly hated company since he "canst talk of love so well" (3.5.94). She wants to

use Silvius in the same way Rosalind did, as food to her love. Though brief, Rosalind's treatment of Phebe opens the door to a recognition of what Silvius has been going through. However, this is insufficient for helping Silvius win Phebe, as the love letter Phebe immediately pens to Ganymede clearly shows. Rosalind will also have to teach her the wisdom of accepting a real man who loves her rather than a fictional one who does not. The only way of permanently correcting Phebe's misreading of the situation is to reveal the fiction under which she has been operating. As with a lie, once this artifice is revealed the fiction will have no more power over Phebe since there is no actual Ganymede. However, this recognition of the artifice (and all that it implies) actually achieves the goal of pairing off Phebe with Silvius, and in this is more akin to feigning. Whatever the category of artifice, though, it is clear that the situation cannot be fully resolved until the final unmasking of Rosalind at the end of the play.

The last person involved in this recognition is the least explained: Rosalind draws her father, Duke Senior, into her plan to "make all this matter even" (5.4.18). Insofar as the Duke is unaware, as is everyone but Celia/Aliena, that Ganymede is his daughter, this is perfectly sensible. It is less clear, however, that this recognition has much bearing on the story. Until 5.4.27, Duke Senior has made no mention of his daughter, and this mention comes only after Rosalind has gotten his promise to give her away to Orlando. True, Rosalind's first speech in the play is about her sadness for her "banishe'd father," but the ultimate decision to go into Arden to seek him upon exile was Celia's idea, not Rosalind's (1.2.5-6, 1.3.107). Even when Rosalind finally meets her father in the forest, she does not reveal herself but only teases him that her parentage is as good as his (cf 3.4.37). While this failure to reveal herself indicates a desire to have him participate in the final unmasking, it is not clear that any particular effect is predicated

for Duke Senior beyond acting as Rosalind's "commission" by giving her away to Orlando (*As You Like It*, 4.1.138). Even here, though, it is Orlando who promises to invite Duke Senior to the wedding of Oliver (*As You Like It*, 5.2.14). Rosalind appears to be too caught up in her love for Orlando to much bother about her father; she even asks Celia, "what talk we of fathers when there is such a man as Orlando?" (3.4.38-9).

What Duke Senior's presence at the final recognition does provide is closure to his part of the plot, something necessary to the in-house audience but not necessarily inherent to the play. Pleasing the in-house audience cannot be a goal of Rosalind's because, as a character in the play, she never acknowledges that they exist. It could be that information seeking is again Rosalind's motive here; her father has been gone for some time and she may wish, as she evidently does with Orlando, to verify what kind of man he really is by observing him without his knowledge. The Duke's presence makes sense, of course, since Rosalind needs her father at her wedding, but her motive for not letting him in on the secret of her identity beforehand is unknown, though it unquestionably adds to the spectacle and emotional force of the recognition to have an additional in-play audience.

The matter of Rosalind's recognition is clear enough: it is one of person, herself. She is kin to the Duke, spouse to Orlando, and female to Phebe, as she says herself:

> I'll have no father, if you be not he;
> I'll have no husband, if you be not he;
> Nor ne'er wed woman, if you be not she.
> (5.4.122-24)

The means of revelation is arguably the sign of her person, taken in by the twice-mentioned "truth in sight" (5.4.17, 19). It is more consistent with the criticism, however, here quite critical

indeed,[17] to categorize the means as contrived because of Hymen's speech and, indeed, Hymen's sudden presence in the play at all. Rosalind herself claims she is able to bring about this recognition because, like Prospero after her, she is "a magician" (5.2.71). Just before the recognition, though, Orlando explains to Duke Senior that Ganymede was "tutor'd in the rudiments of many desperate studies by his uncle, whom he reports to be a great magician" (5.4.29-31). Since it was actually her uncle, the usurping Duke, whose potency sent Rosalind into the woods in disguise, it is clear that the "magic" here is nothing other than the costume Rosalind has been forced to wear and not, as in Prospero's case, magic indeed. Still, the linking of the drama with magic begins at this point and will be more fully developed in *The Tempest*.

Between the literal *deus ex machina* of Hymen and the fact that the play ends before the theater audience sees any effects of Rosalind's recognition scene, it appears that the primary function of recognition in this play is more at the service of Shakespeare than Rosalind. The device simply draws disparate parts of the plot together. The recognition does create wonder in all three audiences, as indicated by the "if there be truth in sight" speeches of each of the audience members.[18] Each of them is forced by this moment of bisociation to reevaluate his or her knowledge of Ganymede. It is unclear exactly what use Rosalind would make of this wonder, except in the case of Phebe. In the end, Phebe ends up with Silvius after the admonition by Hymen that

> [she] to [Silvius'] love must accord
> Or have a woman to [her] lord.

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[17] To take a particularly vehement instance, Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch calls it "a piece of sheer botchwork" and claims that "Hymen in *As You Like It* is worse than Hecate in *Macbeth*." ("As You Like It" in *Shakespeare's Workmanship*, 1917. Reprint by T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., 1918, 133.)

[18] *Duke S:"* If there be truth in sight, you are my daughter.
Orl: If there be truth in sight, you are my Rosalind.
Phe: If sight and shape be true, / Why then, my love adieu!" *As You Like It*, 5.4.18-21

(5.4.133-4)

Because of the earlier intervention of Rosalind in the “play” of Phebe and Silvius it is clear that the other goal of Rosalind’s recognition for Phebe, informing her that she is not and cannot be desirable to Ganymede since there never was a Ganymede at all, is finally realized. In this case, it seems likely that Rosalind meant to use the wonder created by her recognition to move Phebe firmly in Silvius’s direction, which she does. Phebe has learned to love Silvius’s fidelity and says, “Thy faith my fancy to thee doth combine” (5.4.149).

In terms of dramatic goals for the other two audiences, one can only speculate. This seems to indicate that the drama was really more for Rosalind’s own enjoyment than for the sake of anything particular about her audience. She undoubtedly enjoys being the center of her recognition scene, but, barring the good she does to Silvius, she has no other obvious goals. It is more difficult to come up with a plausible conjecture as to what Rosalind might have been intending because the play ends almost immediately after the recognition. The possible rhetorical power of Rosalind’s unmasking on the characters in the play consequently has no time to develop. Whatever Rosalind’s purposes, Shakespeare is finished with the play after he ties all of the disparate elements of the plot together in the final scene.

A particularly striking feature about the end of *As You Like It* is that Rosalind’s unmasking, the apex to which much of the plot has been building, is utterly unrelated to the major problems that drive the plot. In the earlier plays, the recognition is always tied up with the major character developments. But here, though Shakespeare ties up all the loose ends of the plot, he does not even deign to present these resolutions of difficult character problems on stage. Oliver’s conversion happens via the lion attack and is only reported. The usurping Duke is dealt

with after Hymen's performance, by the previously unmentioned (and often considered inartistic[19]) means of Jaques de Boys and his report of Duke Fredrick's offstage conversion. The two most important conversions in the play, then, those of Oliver and Duke Frederick, have nothing whatever to do with the recognition of Rosalind. They have nothing to do, in fact, with anything that happens on stage at all. Rosalind's recognition brings about some good for her and Orlando, and also for Silvius and Phebe, but the main moral situations are resolved without any reference to Rosalind's drama. Her drama, then, is relatively minor in terms of the real problems of the play. It serves a functional/structural purpose for Shakespeare: that of bringing the various strains of the plot together for the benefit of those watching in the theater, but in the play drama is not equal to solving major problems of a moral nature. Minor romantic problems of a personal nature can be treated by Rosalind's drama, but major moral reform is left to larger forces.

Rosalind's drama, or rather, her disguise, does help her to gain knowledge about Orlando's feelings and character. By approaching Orlando in disguise, she is able to watch him closely without his knowledge and so evaluate his character. Evans claims, accordingly, that "Rosalind is the brightest of Shakespeare's bright heroines, and Orlando is the least conscious of his unconscious heroes. The gap between them is that between omniscience and oblivion."[20] But this seems to be overstating the case. Rosalind did not plan to meet Orlando in Arden, it just happened. She certainly keeps Orlando ignorant of her disguise, but this was the only way she could see how he behaved in her absence. In this respect, critics like Richmond are right that Rosalind's disguise gives her the means to explore her relations to other people. His contention is

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[19] See for example Harold Jenkins, "As You Like It" *Shakespeare Survey* 8 (1955):40-51, esp. 42, for a his theory of the uncorrected error of composition that forgot to identify melancholy Jaques with Jaques de Boys.

[20] Evans, Bertrand. *Shakespeare's Comedies,* 92.

that "Rosalind's detachment from her identities is a magnificent school for self-awareness, as well as a unique pedagogic opportunity in her dealings with others."[21] However, the chief gain Rosalind gets from her disguise is related to Orlando above all: his ignorance of her presence is what gives her the means to explore his character. Once she is satisfied that all is as it should be in his regard, she gives up her costume freely. Her ruse is a small one that takes advantage of circumstances, not equal to causing major conversions, but at least suited to finding information.

This is true of the dramatists in *Hamlet* as well, but Rosalind's case is different since her situation of spying grows out of the disguise that she takes up to keep herself and her cousin safe. She initially has no intention of seeking Orlando; he simply shows up in Arden. She improvises a drama and uses her disguise as Ganymede to discover things, but she does not originally take up the disguise in order to do so. Although Rosalind chooses the moment for her recognition scene, she did not initially set out to stage one. The situation that put her in the woods in the first place - her usurping uncle - is something she knows is outside of her control.

Hamlet is in a situation somewhat similar to Rosalind's. He, too, has a usurping uncle and a father who has been sent away, though in this case not simply to Arden but to death. But the Denmark of *Hamlet* is also similar to Arden in that the denizens of Denmark use drama to seek information, even as Rosalind does. However, Hamlet and Polonius are much more intentional than Rosalind. When they set about using drama to acquire information, it is not in a spirit of improvisation built from a holiday humor. They deliberately stage their play with the intention of finding out information. But whereas Rosalind is content merely to investigate casually, the characters who seek information in *Hamlet* desire absolute certainty. They know exactly what

[21] Richmond, Hugh. *Shakespeare's Sexual Comedy*, 143.

they are doing and intend to act on the information they discover. Still, though Polonius and Hamlet seem to have their dramas more in hand, the very clarity of their motives makes their success much more ambiguous than Rosalind's. Rosalind's costume gives her the ability to improvise, but Hamlet and Polonius can only stick to a script that they have written ahead of time. This is because Rosalind is creating ignorance in her audience. She uses her disguise to learn information, yes, particularly about Orlando, but this was not the purpose of her disguise. The chief focus of her recognition is revealing her artifice so that the various audiences come to know that Ganymede was Rosalind the whole time. The recognition takes place in the audience. By contrast, both Polonius and Hamlet are chiefly addressing their own ignorance, that is, they hope to use their dramas to learn things about their audiences. They are using a method similar to Rosalind's, but in a much less effective way. Both men take care to observe characters in various situations, Polonius observing Hamlet and Hamlet Claudius, but unlike Rosalind, these observations are the focus of the recognition. The plays Polonius and Hamlet stage are supposed to cause recognition in the dramatists. Both men do want to create recognitions in their audiences, but these recognitions are not ends in their own sake, but for the purpose of seeking information. Both men assume that they will be able to see the recognitions they cause. Unlike Rosalind's drama, which only led incidentally to information, in *Hamlet* the whole purpose of the dramas is to gather information.

Hamlet himself is of course the main player-dramatist of this play.[22] Evans astutely points out that, unlike the other tragedies in which the highest level of awareness belongs to the villain, "*Hamlet* is Shakespeare's sole tragedy in which the highest level of awareness, next to our own,

[22] For one of the early discussions on Hamlet as a dramatist, see John F. Ross, "Hamlet: Dramatist" in *Five Studies in Literature*. University of California Press, 1940, 55-72.

is occupied by the hero."[23] James Calderwood, however, points out that it is not just Hamlet himself, but rather the whole play that is "theater-conscious":

> A touring stage company suddenly appears in Denmark, allusions are made to the child actors of Shakespeare's day, Polonius retails a catalogue of dramatic genres, a player auditions for Hamlet, Hamlet discourses on styles of acting, 'The Murder of Gonzago' is performed, and theatrical terms like 'act' and 'play' are endlessly explored.[24]

Speaking of this self-consciousness, and especially of the formal play-within-the-play, Hugh Richmond speaks in terms of emotional distancing. He assumes that "[b]y using such alienation effects [as plays-within-plays] Shakespeare must want a poised and thinking audience pleased by its intellectual and emotional superiority to the characters on the stage, not an agonizing empathetic one such as postulated by Aristotle."[25] Richmond may be right about Shakespeare's motivations, but in accordance with my chosen method in this dissertation, I want to concentrate on how Shakespeare dramatizes the motives and methods of the player-dramatists in *Hamlet* before speculating about his own motives and methods.

In a play so concerned with theater, it is not surprising that Hamlet is not the only player-dramatist. Lionel Abel goes so far as to claim that "[a]lmost every important character acts at some moment like a playwright, employing a playwright's consciousness of drama to impose a certain posture or attitude on another."[26] Certainly Polonius stages two recognition dramas

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[23] Evans, Bertrand. *Shakespeare's Tragic Practice.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1979, 78.
[24] Calderwood, James L. *To be and Not to be: Negation and Metadrama in Hamlet.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1983, 30. See also n. 26 for an extensive list of authors who treat of the metatheatricality of *Hamlet.*
[25] Richmond, Hugh M. *Shakespeare's Tragedies Reviewed: A Spectator's Role.* New York: Peter Lang, 2015, 75.
[26] Abel, Lionel. *Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form.* New York: Hill and Wang, 1963, 46. Abel elaborates later in a note: "In calling the important characters of *Hamlet* playwrights, am I relying on a metaphor? To an extent, yes. On the other hand, I claim that no other metaphor could throw an equal light on the play's movement. Suppose that we called Hamlet, the Ghost, Claudius, and Polonius "poets" and compared their rhetoric. This could be done, and might lead to some discovery. But not, I think, to any

before Hamlet's famous (and quite distinctive) Mousetrap. Indeed, Polonius serves as a kind of comic version of Hamlet in this play. What Hamlet does, Polonius does, but, lacking Hamlet's genius, Polonius accomplishes everything clumsily. Still, because Polonius provides a parallel to Hamlet, a study of the old man helps bring the younger one into clearer focus.

By the beginning of Act 2, Polonius has already given some long-winded advice to both Laertes, regarding his behavior at university in France, and Ophelia, regarding her behavior toward Hamlet.[27] His advice to Laertes, especially, has been the subject of constant comment, though little consensus. Dr. Samuel Johnson assumes the Lord Chamberlain is "declining into dotage,"[28] but G.L. Kittreage calls his advice "sound and sensible"[29] and Robert Berkelman concludes that his advice "is neither wholly ignoble nor wholly sensible; most of it, under closer inspection, turns out to be pretentiously windy."[30] Alan Fisher claims that this windy speech makes Polonius "a recognizable version of the kind of man that a humanist training was supposed to produce"[31] although, rounding out the critical opinions, Myron Taylor thinks Polonius a "Machiavellian villain."[32] Clearly, the character of Polonius defies easy

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important discover about the play as a whole. When I say that the important characters are "play-wrights" what I want to underscore is that each of them has the consciousness of a dramatist as well as that of a character," 49.

[27] For a discussion of Polonius and how his long speeches delay the plot in such a way as to foil Hamlet's own delay, see Cardullo, Robert J. "The delay of Polonius in Shakespeare's Hamlet." *Neophilologus* 96, no. 3, 2012: 487 – 495.

[28] Johnson, Samuel, 1709-1784 and Raleigh, Walter Alexander, Sir, 1861-1922. *Johnson on Shakespeare: Essays and Notes*. London: Oxford University Press, 1908, 190.

[29] Kittredge, George Lyman. "Introduction." *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark.* Boston: Ginn, 1939, 155.

[30] Berkelman, Robert G. 1943. "Polonius as an Adviser." *College English* 4, no. 6: 379-381, 381.

[31] Fisher, Alan. "Shakespeare's Last Humanist." *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme* 14, no. 1, 1990, 37-47. Fisher has an excellent discussion on both the critical commentary on this passage and on the practices of humanist education that make Polonius's way of speaking intelligible.

[32] Taylor, Myron. 1968. "Tragic Justice and the House of Polonius." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 8, no. 2: 273-281, 275. While Taylor's reading is interesting, especially as it interprets Polonius as a kind of dramatist, it pushes things a bit too far.

categorization.[33] Given these various constructions, it is remarkable that one thing almost everyone agrees upon is the fact that Polonius "fails to heed the advice he gives to his son,"[34] as when he imparts the precept "Give thy thoughts no tongue" and then proceeds to speak for twenty-two more lines (*Hamlet*, 1.3.59). Lloyd N. Jeffrey concludes his review of eighteenth and nineteenth-century criticism on this point, quoting Coleridge and Hazlitt, among others, by observing "Polonius' [sic] seemingly outrageous self-contradictoriness can thus be seen as a common human trait mercilessly objectified under dramatic pressure."[35] A possible way to understand the scope of these interpretations is to consider Polonius as an aspiring player-dramatist. This does not do away with all contention about his character, but it at least provides an intelligible interpretation of the disconnect between his words and actions.[36]

Hamlet draws attention to Polonius's history with the theater in 3.2 when he says, "My lord, you play'd once i' th' university, you say" (3.2.97-8). Polonius concedes that he "was accounted a good actor" and he "did enact Julius Caesar" (3.2.100-101, 103). Evidently this experience left Polonius with a taste for the dramatic; he makes two different attempts to stage recognitions in this play. The first is in 2.1 when he sends Reynaldo after Laertes to "make inquire of [Laertes'] behavior" (2.1.4). Perhaps this is not such an odd behavior for an anxious parent, especially one sending money to his son at college. However, Polonius does not stop at asking Reynaldo to make inquiry. Rather, he has a different "fetch of wit" planned (2.1.38).

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[33] See Sacks, Michael. "Conniving and bumbling, yet sometimes wise: an examination of the many facets of Polonius." *Shakespeare Newsletter* 60, no. 2, 2010, 55, for a particularly thorough and balanced discussion of Polonius's many facets.
[34] Ibid., 55.
[35] Jeffery, Lloyd N. "Polonius: A Study in Ironic Characterization." *CEA Critic* 33, no. 2, 1971. 3-7, 4.
[36] For a discussion on the parallels between Hamlet and Polonius in the indirect manner of seeking information, see Richard K. Parker. "Polonius' Indirections: A Controlling Idea in 'Hamlet'." *English Journal,* 1968: 339-344.

Faced with uncertainty about his son's real behavior, Polonius sets out to reveal a fact: the nature of his son's unsupervised conduct. His motive for doing this is slightly less clear, but the fact that he is sending Reynaldo to "Give [Laertes] this money and these notes" may mean that he wants some idea of how the money is spent, but this is only one of several possible motives (2.1.1). Lloyd Jeffery goes so far as to suggest prurient curiosity as a motivation for Polonius.[37] In any event, it is clear that the old man intends to use recognition to get the information that he wants. He gives detailed instructions to Reynaldo on using a "bait of falsehood" to catch a "carp of truth" (2.1.60). Reynaldo is to "put on" Laertes "forgeries" of his behavior; not so egregious as to "dishonor" him, but just

> such wanton, wild, and usual slips
> As are companions noted and most known
> To youth and liberty.
>
> (2.1.19-24)[38]

Polonius's idea is that those to whom Reynaldo is speaking will recognize Laertes in the report of mild profligacies. Then, because Reynaldo has established himself as someone who is already possessed of knowledge about Laertes's character, these people will drop more information than they otherwise would. This is clearly organized to produce recognition, but of what, exactly? The specific means of recognition Polonius outlines help make this clear. Polonius states that the audience of Reynaldo's drama will "close thus":

> I know the gentleman
> I saw him yesterday, or th' other day,
> Or then, or then, with such or such, and as you say,

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[37] Jeffery elaborates on this, though it is still only theorizing: "his sending Reynaldo to spy upon Laertes might be prompted less by a concern for his son's moral character, or even by discretionary considerations, than by a kind of sniggering curiosity about the peccadilloes of full-blooded youth. There is more than a slight temptation to see Polonius as a superannuated (or frustrated) playboy whose libertinism must perforce be circumspectly vicarious." (7)

[38] With Jeffery, one wonders just exactly what Polonius was like in college himself.

> There was ‘s gaming, there o’ertook in ‘s rouse,
> There falling out at tennis’ or, perchance,
> I saw him enter such a house of sale.
> (2.1.53-58)

The important thing to note about Polonius’s prediction is that all of the things he imagines Reynaldo’s in-play audience saying happened in the past tense, either “yesterday, or th’ other day.” He is clearly hoping that Reynaldo’s false statements will jog the memories of his audience and bring out the truth. Recognition by memory contains the moment of wonder within itself; the bisociation happens when the men listening to Reynaldo put together the Laertes of whom Reynaldo is speaking and the Laertes with whom they are already familiar. Reynaldo is to hide his artifice at first, but after he gets the information he is seeking, revealing the trick would not impact his outcome: he would still know the information he has ferreted out. He does not plan to use the recognition of the artifice to further his end; the fact that revealing it would leave the outcome unchanged suggests that this is still a type of feigning rather than lying.

This means of inquiring after one’s children is odd to say the least, but since Polonius is dead before Reynaldo is able to return with his report, there is no way of knowing if these “indirections [found] directions out” (2.1.63). What is certain is that Polonius is using recognition to discover information, and that for no easily intelligible motive beyond curiosity. Rosalind may have no particular motive in regard to keeping her identity from the Duke, but the circumstance that put her in disguise, at least, is outside of her control. What Polonius does here is different. Though Polonius, too, is acting from an unknown motive, the circumstances that set the recognition up are thoroughly under his control: he has literally hired someone to spy on his

son.[39] It is also different because information is the end of Polonius's action, whereas the information Rosalind learns happens on the way to her end. Polonius is actually getting his information as a result of a recognition, but though Rosalind gets information through being in disguise, this happens as part of the means that create the recognition at the end of her play. It is easy to excuse Rosalind because of her peculiar circumstances, but Polonius's too-great curiosity is a bit harder to forgive: perhaps this is part of what causes the wildly different views of his character discussed above.

Polonius's role in the second recognition in which he is involved is even more direct than the first; where before he employed an intermediary, now he directs himself. Polonius plans this drama in 2.2 when he is discussing the cause of Hamlet's madness with Claudius and the Queen. Convinced that it is the love of Ophelia that has driven Hamlet mad, he tells the King that "at such a time" when Hamlet is walking in the lobby, he will "loose [his] daughter to" Hamlet, while he and the kind "mark the encounter" from "behind an arras" (2.2.162, 164, 163). This plan eventually comes to fruition in 3.1 when Polonius arranges Ophelia's position and reading matter in a "show" designed to reveal Hamlet's feelings for Ophelia (3.1.44).[40] This is clearly a scene in which Polonius and Claudius are seeking information, trying to make certain of what has driven Hamlet mad. Ophelia's presence is to be the means, and Hamlet's behavior is supposed to inform the watching Claudius and Polonius about the prince's feelings. Their plan is simple. The King says he and Polonius will

> so bestow ourselves that, seeing unseen,
> We may of their encounter frankly judge
> And gather by [Hamlet], as he is behaved,

[39] See Myron Taylor "Tragic Justice and the House of Polonius" for a discussion of Polonius as a spy.
[40] See Ibid., 275-6 for a discussion of Polonius as belonging to a class of villainous player-dramatists including Iago and Edmund.

> If 't be th' affliction of his love or no
> That thus he suffers for.
>
> (3.1.32-36)

The recognition they seek is clearly for Claudius and Polonius and not for Hamlet. Like the characters in *Much Ado*, the two men assume that "seeing unseen" is a legitimate avenue to truth. Their idea hinges on the fact that Hamlet does not know that he is being watched; accordingly, they should be able to get at his true feelings. Thus far, in regards to this cause of Hamlet's madness, Polonius has been "mistaking vague hints for concrete evidence," that Hamlet loves Ophelia.[41] But, after watching the interaction between the young people, which includes some of Hamlet's most well-know speeches, Claudius is unconvinced:

> Love? His affections do not that way tend;
> Nor what he spake, though it lacked for a little,
> Was not like madness. There's something in his soul
> O'er which his melancholy sits on brood.
>
> (3.1.162-165)

Polonius, however, persists in believing that

> the origin and commencement of [Hamlet's] grief
> Sprung from neglected love.
>
> (3.1.177-178)

This drama, then, does not fulfill the purpose for which it was staged because it does not clarify anything about Hamlet. Polonius sees confirmation of his opinion in the little scene between the two young people, but Claudius remains uncertain. As the two men do not gain the information that they seek, even though Polonius thinks he does, there is no recognition in this case. The problem is that Hamlet may have known that this was all a set up, and this makes his response hard to read, even for the people in the theater audience. As with Hamlet's play for "catch[ing]

[41] Sacks, 56

the conscience of the king," the results of this drama are unhelpful to the dramatists seeking information (2.2.605).

When Hamlet sets out to stage his "Mouse-trap," he is in a situation of doubt, as Polonius and Claudius are doubtful about Hamlet's state of mind (3.2.237). The difference is important, however. While the King and Polonius are seeking information in order to deal with the situation in front of them, Hamlet is driven to seek information by his encounter with the ghost. He does not know if the ghost can be trusted or not, which means he does not know if his uncle is guilty or not, which in turn means he does not know if he should bring his uncle to justice or not. The ghost's request for revenge is obviously a much more complicated problem than simple curiosity about a college-aged son or a young prince's affections.

The ghost is, in fact, something of a player-dramatist; like Portia's father; it shapes the course of the play even though already dead when the play begins.[42] Lionel Abel suggests that it is the very deadness of the ghost that gives the ghost his power, saying "[w]hat makes the Ghost a serious playwright is what has happened to him. He has the force of death and hell behind his stage instructions."[43] Unlike Portia's father, though, it intervenes directly and speaks from beyond the grave. Abel points out that the ghost's "revelation is couched in the most theatrical and stagey terms" and that he is "determined to impose on Hamlet a definite posture."[44] When Hamlet finally speaks to the ghost in 1.5, the ghost shows itself a master of moving people to

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[42] Calderwood briefly discusses the difficulties of the various imperatives the ghost gives Hamlet (*Negation and Metadrama in Hamlet*, 20), but he does not identify the ghost as a directorial presence, nor does Evans. Aside from Abel, much of the critical attention devoted to the ghost has been centered on questions of religion examining how Catholic or Protestant the presentation of the ghost is. For a summary of the first works of this kind, see Arthur P. Stabler, "King Hamlet's Ghost in Belleforest?" *PMLA* 77, no. 1 (1962): 18-20, and for a more recent take on the same question, Vladimir Brljak in "Notes on the Religious Element in Hamlet." *Notes and Queries* 64, no. 2 (2017): 274-278.
[43] Abel, *Metatheatre*, 47.
[44] Ibid., 46.

action. Rather in the manner of Don John to Claudio, the ghost describes not one of "the secrets of [its] prison house," but then obliquely describes the effects such a description would have if given (1.5.14). The ghost says:

> I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
> Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
> Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,
> They knotted and combinèd locks to part,
> And each particular hair to stand an end,
> Like quills upon the fearful porpentine.
>
> (1.5.15-20)

These indirections paint an "eternal blazon" much more horrifying than anything it might have said outright (1.5.21). It uses the same indirect method when asking for revenge. The ghost commands nothing regarding Claudius, but simply tells the story of the murder and seduction of the Queen. It then says:

> Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
> A couch for luxury and damned incest.
> But howsomever thou pursues this act,
> Taint not thy mind, nor let thy mind contrive
> Against thy mother aught.
>
> (1.5.73-86)

The only imperative here is about what Hamlet should *not* do, that is, revenge himself on his mother.[45] The "howsomever" leaves the details of the revenge up to Hamlet. The ghost's intentions are clearly destructive, but its only other imperative is "remember me" (1.5.91).

The ghost is clearly using memory rhetorically, and that to great effect, but this is not a case of recognition by memory. Polonius seeks to use memory to create recognition, but

[45] Vladimir Brljak has recently drawn attention to this passage, questioning the assertion of Robert West ("King Hamlet's Ambiguous Ghost." *PMLA* 70, no. 5 (1955): 1107-1117.) that the concern for Gertrude proves that the ghost is not demonic. Brljak draws attention to the fact "that this tactic—doing some good to do more evil—is commonly attributed to the devil and his minions" and he cites Banquo's lines about how "instruments of darkness tell us truths" (1.2.122) to prove that Shakespeare was aware of this trope (276).

Hamlet's memory of the ghost does not cause a recognition so much as it simply supplants everything else in Hamlet's mind. Hamlet vows that the memory of the ghost shall "wipe away all trivial fond records" from "the table of [his] memory" until the ghost's

> commandment all alone shall live
> Within the book and volume of my brain
> Unmix'd with baser matter.
>
> (1.5.99, 98, 102-4)

Whatever Reynaldo's indirections may have done, it is clear that the ghost's indirections have great rhetorical power. The memory of the ghost's conversation does indeed drive the rest of Hamlet's actions, but not because Hamlet has recognized anything. Indeed, the ghost's obvious desire for justice and yet lack of a specific request makes Hamlet's situation difficult. Further complicating things, Hamlet realizes that "The spirit that [he has] seen may be a dev'l" trying to damn him, and so he sees the need to test the ghost's account of the murder (2.2.598-9). Still, even when putting the ghost to the test, as it were, the ghost is obviously the main director. Abel postulates that Hamlet's treatment of the ghost in the scene in which the ghost howls from beneath the boards of the stage, is "the reaction…of a man with a playwright's consciousness who has just been told to be an actor, and is now determined to make an actor of the very playwright who has cast him for an undesired role."[46] Whatever the motive for Hamlet's treatment of the ghost, however, there is no doubt that Hamlet sets out to verify the ghost's story, and so his actions are more shaped by his encounter with the ghost than by anything else in the play.

The plan Hamlet eventually hatches for testing the ghost's story is to ask the company of players to stage something like the murder the ghost described. He chooses this method partly

[46] Abel, *Metatheatre*, 47.

because the presence of the players makes it convenient, but also because he is aware, especially after the performance of the player in 2.2, of the power drama has to "hold. . . a mirror up to nature" (3.2.21-2). Hamlet's plan, like Polonius's for getting information about Laertes, hinges on a recognition by memory: he hopes that when the King sees "something like the murder," he will "by the very cunning of the scene. . . [be] strook . . . to the soul," and, most importantly, in the end will have "proclaime'd [his] malefactions" (2.2.590). Hamlet is clearly hoping that the memory of the murder will cause Claudius to react in some indicative way.[47] This is similar to what Polonius asks Reynaldo to do, but there is a difference in the mode of their dramas since there is a difference in their audiences. Polonius's first fiction about his son is directed at producing recognition in people who have observed something of his son's behavior, not at Laertes himself. Hamlet, on the other hand, aims to cause a recognition, not in people close to the king, but in the king himself. And yet more: Hamlet hopes to recognize the king's recognition. Hamlet's drama is more successful than the one staged by Claudius and Polonius to try and determine the cause of his madness, but the success is not what Hamlet supposes or that the theater audience may be led to think.

When Hamlet first verbalizes his plan for inserting an image of the King's murder into *The Murder of Gonzago* (distinct from when he first conceives it, as he evidently does at 2.2.535), he is interested in eliciting some kind of verbal response; the murder should be "proclaime'd" and should "speak" (2.2.592-3). Hamlet's end-goal was, at that point, very similar

[47] For an excellent recent discussion of *A Warning for Fair Women*, the 1599 play performed by Shakespeare's company that features murders discovered by these means and which served as a source for Shakespeare see Ceri Sullivan, "Armin, Shakespeare, and Heywood on Dramatic Empathy." *Notes and Queries* 62, no. 4 (December 2015): 560–562. Also, Thomas Heywood's 1612 *An Apology for Actors* describes several instances of murderers who betrayed themselves after seeing crimes analogous to their own performed.

to that of Polonius and Claudius: he had a suspicion and wanted to test his hypothesis by receiving an audible confirmation of that suspicion. However, a few lines later, Hamlet says that a mere "blench" from the King will decide his "course" (2.2.597-8). It apparently does not occur to Hamlet that watching a play with discomfort is not as clearly indicative of guilt as a verbal confession. Hamlet is confused on this point and makes the same mistake when speaking to Horatio; he says he wants the king's guilt to "unkennel itself in . . . speech," but he does not advise that he and Horatio listen for anything spoken, but rather that they "rivet [their eyes] to his face" (3.2.81, 85). When the king rises and calls for a light, Hamlet uses this motion to "take the ghost's word for a thousand pounds," seemingly unconcerned that he has gotten no verbal confession (3.2.86-7).

The fact that Hamlet lacks a verbal confirmation of the king's guilt is particularly hard to remember since Hamlet's play, unlike that of Polonius and Claudius, does, in fact, cause the King to recognize his own guilt and does elicit a verbal confession in 3.3. Once Claudius knows that he is alone and unwatched, he even enumerates all of the reasons he murdered King Hamlet: "my crown, mine own ambition, and my queen" (3.3.55). This is exactly the sort of speech Hamlet was hoping to create when he set out to "catch the conscience of the King," but Hamlet himself does not hear it, likely because the reaction Hamlet observed was in the presence of the very people Claudius is trying to keep in ignorance of the murder (2.2.605). In the confession scene, by the time Hamlet enters at 3.3.72, Claudius is silent and appears to be in prayer. Hamlet, therefore, is basing his subsequent actions on the ambiguous response of the Claudius to *The*

Murder of Gonzago, but this is easy for the theater audience to forget.[48] In fact, the theater audience has already gotten a verbal confession from the king even before Hamlet's drama. In response to Polonius' remarks about how those in court are "oft to blame" for seeming different than they are, the king responds with an aside saying,

> O, tis too true!
> How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience!
> The harlot's cheek, beautied with plast'ring art,
> Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it
> Than is my deed to my most painted word.
> O heavy burden!
>
> (3.1.48-53)

Hamlet hears neither this nor the latter confession. All he knows for certain is that, while watching a play about regicide put on by the heir to the throne, the King became upset; a rather ambiguous circumstance to say the least. Hamlet never achieves his purpose because he never hears the King's verbal confessions. It is true that he has successfully brought Claudius to a greater recognition of his own guilt and, indeed, even to talk about reforming his own life. But Hamlet has not, for himself, proven whether the ghost can be trusted, since he still does not know if the image of his father's murder that he inserted into the play was accurate. All he has done is broadcast his suspicions in that regard to Claudius, making the king suspicious that Hamlet knows of the murder, though Hamlet only thinks he knows.

It is particularly interesting that, although Hamlet uses memory to cause recognition, his means are the inverse of most other player-dramatists. While Polonius wants Reynaldo to appear as natural as possible and so trick people into complying with an artifice, Hamlet is literally staging a play to seek information from Claudius. There is no question here about hiding the

[48] On the ambiguity of the King's response and Hamlet's "entirely unfounded" "confidence that he has confirmed the Ghost's representation" see Scott F. Crider. *With What Persuasion: An Essay on Shakespeare and the Ethics of Rhetoric*. Vol. 18; New York: Peter Lang, 2009. 30-31.

artifice. Hamlet is forthright about the fiction, but what he does artfully is to hide is a kernel of truth: he inserts into his play an image of the actual murder as reported by the ghost. Rather than being convinced that a fiction is real and later being surprised to have this fiction revealed as fiction, Claudius knows he is watching a fiction, but he is suddenly surprised to be confronted by reality. The play convinces Claudius that his actions are known, but Hamlet remains uncertain because it is the very truth of the situation of the murder he inserts into the play that is in doubt.

However, the recognition of self that Hamlet causes for Claudius is profound. Claudius sees not only the fact of his guilt, but what this guilt does to him as a person; his "limed soul…struggling to be free [is] more engaged" (3.3.68-69). The usurping King clearly sees the nature of his fault, but this is essentially an interior action and one very difficult for a third party to judge. Hamlet, at least, is not able to judge it with the certainty he thinks he has, even as Polonius is not able to judge rightly of his second embedded drama. Hamlet successfully shows the in-house audience, who hear Claudius' confession and musings on reforming his life, the great rhetorical power of *anagnorisis.* However, since Hamlet does not get the information he desires, he also reveals the limitations of having such a specific, information-oriented goal. Further, though Claudius recognizes his "bosom black as death," he nevertheless persists in his sin (3.3.67). Even the most powerful recognition, one with considerably more force and moral weight than Adriana's, for instance, does not guarantee any change in the behavior of those experiencing the recognition. Claudius does not reform but simply continues his plan to get rid of Hamlet, but now with the added motivation that he suspects Hamlet knows about the murder of his father.

Hamlet's desire to control things eventually brings him into conflict with Polonius's desire to do the same. When Polonius waits behind the arras, he knows that someone "should o'erhear" the speech between Hamlet and Gertrude, since "nature makes [mothers] partial" and Gertrude may not report it to the King if Hamlet has plans on the life of Claudius (3.4.32). He is again in a situation of noting. However, Polonius has no notion that he himself is partial, prepossessed of the opinion that Hamlet is mad because of love for Ophelia and unable to see Hamlet's anger at King Claudius. As with his advice about brevity, Polonius fails to judge his own actions as he judges those of others, and eventually this is what causes his downfall. Richard Parker points out that "The arras becomes a symbol of the barrier Polonius purposely places between himself and the scene he wishes to observe from a detached angle."[49] Polonius, like Friar Lawrence, is so caught up in his own dramatic purpose that he fails to remember that the drama is being played out by real people. Polonius is not directing a play performed by Hamlet and Gertrude, but listening to an actual argument. Similarly, Hamlet is so focused on his own unfolding drama with Claudius that he fails to consider that someone other than the King might be listening in. If Polonius has forgotten that the arras is permeable, Hamlet has forgotten that he is not controlling the drama; both men are so caught up in arranging things for themselves that they fail to imagine possibilities outside of their own script. When Hamlet stabs Polonius through the arras, he recognizes that the old man gets what he deserves:

> Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!
> I took thee for thy better. Take thy fortune.
> Thou find'st to be too busy is some danger.
> (3.4.31-33)

[49] Parker, 342.

Ironically, however, Hamlet does not recognize his similarity in situation to Polonius. He, too, is a bit "too busy" in his quest to verify the ghost's words.

Hamlet showcases the difficulties inherent in using drama's impact to get information from audiences. The various embedded dramas prove to be very powerful, but not especially informative. This is because the chief result of recognition is wonder, and wonder itself is, as explained in Chapter One, externally static. It may cause a further effect, and often does, but in itself it is a state of stasis. And, as Koestler suggests, the effects are wildly unpredictable, since "the same pair of matrices can produce comic, tragic, or intellectually challenging effects," depending on the disposition of the audience[50]. Trying to base a recognition on a recognition, as both Polonius and Hamlet do, is not a reliable way to seek information. Though recognitions are noetic events for those experiencing them, they are not necessarily informative to those watching them take place and are of limited usefulness for seeking absolute certainty, since each audience is different and might see the same material with different eyes.

Hamlet's resolution to his problem about whether the ghost is to be believed and revenge sought comes about without any help from him. For all his maneuverings, Hamlet is unable, of his own accord, to accomplish anything capable of putting the ghost at rest. Rather than bringing Claudius to justice, his efforts lead him to kill Polonius, drive Ophelia mad, and reveal his suspicions to his uncle. It is this last that causes Claudius to try to get Hamlet killed by the English king. Hamlet's efforts to control his own drama fail utterly. However, once Claudius makes an attempt on his life, Hamlet has the certainty about his uncle that he has been seeing all along. In this way, his failure leads Hamlet to a recognition that his problem is eventually

[50] Koestler, *The Act of Creation*, 45.

resolved by a higher power than his own. Abel specifically says that this higher power is a dramatist, and that "[t]his dramatist is death."[51] On this reading, at the end of the play "Hamlet recognizes the truth of that dramatic script in which no one can refuse to act: death will make us all theatrical no matter what we have done in life."[52] Although this reading is appealing in some ways, it is not the full story. On the boat to England Hamlet learns that though "deep plots" may "pall," there is yet "a divinity who shapes our ends" (5.2.9,10). When Hamlet stops trying to orchestrate everything he learns that, in the face of "a special providence," plans, lies, feignings all become unnecessary and, rather than take things in hand, he simply has to be attentive to what comes next: "the readiness is all" (5.2.9, 10). Hamlet ultimately recognizes that a drama is best controlled by forces outside itself, but this force is not death, the end of all things, but rather the force that shapes our ends. The obvious conclusion here is that Hamlet's readiness to accept the help of a divine power are related directly to God, and that is presumably what Shakespeare intends to communicate. However, it is worth saying that God did not invent Hamlet as he exists in this play; Shakespeare did. The real historical Hamlet, uttering these lines, would be referring to God, but the dramatic Hamlet is referring to his own creator, Shakespeare. This is why Abel posits that "The problem of author versus character was…first envisaged in *Hamlet.*"[53] Hamlet speaks of God, but the play is a subcreation where Shakespeare becomes a mediator between God and the characters in the play. Thus, Hamlet's discovery of the limits of his own dramatic power paradoxically leads to an act of homage to the power of the ultimate playwright, God, as mediated to him through Shakespeare.

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[51] Abel, *Metatheatre*, 49.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Abel, 58.

Polonius is undone by his assumption that he can control his dramatic situation. His predetermined conclusions about Hamlet cloud his judgment, even as they also cause him to seek strange means to inquire into Laertes's behavior. Hamlet also attempts to take absolute control over his situation, though this is paradoxically what leads him to inaction as well. It is Hamlet's desire for certainty about the ghost that causes him to stage his embedded drama. It is his ability to act without certainty of the end, simply with readiness for what comes, that finally brings the play to a satisfactory end. This pattern repeats again later with Isabella in *Measure for Measure*, but here in *Hamlet* the ending is satisfactory because Hamlet's dramatic goals are achieved. Hamlet gets his confirmation of his uncle's guilt, his father is revenged when his usurping uncle is killed, and Hamlet himself does not incur the guilt for Claudius's death: it is Claudius's own plotting that brings about the demise of both him and his queen. When Hamlet stops trying to plan his own drama, he achieves the best of both worlds: the justice typical of a Senecan revenge tragedy, but delivered in a way amenable to a Christian conscience. In *Hamlet* Shakespeare shows that recognition does not negate free will: Claudius recognizes his fault and feels guilty, but he does not change his behavior. It is also important that Claudius does not reveal this guilt until he thinks himself unwatched. However, for Hamlet himself, recognition leads to greater freedom. Once Hamlet recognizes his own status as actor in someone else's drama, he is able to stop trying to use embedded dramas to provide himself with certainty. He can now live and act without knowing or trying to control the future because he makes his habitual approach to the world one of actor rather than director. Hugh Richmond argues that the "poised and yet relaxed condition in the face of complex adversity" that Hamlet gains by the end of the play is "the

perceptive spectator's…greatest reward" for watching *Hamlet.*[54]. Once he stops plotting in order to achieve ends of his own, he is capable of whatever action the moment requires and is ready for his cue.

Accepting the will of a higher power, as Hamlet does, is possibly easier than accepting the intrigues of a peer, as indicated by Adriana's resentment. However, recognitions, even in the moral realm, do not necessarily lead to resentment: Benedick and Beatrice eventually embrace the roles assigned to them by Don Pedro, even though this involves humbling their pride, Hamlet acts according to his Christian conscience but also revenges his father. Shakespeare returns to the idea of didactic drama in *Twelfth Night,* again showing how difficult it is to create a real character change by means of recognition. In the case of Maria's drama with Malvolio, Shakespeare demonstrates another problem inherent to didactic drama: the sight of Malvolio acting foolishly is so enjoyable that Maria forgets her original purpose and carries her artifice too far, past the point where it might actually be helpful to Malvolio. Once the object of the drama becomes the dramatist's pleasure and not the audience's, a player-dramatist is likely to damage his or her audience. This effect is amplified in Malvolio's case when Feste uses drama as a means to secure revenge.

Viola is, naturally, at the center of the most obvious recognition scene in *Twelfth Night,* and, indeed, Mary Jo Kietzman points out that "Act 5 is orchestrated to build toward the epiphanic reunion and recognition of the twins."[55] However, though Viola is an admirable actor, it is by no means clear that she, herself, brings about this recognition. Viola does end up participating in a standard recognition scene, but she does not seem to have this end in view

[54] Richmond, *Shakespeare's Tragedies Reviewed,* 81.
[55] Kietzman, Mary Jo. "Will Personified: Viola as Actor-Author in Twelfth Night." *Criticism.* Spring 2012 Vol. 54, No. 2, 272.

when she first puts away her "maiden weeds" in order to serve the Duke (*Twelfth Night*, 5.1.255). Why Viola decides to don men's clothes at all is unclear. Terence Cave claims that it is an arbitrary decision, and that the whole play has "no rational structure of events which the characters seek to master and understand: the world goes awry because of a storm at sea or a play on words, and it may be restored to wholeness by the same means."[56] But Viola is not so entirely arbitrary: she is clearly interested in the bachelor status of the Duke, commenting, "Orsino! I have heard my father name him. He was a bachelor then" (1.2.28-29). However, she only comes up with the plan to offer herself in service to him after she finds out that Olivia will "admit no kind of suit" regarding new ladies in waiting (1.2.45). Since Viola does not state her motivation for this disguise, theories are various. Stephen Greenblatt theorizes that this is perhaps because of Shakespeare's homage to the inner person.[57] Mary Jo Kietzman points out that, in this respect, "Viola shares Hamlet's sense of indeterminacy," which is not surprising "[s]ince Shakespeare probably wrote Twelfth Night immediately after *Hamlet*."[58] Evans does not assign a reason to Viola's actions, but he does point out that "Viola did not take up the masquerade for the love of mockery. Hers," unlike that of the playful and high-spirited Rosalind, "is not a mocking nature."[59] Textually speaking, Antonio offers a probable cause for Viola's disguise when he says that Illyria and its environs

> to a stranger
> Unguided and unfriended, often prove
> Rough and unhospitable.
>
> (3.3.9-11)

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[56] Cave, *Recognitions*, 277. Cave argues this based on Viola's saying, "What else may hap, to time I will commit." Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, 1.2.60.
[57] Greenblatt says this about both this play and *Hamlet*. Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World: How Shakespeare Became Shakespeare.* New York: W. W. Norton, 298–308.
[58] "Will Personified: Viola as Actor-Author in Twelfth Night," 263.
[59] Evans, *Shakespeare's Comedies* 127

According to this text, Viola probably takes up her disguise for a reason very similar to Rosalind's. Whatever the cause Viola does prove to be an admirable actor. As a dramatist, however, she is not empowered as Rosalind, though she does resemble her in important particulars. Bertrand Evans calls Viola a "heroine who surpasses Rosalind in femininity and rivals her in awareness – though hardly in control – of her world."[60] Rosalind has, at least originally, a stated reason for adopting the disguise of a man (to protect herself and Celia while in the forest), but Viola does not speak of her reasons. They both, however, use the fictional character they have created to explore their relations to other people.[61] As regards recognition, Viola is not as free as Rosalind because of a difference in her audience: Rosalind already knows she has the love of Orlando, but Orsino does not even know that Viola exists.[62]

The other important advantage that Rosalind has over Viola is that the "storm" of the court that Rosalind and Celia flee from is much more intelligible than the storm that casts Viola on the shores of Illyria. Indeed, Viola's disguise seems arbitrary because of the situation that caused her to take it up. Natural phenomena are capricious and less easily explained than jealous uncles.[63] The situation of the two women is similar in that they both end up in disguise, but the machinery for getting them there is different. Their recognitions, therefore, are likewise different. Rosalind is in a situation of near complete mastery over her circumstances, but Viola does not

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[60] Ibid., 118.
[61] Kietzman, 260.
[62] After Viola's confession of 1.4.40-2, Evans points out that the theater audience has a double advantage over the Duke: "the secret of her right identity and the secret of her love." Evans, *Shakesepeare's Comedies*,120.
[63] Although, because it is a play, even the storm is part of the authorial providence – in the sense that Shakespeare wrote it and used that as the machinery of his play. But Cave claims that "There is. . . no rational structure of events which the characters seek to master and understand: the world goes awry because of a storm at sea or a play on words, and it may be restored to wholeness by the same means" (*Recognition*, 277).

have all of the moving pieces in hand. The recognition proper can only occur when Sebastian enters in 5.1, and, while it is a particularly fine example of bisociation,[64] this reentrance of Sebastian into Viola's life was orchestrated by the storm, not by her. The only power that Viola exerts on the recognition proper is one of delay. This makes sense in light of her earlier comment that she would leave the work of bringing about the resolution chiefly to time saying,

> O time, thou must untangle this, not I
> It is too hard a knot for me t'untie.
> (2.2.40-41)

When she is finally in the recognition scene, rather than declaring outright that she is Viola, she leads Sebastian through an exercise that amounts to a parody of *anagnorisis*, invoking Aristotle's least artistic means of birthmarks and dates.[65] Even then her revelation is merely conditional: "Do not embrace me," she says,

> till each circumstance
> Of place, time, fortune, do cohere and jump
> That I am Viola.
> (5.1.251-3)

So, though she is part of the most recognizable recognition and also something of a player-dramatist, the play, and particularly the recognition, unfold without much help from Viola. Rosalind, by contrast, is the center of all the action regarding the recognition, even though the other major plot points are resolved without her help.

In terms of player-dramatists staging recognition scenes, the more compelling case in this play is Maria and the embedded drama she arranges for Malvolio. Maria is an interesting character. Richard Madelaine has recently argued that "Maria's part is not so much

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[64] Orsino's line sums it up: "One face, one voice, one habit, and two persons! / A natural perspective, that is and is not!"

[65] For an extended discussion of the various ways in which Viola is not in control here, see Cave, *Recognition*, 278ff.

complementary to, but rather on the threshold of upstaging the Clown's role," and that this is because "the role of Maria is specially intended (even tailored) for the Clown's apprentice."[66] He points out that in this play "apprentice actors," that is, the boys playing women's roles, "dominate both parts of the plot: if Viola provides most of the life in the main plot, Maria drives the subplot."[67]

As to Malvolio himself, Mary Jo Kietzman makes the case that Malvolio is present in the play specifically "as a foil for the very different performances of his exemplary actor, Viola."[68] Indeed, from its earliest days, the play has been remembered for the gulling of Malvolio, as proved by John Manningham's account of seeing the play in 1601. He says the play has

> A good practise in it to make the Steward beleeve his Lady widdowe was in love with him, by counterfeyting a letter as from his Lady in generall termes, telling him what shee liked best in him, and prescribing his gesture in smiling, his apparaile, &c., and then when he came to practise making him beleeue they tooke him to be mad.[69]

Charles I famously labeled the title of the play in his copy of the second folio with the name of the most memorable character: "Malvolio."[70] William Hazlitt was the first critic to express sympathy for Malvolio, saying that "we feel a regard for Malvolio, and sympathize with his gravity, his smiles, his cross-garters, his yellow stockings, and imprisonment in the stocks."[71]

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[66] Madelaine, Richard. *The Apprentice, the Clown, and the Puritan: Comic Revenge as Theatrical Drawing-Out in Twelfth Night.* Australian and New Zealand Association for Medieval and Early Modern Studies Inc, 2012, 74-75.
[67] Ibid., 74.
[68] "Will Personified: Viola as Actor-Author in Twelfth Night," 259. Kietzman is making a specific case that, in the context of the "Poet's War" Shakespeare uses Malvolio to expose the folly of the Jonsonian humorous character.
[69] Manningham, John, and John Bruce. *Diary of John Manningham.*Westminster: J.B. Nicholas and Sons, 1868, 18.
[70] King Charles I, annotation, in William Shakespeare's *Comedies, histories and tragedies, published according to the true originall copies*(The Second Folio), London: Thomas Coates, 1632. In The Royal Trust Collection of the British Library, Shelfmark RCIN 1080415, bl.uk.
[71] Hazlitt, William. "Twelfth Night; or, What You Will'" in *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*. London: C.H. Reynell, 1817, 259

There is also an important critical tradition, begun by Joseph Hunter in 1845, of seeing Malvolio's puritanism as his chief problem. Hunter claims, "In Malvolio's general character the intention was to make the Puritan odious; in the stratagem of which he is the victim to make him ridiculous."[72] More recently, Allison Habgood envisions "Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* as a play wholly preoccupied with Malvolio's gulling and its profound impact on playgoers."[73] Almost the first thing that the theater audience learns about Malvolio is that he is "sick of self-love" and tastes "with a distempered appetite" (1.5.90-1). Maria sums up Malvolio's vice when she says that he is "the best persuaded of himself, so crammed (as he thinks) with excellences, that it is his grounds of faith that all that look on him love him" (2.3.150-2).[74] Malvolio proves Maria's reading correct in 2.5 when he imagines first that Maria "uses [him] with a more exalted respect than any one else that follows her" and then than he can aspire to "be Count Malvolio," husband of Olivia (2.5.26-7, 35). Evans points out that Malvolio "is self-deceived before he is deceived," and that his "fire is the product of spontaneous combustion, and his sense of worthiness is unalloyed by misgivings."[75]

Maria plans a drama to convince Malvolio that Olivia does, indeed, love him. She calls her ruse a "physic," implying that her purpose is to cure Malvolio of something, presumably the excessive self-love he is known for, but it is also clear that she wants to make him "a common recreation" by means of her drama (2.3.173, 135). She has, then, a dual motive. On the one hand,

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[72] Hunter, Joseph. *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: Twelfe Night, or, What You will, Vol. XIII.* ed. Horace Howard Furness. New York: Dover Publications, 1963, 398.
[73] Hobgood, Allison P. "'Twelfth Night's' 'Notorious Abuse' of Malvolio: Shame, Humorality, and Early Modern Spectatorship." *Shakespeare Bulletin* 24, no. 3 (2006): 1-22, 2.
[74] Mary Jo Kietzman situates this play in the context of the Poet's War and thus reads Malvolio as a caricature of Jonson's "humours" characters: "Shakespeare uses Malvolio to expose the limitation of Jonsonian characterization and comical satire and uses Malvolio's absurd personations in the subplot as a foil for the very different performances of his exemplary actor, Viola." 259.
[75] Evans, *Shakespeare's Comedies*, 131.

in a way similar to Dons Pedro and John who construct their dramas in order to play off of the faults of their audiences, she plans to treat Malvolio's excessive pride didactically, at least in the sense that she wants to teach him a lesson, but on the other, she also wants to be amused by this treatment. It is the second motive that will prove stronger in the course of the play, ultimately with a disastrous effect for Malvolio.

The means Maria employs are fictional: a "letter that [she] dropped to betray him," ostensibly written by Olivia about her love for Malvolio (3.2.77-8). However, before Malvolio receives this letter, the daydreams he narrates (both to the in-house and in-play audiences) reveal his true character. Though he affects puritan principles, he openly imagines himself "in [a] branch'd velvet gown; having come from a day-bed, where [he] left Olivia sleeping" (2.5.47-49). John Draper, who sees Malvolio's character as a direct attack on Jonsonian humorous characters, argues that here "Malvolio's moving passion betrays his choleric nature: he displays a personal pride that brings about his efficiency as a steward, but makes him arrogant even towards his superiors, and encourages him in the preposterous notion that he might wed the Countess."[76] Maria's letter betrays Malvolio, not because it reveals him to himself, but because it causes a recognition that is false. Malvolio's recognition that Olivia loves his smiling, yellow-stocking-wearing, cross-gartered self, is not true. Because Malvolio did not need much encouragement to think Olivia in love with him, Maria causes the intended false recognition. However, she is utterly unsuccessful in treating Malvolio's pride. This is at least partly because she waits too long to reveal her artifice. She certainly causes Malvolio to respond to her fiction with a very un-fictional display so absurd that "If this were play'd upon a stage now, [Fabian] could condemn it

[76] Draper, John William. *The Humors & Shakespeare's Characters.* Durham, N. C: Duke University Press, 1945, 103.

as an improbable fiction" (3.4.127-8). Her letter draws Malvolio into a preposterous performance. If Maria had revealed her artifice to Malvolio at this point, it is possible he could have come to know himself as both audiences now know him. A coming-to-know does not necessarily mean that there will be a change of heart, but at 3.4 Malvolio has only had his foolishness magnified a bit, even as Adriana did. If he had learned about the trick, he would have been angry, certainly, but perhaps in a salutary way that would not cut him off from the comic resolution of the play. Maria's intentions, at least at this point, are still arguably constructive. Malvolio's pride would certainly be humbled by a recognition of the artifice at this point. However, though the time seems right for a recognition, Maria and her co-conspirators do not reveal the artifice to Malvolio because they are enjoying the spectacle too much. Inviting the others to see Malvolio's performance, Maria says:

> If you desire the spleen, and will laugh yourselves into stitches, follow me. Yond gull Malvolio is turn'd heathen, a very renegado; for there is no Christian that means to be sav'd by believing rightly can ever believe such impossible passages of grossness. He's in yellow stockings.
>
> (3.2.68-73)

There is no more mention of curing Malvolio, only discussion of enjoying his humiliation. The purpose of the drama has moved from being something salutary for the actor/audience to being something entertaining to the dramatist. Maria's desire to amuse herself via Malvolio makes her discontinue her slightly more constructive motive and descend into one more unambiguously destructive. She accepts Fabian's suggests that they "shall make him mad indeed," and Sir Toby comes up with the idea of putting him in "a dark room. . . for [their] pleasure and his penance" (3.4.133, 135, 137-8). This motive moves beyond the original idea of "physic" to enter the realm of revenge.

Although all of the characters have some grudge against Malvolio, Feste is the main player-dramatist who orchestrates revenge against him. The revenge Feste arranges is not exactly measure for measure, and the theater audience, seeing him tortured with physical barbarity, must experience this as excessive. Indeed, Hobgood points out that many modern spectators of the play "feel themselves somehow involved or implicated in shameful stage action," specifically in regard to the treatment of Malvolio.[77] Had Malvolio been called out on his excessive self-love in the midst of his smiling, yellow-stocking farce the punishment would have been felt as just, even if Malvolio subsequently refused to repent, since it would have been his own absurd pride that led him to such absurd behavior. The locked darkroom, however, goes an uncomfortable step further than physic. It goes beyond the corrective and, at least in the case of Feste, becomes vindictive and destructive.[78]

It is particularly notable that, though Maria says in 2.3 that she will "let the fool make a third" to Sirs Andrew and Toby, in fact it is Fabian, not Feste, who sees Malvolio in all of his cross-gartered glory (2.3.174). Feste is not involved until 4.2 when Maria tells him to "make [Malvolio] believe thou art Sir Topas the curate" (4.2.2). Feste uses this ruse to accuse Malvolio, locked up in the dark in the contemporary manner of a lunatic, of being in the darkness of ignorance only. He eventually appears in his own person and helps Malvolio to write a letter to Olivia, but then fails to deliver it promptly, excusing himself on the grounds that "as a madman's epistles are not gospels, so it skills not much when they are deliver'd" (5.1.287-8).

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[77] Hobgood, 3.

[78] Mary Jo Kietzman explicitly makes the case that Feste's Sir Topas character could have converted Malvolio if he had been a better actor and had a better part to play. My argument is that Sir Topas was simply part of Feste's plan to get back at Malvolio. See "Will Personified: Viola as Actor-Author in 'Twelfth Night'." *Criticism* 54, no. 2 (2012): 257-289.

Feste, however, knows that Malvolio is sane, if somewhat pompous. In the final scene, Feste first orchestrates a moment of *anagnorisis*, revealing to Malvolio the previously unknown fact that he was acting as "one Sir Topas" and that Malvolio had been making his pleas in vain (5.1.372). However, he also elaborates on his motive when he calls to Malvolio's mind the disparaging speech the steward made to the fool in Act 1. While everyone has his or her grievances with Malvolio, such as his calling out of Fabian's bear-baiting habit, Feste is the only one who explains himself in great detail, recalling that Malvolio, in Act 1, asks Olivia, "Madam, why laugh…at such a barren rascal?" (5.1.374-5). Feste has been nursing this wound the whole play long and so ends with a devastatingly clear statement of his motive for participating in the ruse: "And thus the whirligig of time brings in his revenges" (5.1.375-6). But it was not time who brought revenge; it was Feste. Since the clown is repaying an insulting remark with physical torture, it is no wonder that audiences experience this as out of proportion. In fact, the strong emotion that Feste's revelation causes in Malvolio is not wonder, but disgust and a mutual desire for revenge. In the end, though he is not exactly likeable, it is hard for the theater audience not to feel that Malvolio is somewhat justified when he famously cuts himself out of the comic resolution crying, "I'll be reveng'd on the whole pack of you" (5.1.378). He may not have been the sort of character who would take well to a correction couched in embarrassment, but his reaction at the end seems justified in light of what he has endured.

The incident with Malvolio shows, as do Rosalind's play to Phebe and Hamlet's "Mousetrap" for the King, the difficulties in directing drama for the purpose of helping an audience recognize and consequently reform itself. Hamlet's play shows that the recognition is possible, even if it does not cause repentance, though it also presents the problem of the

dramatist himself recognizing such a recognition. There is no guarantee that Malvolio would have taken his humbling well if his folly had been revealed before the dark-house episode; after all, Benedick and Beatrice almost fail to pass the test of admitting their own pride in public, and though Claudius realizes his sin he, like Adriana, does not care to reform himself. However, there is at least a chance that things might have gone differently for Malvolio: had Maria stopped things sooner, it is possible that he might have seen his own pride. Once Feste added his motive of using *anagnorisis* as revenge, however, it was simply too easy to take things too far.

In Feste's case, Shakespeare is playing with the way in which the intention of the dramatist shapes a drama, showing that even when that drama is certainly feigning and not lying, the intention the dramatist has in view is a major factor in how things turn out. Once again, when the intention of the drama is chiefly the good of the player-dramatist, the results are not always pleasing. In Maria's case, the results are hilarious for the theatre audience to watch since the yellow-stockinged, cross-gartered Malvolio is an entertaining spectacle, but this drama is not constructive, it does not do anything to cure Malvolio of his too-great pride. Then when Feste adds his motive of revenge, he gets what he wants, but it is much more painful for the in-house audience to watch.

The treatment of Parolles in *All's Well that Ends Well* offers a parallel to Malvolio's situation in this regard that is worth examining. Evans points out that, in *All's Well*, "the ignorance of only two, Bertram and Parolles, serves as the exploitable condition for whole scenes."[79] However, although the Lords Dumane do function as player dramatists in regards to Parolles, it is rather Helena who is the chief player dramatist of *All's Well*. Sharp critical debate

[79] Evans, *Shakespeare's Comedies*, 143.

surrounds the recognition that Helena stages at the end of the *All's Well that Ends Well*, ranging from what James Calderwood calls "nearly unanimous disfavor"[80] for the play's lack of unity, to G. Wilson Knight's idea that Helena forgives Bertram in the manner of Christ.[81] Most would tend to agree with Calderwood. Helena is certainly a player dramatist of *anagnorisis*, and she does orchestrate a brilliant recognition scene, revealing herself by means of ring and child, as ordered, hoping to be the recognized wife of Bertram, the man who refused to notice her even after he was her husband. And there's the rub: Bertram! At no point in the play has Bertram been a particularly likeable character.[82] R.G. Hunter points out that, in this play, "our expectations are consistently disappointed, our hopes are frustrated, and the romantic comedy that, after the first hundred lines, we had settled down comfortably to enjoy is again and again pulled out from under us in the most annoying and awkward way."[83] In the character of Helena, then, Shakespeare begins to raise questions about dramatists with obviously constructive intentions: whether Helen ought to have what she desires is very much at issue in this play.

Shakespeare begins the play by establishing that Helena is a "gentlewoman" and "the daughter of Gerard de Narbon," the late physician so famous that the King of France himself "spoke of him admiringly, and mourningly" (*All's Well*, 1.1.37, 29). Helena is already in love with Bertram when the play begins, and the Countess Rousillon quickly forces her to a confession of it. The Countess's motive for this confession is unclear, but she also gets Helena to

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[80] Calderwood, James L. "The Mingled Yarn of 'All's Well'." *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 62, no. 1,1963: 61-76, 61.
[81] Knight, G. Wilson. "The Third Eye." in *The Sovereign Flower: On Shakespeare as the Poet of Royalism, Together with Related Essays and Indexes to Earlier Volumes*. London: Methuen, 1958, 146.
[82] For one of the few sympathetic discussions of Bertram and his being forced into a marriage, see Emily Ross, "'Undone and Forfeited to Cares Forever: The Plight of Bertram in *All's Well that Ends Well*." *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 42, (2011): 187-217.
[83] Hunter, Robert Grams. *Shakespeare and the Comedy of Forgiveness.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1965, 109.

confess that she is going to go to court to try to heal the King.[84] Helena makes bold to do this because of her father's "prescriptions," which she speaks of as things almost magical: their "faculties inclusive were more than they were in note" (1.3.221, 226-227). In the particular prescription she wants to try on the King, Helena claims that

> There's something in 't
> More than my father's skill, which was the great'st
> Of his profession.
>
> (1.3.242-244)

Helena further admits that it is her love of Bertram, more than her pity for the King, that drives her to court to try her father's remedy for fistula on the ailing monarch, but she is still willing to venture her "well-lost life" on the outcome of the cure (1.3.248). Shakespeare portrays Helena as having more than earthly power. Lafew describes her to the King as having

> a medicine
> That's able to breathe life into a stone,
> Quicken a rock, and make you dance canary
> With sprightly fire and motion, whose simple touch
> Is powerful to araise King Pippen, nay,
> To give great Charlemagne a pen in 's hand
> And write to her a love line.
>
> (2.1.84-90)

Once the King becomes convinced that Helena is in earnest, he agrees to her condition that, should he be cured, she will be able "To choose" a husband "from forth the royal blood of France" (2.1.196). Helena's prescription does heal the King, and Parolles and Bertram discuss the court gossip about the healing in terms of "miracles" and "wonder" (2.3.1,7). It is written of as "A showing of a heavenly effect in an earthly actor" and spoken of as the "very hand of heaven" (2.3.23-4, 31). Her power is somehow outside that known in the day, "both of Galen and

[84] See Sullivan, Garrett. ""Be this Sweet Helen's Knell, and Now Forget Her": Forgetting, Memory, and Identity in All's Well that Ends Well." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 50, no. 1 (1999): 51-69, for a discussion of how the Countess is trying to help Helena establish her identity as someone worthy to love her son.

Paracelsus," that is, both of ancient and modern wisdom (2.3.11). Helen thinks of herself as an agent of heavenly power and says that "Heaven hath through [her] restor'd the King to health (2.3.64). The reward for her labors is that she chooses the man she desires, Bertram, whom she has risked her life to gain. R.G. Hunter explains that Helena's human love and divine power are both necessary elements of her character. "She is, on the one hand, Helen, for whose beauty men launched ships and burned towers. On the other hand, she is Helena, who was the daughter of the notoriously merry old Coelus, Earl of Colchester, and one of the first and most famous of British Saints."[85] Part of what makes Helena's situation with regards to Bertram so difficult to understand is that she is simultaneously a human lover and an instrument of divine grace.

Although the audience trusts Helena and supposes she must know Bertram well to love him so much, it is still unsettling that Shakespeare immediately throws doubt upon his character when, in response to being presented with Helena for his wife, he responds to the King:

> My wife, my liege? I shall beseech your Highness
> In such a business give me leave to use
> The help of mine own eyes.
>
> (2.3.106-108)

Bertram utterly refuses to play along, insisting that, in regard to Helena, "I cannot love her, nor will strive to do't" (2.3.145). The audience in the theater may well wonder what Helena sees in Bertram and, in fact, Helena herself is willing to give up and leave, but the King feels bound in honor to force Bertram's hand and make him marry Helena. Bertram is not amused and, though forced to wed her, refuses to bed her, running off to the war in Italy and sending Helena back to his mother.

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[85] Hunter, 114.

Although Helena has been the chief mover in the plot all along, it is at this point that Bertram sets the terms for the recognition scene that Helena, as player-dramatist, will stage at the end of the play. He writes Helena a letter that establishes very specific, supposedly impossible conditions, under which he will agree to accept her as his wife: "When thou canst get the ring upon my finger, which never shall come off, and show me a child begotten of thy body that I am father to, then call me husband. But in such a 'then' I write a 'never'" (3.2.58-62). It is Helena's drive to fulfill these conditions that moves the rest of her actions in the play. Her initial plan is simply to leave France so that Bertram can come home from the war, to which he fled to be rid of Helena. Her words, in fact, have something of an ominous ring:

> I will be gone.
> My being here it is that holds thee hence.
> Shall I stay here to do 't? No, no, although
> The air of paradise did fan the house
> And angels offic'd all. I will be gone,
> That pitiful rumor may report my flight
> To consolate thine ear. Come, night; end, day!
> For with the dark, poor thief, I'll steal away.
> (3.2.122-129)

Although these words are dark, Helena does not kill herself but merely becomes "Saint Jaques' pilgrim" for a time (3.4.4). Wandering quite far from her stated route and at a loss about how to get hold of her husband, Helena eventually ends up in Italy where she runs into Diana and her mother. It is the old widow who, apparently, first conceives of the bait and switch solution to Helena's problem, saying of Bertram's jilted wife, "This young maid," that is, Diana, her daughter, "might do her a shrewd turn, if she pleas'd," but it is Helena herself who actually talks of the bed-trick (3.67-8). In the source, the widow is harder to convince. Helena, however, successfully plans to have Diana pretend to yield to Bertram's solicitations, but then will "fill the

time" with him herself (3.7.34). The widow may call this a "deceit so lawful," but Helena's "wicked meaning in a lawful act" is more expressive: Helena will sleep with her "lawful" husband, but he will think he is sleeping with Diana, hence the "wicked meaning" (3.7.38. 45). While this will advance Helena's purpose, it certainly does not make Bertram any more likeable.

Thus far, Shakespeare has largely followed his source plot from *The Decameron*, mediated to him via William Painter's rendering of Boccaccio in "Giletta of Narbonne," published in *The Palace of Pleasure*. However, the way that Shakespeare deviates from his source is particularly interesting since it paints Bertram's character in a much worse light than Shakespeare's source. First, Shakespeare gives Bertram companions who are disgusted by his planned violation of Diana. The Lords Dumaine, supposing Bertram to be trysting with Diana, are somewhat appalled both by his action and by his boasting of it. They see that "this action contrives against his own nobility," but they are likewise shocked that he is a "trumpeter" of his own "unlawful intent" (4.3.24, 27).

Censuring companions are not the only change Shakespeare made to his source, but before examining how very different the ending of his play is, it is worth taking a closer look at his other large deviation from the source and a strictly Shakespearian addition to this play: Parolles. Parolles is, as the Lords Dumaine put it, "a bubble," that is, someone who is all show and has nothing underneath (3.6.5). The Lords Dumaine are aware of Bertram's problematic behavior in regard to Diana, but they cannot do anything to change it. However, they are able to disabuse him of his wrong notions about Parolles. They stage, in fact, a recognition scene that comes prior to Helena's. The Lords know that Parolles, whom Bertram counts as friend, is "a most notable coward, an infinite and endless liar, an hourly promise-breaker, [and] the owner of

no one good quality worthy [Bertram's] entertainment," and they convince Bertram of a scheme to reveal his true character (3.6.9-12). Bertram is somewhat skeptical of having been "so far deceiv'd in [Parolles]," but he is willing to take part in the pretend capture the Lords arrange (3.6.6). Just before the Lords call Bertram in for the questioning of Parolles, the first Lord Dumaine says, "I would gladly have him see his company anatomized, that he might take a measure of his own judgments, wherein so curiously he had set this counterfeit" (4.3.35-6). The pronouns here are ambiguous at best. *The Riverside Shakespeare* glosses them thus: "him…he…his: i.e. Parolles. . . Bertram. . . Bertram's."[86] However, the first "him" is much more likely to apply to Bertram than to Parolles, since it is he whom the Lords have just been speaking of and Parolles who is the "company" about to be "anatomized." The drama, then, is staged for the benefit of Bertram's passing from ignorance to knowledge, the noetic shift that is typical of recognition.

Key to the Lords' plan is the fact that Parolles thinks he has been captured by people who do not know him. Accordingly, he assumes that he is unwatched by anyone who habitually sees him in the guise of heroic friend that he habitually feigns. In fact, the moment he supposes he has been taken by "the Muskos' regiment," he immediately acknowledges his cowardice and offers to betray his own army to save his life (3.4.69). Once Parolles supposes himself unwatched by the people he is trying to fool, he is freed from having to pretend he has courage and instantly reveals his true character. Parolles is an inveterate performer, but when the Lords change his audience, he is free to be himself. In fairness to Parolles, there is some truth in his post-humiliation question, "Who cannot be crushed with a plot?" (4.3.325). However, it is undeniable

[86] G. Blakemore Evans, ed., *The Riverside Shakespeare*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974, 531, n.35-36.

that over the course of the scene Bertram becomes undeceived in Parolles's regard, calling him "a past-saving slave" (4.3.138). Interestingly, Bertram is the only one who learns anything from this drama. The Lords know Parolles, and Parolles knows himself; his speech about his tongue prattling him into perils in regards to his boastful promise to retrieve his drum, in fact, causes the second Dumaine brother to wonder that "It is possible he should know what he is, and be that he is" (1.44-5). Apparently, as with Claudius, the answer is yes; knowing does not always determine behavior. Fortunately for the Lords, by making Parolles a character in this false arrest, they have not trusted in his desire to reform himself after being caught out in his own faults, as Maria apparently did in regard to Malvolio. Parolles already knows himself; the issue is that Bertram does not, and so the play was staged for Bertram's benefit. Even after Parolles's (false) credibility is ruined, he knows that his very meanness is a kind of salvation since "If [his] heart were great, 'T would burst at" his humiliation (4.3.330-1). He is also resigned, even relieved, to drop his habitual performance and take up his new state of "allowed fool," saying that "There's a place and means for every man alive" (4.3.339).

This interlude is a foil to the recognition of Helena by Bertram. Both men reveal their true character when they suppose that they are unobserved. Parolles supposes his actions to be in secret in the sense that Bertram, the man he is trying to impress, cannot see them, and so he has no trouble revealing his true nature. When Bertram supposes himself safe from the observation of the King, he is willing to do things of which the King will not approve, like seducing Diana. Robert Grams Hunter specifically links these two episodes, claiming that Bertram's "revelation is no more fortuitous than the unmasking of Parolles. The French Lords have played a socially valuable practical joke that results in the return of Parolles to his appropriate station in the world.

Like them, Helena has arranged a salutary discomfiture – that of her erring husband."[87] At this point in the play Parolles cannot avoid having his true character displayed before Bertram, who was present for his interrogation, but Bertram, by contrast, is eager to avoid having his true character displayed before the King. But this also reveals a fundamental difference in the character of the two men. R.G. Hunter points out that "Parolles learns nothing about himself" as a result of his unmasking "because he has never been the victim of any illusions about what he is."[88] Bertram, by contrast, is not fully aware of his own nature.

Helena brings about the revelation of Bertram's actions in several stages. First, after her encounter with Bertram, Helena arranges a false death for herself. Bertram receives word that she "made a groan of her last breath, and now she sings in heaven" from "the rector of the place" Helena supposedly was in when she died (4.3.54-55, 61). Second, Helena takes the widow and Diana to the King of France, he being the primary support she needs for her recognition drama. Bertram is her primary audience, but she knows that she may need the King's support to carry her point.

Having heard the news about Helena's death, the King desires to wed Bertram to Lafew's daughter. It is here that Shakespeare again deviates greatly from his source, which has no comparable episode to what follows.[89] In Boccachio's version, Giletta, the Helena equivalent, arrives some years after her encounter with her husband and has twin sons in tow. But Helena does not enter at this point in the play; rather, Helena sends the King a letter accusing Bertram of his crime and then arranges to have Diana come in to confront Bertram in the presence of the

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[87] Hunter, 128.
[88] Hunter, 126.
[89] For an extended discussion of how Shakespeare varies from Boccaccio, see Gerard J. Gross. "The Conclusion to *All's Well that Ends Well*." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 23, no. 2 (1983): 257-276.

whole court. Bertram is eager to appease the king and almost relieved when Diana calls Parolles to witness for her. Since Bertram now knows that his one-time friend is "quoted for a most perfidious slave," he feels he can safely put off Diana and his true nature can remain unknown to the King (5.3.205). Indeed, Bertram is very nearly successful in keeping his actions hidden since the King, faced with such a profusion of contradictory evidence, much of which revolves around rings in a way similar to *Merchant*, is prepared to send Diana to jail. But Helena has things well in hand. As Diana says when she sends for Helena,

> But for this lord
> Who hath abused me as he knows himself,
> Though yet he never harmed me, here I quit him.
> He knows himself my bed he hath defiled,
> And at that time he got his wife with child.
> Dead though she be, she feels her young one kick.
> So there's my riddle: one that's dead is quick.
> And now behold the meaning.
>
> (5.3.297-304)

Helena's sudden entrance at 5.3.304 causes a number of recognitions. First, there is the fact that the news of her death was false. When the King asks "Is't real that I see?" he indicates his wonder at finding Helena alive (5.3.306). But not only is Helena alive; she demands recognition that her marriage with Bertram has been consummated. To prove this, she produces the irrefutable signs Bertram demanded before he would recognize her as a spouse: Bertram's letter, ring, and unborn child.

In addition to Bertram's double recognition that Helena is alive and that he has slept with her, not Diana, Bertram may have had a recognition of self that marks his conversion at the end of the play as genuine. Lafew, for one, is so moved that he has to ask Parolles for a handkerchief. Certainly Bertram recognizes that his behavior toward Diana is known, although Helena has, in

some measure, mitigated his guilt. Like Parolles, he is now free from having to act the part of a virtuous man. Yet although Helena is recognized as Bertram's wife at last and, in the King's words, all "seems well" since the ending contains the requisite conventions, whether the audience actually takes it as well is another question (5.3.333). It is a bit like the problem of Hero and Claudio but worse since here there is no Benedick and Beatrice to soften the blow. In the original, the whole thing is less ambiguous. Shakespeare deliberately complicates the ending. Gerarld Gross points out that "instead of heightening Bertram's stature as 'romantic hero,' [Shakespeare] permits him to sink lower and lower in our estimation and in that of the characters of the play who are present."[90] The young man jilts Helena and woos Diana in the source, but the public slandering of Diana that Shakespeare added makes Bertrand much less likable. Granted, after Helena explains how she can save Bertram from the tight corner created by his lies, Bertram does address the King with the words,

> If she, my liege, can make me know this clearly,
> I'll love her dearly, ever, ever dearly,

but this conversion, directed not at Helena but the king, is only conditional, contingent upon the "if" of further explanation from Helena which the audience in the theater never hears (5.3.314-15). Gross points out that "it would have been easy for Shakespeare, if he had wanted, to have given Bertram more words, if not of explanation, at least of positive profession of his love rather than a simple conditional statement."[91] Bertram is not a very convincing lover of Helena, and accordingly, though it is abundantly clear that Helena gets what she wants, the audience may well feel that she has made a mistake all the same.

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[90] Gross, 262.
[91] Gross, 271.

R.G. Hunter points out that Shakespeare's manipulation of his source has radically changed Boccaccio's story: "Instead of a clever wench who must prove herself worthy of an aristocratic husband, we have an unworthy husband who must be made worthy of his wife."[92] Shakespeare has cast "Helena [as] the instrument which heaven has employed in working out its designs" and yet he has also made her the human lover of a sinful man.[93] Shakespeare's clear manipulation of his source suggests that he deliberately wanted to make his theater audience uncomfortable with the ending. Hunter points out that, for modern audiences, "Bertram's regeneration is unconvincing."[94] His thesis is that Shakespeare's original audience believed "in the reality of the descent of grace upon a sinning human" in a way that modern audiences do not.[95] He is certainly correct. However, even given this distinction, I would argue that there is yet something unsettling about the way Helena gets what she, as a human lover, wants. As an instrument of the divine, Helena ought to be a dramatist the in-house audience can trust. Everything about her purpose seems constructive: she is a sensible woman who loves a man and marries him. Bertram's mother knows that Helena would be a suitable wife for her son. In fact, Helena shows herself so remarkably clever that any man in France would be happy to have her, except the very one she chooses. Perhaps there is something of divine forgiveness in Helena, something that justifies the love of Bertram as analogous to the love of God for undeserving humanity, but Helena is not God and she cannot directly convert Bertram to her way of seeing things. However, Helena repeatedly uses her dramatic skill to force Bertram's hand, first by means of her cure of the king, then by means of the bed trick, and finally with her false death.

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[92] Hunter, 112.
[93] Ibid., 129.
[94] Ibid., 130.
[95] Ibid, 131.

There is something here of the conversion of Shylock: Bertram complies, in the end, and even apparently converts, but the circumstances have also left him with no other option, and it is accordingly difficult to accept his conversion as genuine. Shakespeare could have extended the end of the play and given time for Bertram to display more evidence that his conversion was genuine, but instead Shakespeare ends the play before the in-house audience has time to witness more than a cursory conversion. Shakespeare, though still interested in how dramatists' purposes shape their dramas, is again raising the question of how dramatists get what they want. As with Portia and Shylock, it is not as simple as good characters having good dramas and bad characters bad ones. Helena's intent is obviously constructive, but her means are questionable, and the end possibly not desirable at all.

If the middle plays demonstrate that drama has many uses, didactic and otherwise, they also present the problem that this creates. Helena gets what she wants, but the audience is justifiably concerned, not just about her means, but about her end: perhaps Bertram is not worth having. Similarly, Feste gets what he wants, but Malvolio's possible redemption is ruined in the process. Viola gets Orsino and Olivia Sebastian, but this was caused by forces outside of Viola's control, and the matches are not the ones Olivia and Orsino originally want. Hamlet gets his revenge, but only after he has stopped trying to execute a plot. Rosalind is the most convincingly successful of the player-dramatists in this group, and her recognition is not related to any of the major conflicts of the play. The most compelling recognition, then, is also the least purposeful: in her pastoral setting, Rosalind does not really need to stage it at all, at least not for the Duke and Orlando. In the case of Phebe and Silvius, however, she does a real service. By drawing Phebe into the experience of unreciprocated affection, Rosalind actually causes her to have sympathy

with Silvius. True, in the end Phebe is simply tricked into marrying Silvius, but the experience of sympathy remains. By contrast, Malvolio's cross-gartered prancing is somewhat fruitless. If he had been caught in his foolishness it may perhaps have helped him, but Maria's letter was not designed to help him act with virtue, just to make him look foolish, even as the Lords Dumaine wanted Parolles to look foolish.

The player-dramatists of the middle plays begin, more often than in the earlier plays, to engage people as unwitting actors. When Don Pedro plans his drama, all of his actors are in on the scheme to fool Benedick and Beatrice. This does happen in the middle plays as well, though in these cases the drama is usually performed by the player-dramatists themselves, as with Rosalind (who does have a helper in Celia) to Orlando or Feste to Malvolio or Helena to the King. However, increasingly, the player-dramatists fool actors who do not know that they are acting, as Polonius tries to do to Hamlet, or the Lords do to Parolles when they trick him into dropping his act, or Helena when she takes Diana's place. It is this method that proves to be most effective. In a way, of course, Maria and the Lords are simply revealing what is already there: Malvolio is a conceited man, Parolles is a coward, the dramas they are involved in simply showcase this. Even Hamlet's trap for Claudius or Polonius's ruse for Reynaldo are aimed at revealing what is already there; but in all of these cases, success is predicated on the fact that the actor does not know that he or she is acting, that is, the actors are unaware of their audience. Rosalind's drama with Phebe is different because it draws Phebe into a new kind of experience, one that does not simply reveal what is already there. By creating the character Ganymede, Rosalind creates an opportunity for Phebe, even as Don Pedro's respective dramas for Benedick

and Beatrice create the opportunity for each lover to think he or she is saving the other from a miserable life of loneliness.

It seems that these kinds of recognitions based on causing characters to act unawares are more successful because of the way they engage their audiences. When Benedick and Beatrice discover that they have been tricked, they can rest in the knowledge that they were drawn into slightly ridiculous behavior mostly because they love each other. When Malvolio sees the artifice, however, and he knows he has been behaving as a fool in full sight of everyone, he is embittered. The experience of coming to know, even one that is augmented by the power of wonder, is not necessarily creative. Parolles and, to some extent, Bertram are relieved to be free of their false characters, but there seems to be a difference between a drama revealing something that was already there, as in Hamlet's drama for the king, and a drama with the power to create something altogether new. Helena's ending is slightly disturbing because it is not exactly clear which kind it is; she causes Bertram to act as a husband, which is new for him, but she has also revealed his true colors. Although she is an instrument of grace for Bertram, she is, perhaps, like Friar Lawrence, so focused on getting what she wants that she thinks too little about her means: God could perhaps trust in Bertram's conversion, but Helena, as a human woman, backed Bertram into a corner where conversion became his only option. As with Shylock and the over-emphasis on the letter of the law, the ending of Helena's play leaves audiences wondering whether Bertram's interior disposition indeed matches his exterior submission.

But if the way the drama is staged is important, so too is the why, or the end. In all these plays, Shakespeare is demonstrating the difficulty of player-dramatists who use drama as a means of personal gain. For instance, "noting" may work out if the player-dramatist is also the

lead actor in the drama; Rosalind is after all able to verify her assumptions about her audiences by observing different responses to different situations over time. This allows her moral certainty about Orlando's love for her, certainty that gives her the confidence to act. But if the goal of the drama is to yield definitive information rather than a mere moral certainty, as the player-dramatists in *Hamlet* persistently believe, this is problematic. Hamlet's conviction about his uncle's guilt rests on evidence so flimsy that it (painfully) does not drive him to action, and his own famous "To be or not to be" soliloquy is difficult both to stage and to interpret precisely because it is unclear whether or not Hamlet knows that he has been set up by Claudius and Polonius. It is possible that, in response to their information-seeking drama, he is feigning for purposes of his own.

The player-dramatists of the middle plays also have other non-didactic, self-focused motives besides seeking information. Feste uses both taking up and revealing an artifice simply to settle a score with Malvolio. Maria says she wants to help Malvolio, but her chief interest is in humiliating him and enjoying his foolishness; the Lords Dumaine want to free Bertram from a harmful influence, and so expose the pathetic Parolles; Helena forces Bertram to recognize her as his lawful wife, but the question of how well his interior feelings match his exterior actions remains. Shakespeare is thoroughly complicating the situations in which feigning is used. Drama performed for the benefit of the player-dramatist alone, without any particular consideration for the good of the audience, may structurally be considered as feigning and not lying, but this distinction is much less comfortable in the middle plays than in the early ones. For instance, when Feste reveals that Malvolio has been duped, this recognition accomplishes the fool's purpose of revenge, but it also causes Malvolio to storm off the stage and out of the play in anger

that is at least partly justified. Here the revelation of the artifice serves the purpose without destroying it, so, structurally, this is feigning and not lying. However, whereas in the early plays the ends accomplished by drama are generally in some way laudable (or at least indifferent), Feste's very purpose is destructive; even if Malvolio does deserve his comeuppance, Feste arguably takes things too far. But if Shakespeare continues to press on the morality of drama, in the course of the plays from *As You Like It* to *All's Well that Ends Well* his focus also begins to shift from moral questions to dramaturgical ones. Though still interested in the way the ends of the dramatist shape his or her means, Shakespeare also begins to press harder on the questions about drama raised in *Much Ado*, consistently forcing his audiences to ask difficult questions about the nature and limits of art. For example, Shakespeare makes the noting backfire as it does in *Hamlet*, or he fulfills conventional generic expectations but then complicates matters by deliberately rendering such fulfillment emotionally unsatisfactory, as he does with *All's Well*. The middle plays suggest that there are some things that art apparently cannot achieve, particularly when the outcome is supposed to be some particular good for the dramatist and not the audience. The most effective method the dramatists employ in terms of lasting results is in leading their actors to behave as if there were no audience present, or at least not the audience to which the actor habitually performs. This happens without much help from Hamlet when Claudius seeks solitude, but it is more clearly intentional in the case of the Lords and Helena, and in some measure almost all of the player-dramatists begin to use this method.

In his late plays, *Measure for Measure*, *Othello*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*, Shakespeare will reprise many of the themes and ideas of the earlier plays, combining and expanding upon them. His late player-dramatists are masters of manipulating their characters

into revealing their true natures, but also of creating opportunities for new behaviors that did not previously exist. These late player-dramatists orchestrate dramas that are not just life-revealing, as Maria's for Malvolio, but actually life-giving, like Portia's for Bassanio.

Chapter Four:

Using What is Not in Four Jacobean Plays

By the Jacobean portion of his career, Shakespeare has demonstrated that the moral questions surrounding theater are far more complex than a simple binary of moral/immoral. He knows theater is not simply either/or. Drama can be used for good ends, as Don Pedro uses it, or for bad ones, as Don John uses it; it is a tool that can serve a multitude of ends good and bad, from romantic liaisons to torturous revenge. He has also shown that player-dramatists are not always successful in their dramatic projects: Adriana does not change, Malvolio is lost, Friar Lawrence does not get his comic ending. The player-dramatists can exert a great deal of power, but the power is not absolute.

There are two main limitations to the scope of a player-dramatist's power. The first is that player-dramatists are not in absolute control of their situations. Player-dramatists err who do not take this into account: Hamlet kills Polonius, for instance, because he is so focused on getting revenge on Claudius that he forgets he is not directing all the details of the scene with his mother; Friar Lawrence orchestrates a reconciliation of the warring families, but only after the dangerous means he has chosen have caused the death of Romeo and Juliet; Feste gets his revenge, but it causes Malvolio to cut himself out of the comic resolution of the play. When a player-dramatist attempts absolute control, the results are generally bad.

In the four Jacobean plays considered in this chapter, *Measure for Measure*, *Othello*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*, the player-dramatists have considerable control over their situations, but they also recognize that their control is not absolute. The ends pursued by these player-dramatists are not primarily didactic, as those of many of the early plays, nor are they

simply self-seeking, as many of the middle plays. In these plays characters are tested and hidden faults are brought to light. The implications of the revelation and recognitions are not merely local. Indeed, they have a near-universal applicability that extends well beyond the in-play audience and draws the in-house audience into the drama they witness. Like the medieval dramatist of the York *Crucifixion*, the late player-dramatists structure their dramas to create occasions for their audiences to reveal their true characters. Most of the embedded dramas in this chapter bring healing and reconciliation; however, Iago's drama in *Othello* is the inverse of the others. Iago destroys what is good in order to bring about darkness and chaos.

In the late plays these occasions are especially created by dramatists who are virtuosos of dissimulation, people who leave things out, leave things in darkness, or otherwise actively hide things. The player-dramatists are experts at working with what is not, and these gaps or absences function as a forum in which each of the respective audiences exercises unwonted freedom. When the Duke pretends to leave Vienna, Angelo shows his true condition as the sort of lustful man against whom he is trying to bring the full weight of the law. Iago is able to manipulate through what he does not say, begging Othello to "take no notice, nor build yourself a trouble" from Iago's "scattering and unsure observance" (3.3.150-1). Othello fills in Iago's hints with imaginations of Desdemona's infidelities. Leontes does the same thing to himself, but then the queen's false death gives him a chance to repent, and the wide gap of Time provides opportunity for the oracle to be fulfilled. Prospero hides himself from those on his island so that he can observe the behavior of those who have (as they supposed) been shipwrecked there. Each of these player-dramatists conceals things in order to reveal something in their audience that would otherwise be hidden.

In each of these cases, when the artifice is finally revealed the characters involved either in performing or in watching the embedded drama realize that they have revealed parts of themselves that they habitually keep hidden; like Claudius, they know that their actions are known. The occasion artfully created by the player-dramatists has lifted the mask they wear, usually over the less desirable parts of their character. This happens in the same way that the audience of the York *Crucifixion* has been made to reveal their own easy willingness to forget what Christ has done for them. The pattern that the player-dramatists in these plays are following is structurally similar to what C.L. Barber describes as the main principle of the saturnalian pattern: "through release to clarification."[1] Barber claims that there is a "tendency for Elizabethan comedy" particularly, "to *be* a saturnalia, rather than to *represent* saturnalian experience."[2] His argument hinges on the idea that, as local festival customs were suppressed, the theater became a venue for the same sort of communal emotional release once associated with holidays. The structure can be described as departure from the tense workaday world, festivity, and then return to normal life with some emotional pressure relieved. Barber's thesis is that the comedies were a venue in which people could experience the societal renewal once associated with holidays.

Critics have largely followed Barber in focusing on the relaxing aspect of religious holidays and how the festive dramas provide emotional release, but I would like to emphasize the religious and moral functions of those same holidays. The pattern of release Barber sees in the "Festive Comedies" also occurs in medieval cycle dramas, but in addition to societal release

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[1] "The saturnalian pattern appears in many variations, all of which involve inversion, statement and counterstatement, and a basic movement which can be summarized in the formula, through release to clarification." Barber, C.L. *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy: A Study of Dramatic Form and Its Relation to Social Custom*,1959. Reprinted Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011, 2.
[2] Ibid., 39.

there is also an individual and communal moral component. The York Cycle plays were presented on Corpus Christi, a Christian holiday. They were an opportunity for popular festivity, certainly, but they were also structured so as to cause audiences to reflect on themselves as Christians. What happens in the case of the player-dramatists of the late plays is analogous to Barber's notion of festive comedy: the occasions that they create provide release that leads to clarification. However, Shakespeare's player-dramatists use this situation of clarification, not merely for recreation but for spiritual renewal. This movement toward renewal was certainly present in the mystery plays because these dramas were rooted in the liturgy. As Anne Barton points out, "Mediaeval drama… drew its boundaries between a fragmentary, secular environment and the cosmos of the play," and while the play lasted, it was "a world more real than the one which existed outside its frame."[3] The Catholic liturgy of the medieval period was seen, indeed, is seen today by Catholics, as the ultimate place of personal and communal renewal and reform, a timeless zone in which heaven and earth meet, sins are forgiven, and communion is restored. This move is visible in the York *Crucifixion.* The dramatist puts Jesus on the cross out of sight and distracts the audience with the foolishness of the soldiers, foregrounding actual identities over theatrical ones. As I discussed in Chapter One, the play uses bisociation masterfully and conscientiously creates opportunity for amusement. However, when the cross is raised at the end of the play, a laughing audience with Christian sensibilities is shocked to discover how inappropriate their behavior has been: a cheap laugh has made them forgetful of what Christ has done for them. For the audience to return to the normal state they were in before the play a further movement is needed, one that brings healing and forgiveness. Accordingly, the

[3] Barton [Righter], Anne. *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play.* London: Chatto & Windus, 1962, 20.

dramatist does not leave the audience in their sinful tendencies, as though revealing the audience to themselves was the sole point. Rather, the dramatist has Christ voice forgiveness; the implication is that this forgiveness is not just for the men crucifying him, but also for those watching who have forgotten him. The drama occasions a communal recognition of guilt that each audience member feels personally. The intention of the York Master seems to be that each person departs beating his breast in repentance, though not in hopelessness. This play is a comi-tragedy, but it has also shown that Christ is ready to offer forgiveness to those who ask. This is only one play of the cycle, and healing and the renewal of the communion with God and with our fellow Christians will come in subsequent plays.

This pattern seems to be the way Shakespeare's player-dramatists function in the late plays, with Iago being a striking anti-type. The structure of departure and return, release and clarification, is present, but the return involves some additional movement beyond clarification. The player-dramatists of recognition have the advantage of wonder for helping set the stage for later healing and renewal. The wonder habitually caused by *anagnorisis* has proven a powerful force in all of the previous plays, but in these plays the conditions have become more complex, and the player-dramatists are experts at directing this wonder toward healing and reconciliation. There is generally a communal component to this renewal, but as with the mystery play there is an awareness that the community is made up of individuals. Although this seems similar to the didactic goals of the early plays, it is more nuanced. Didactic drama is moralizing, aimed primarily at revealing a faulty behavior: Adriana and Kate are shrews, the Montagues and the Capulets ought not to feud, Malvolio should not be proud. The revelation includes the invitation to change, but the player-dramatists who use the didactic method are more focused on revelation

than renewal. In the late plays, although the player-dramatists understand the revelatory power of drama, they more effectively use this revelation to bring about renewal because they have thought through more of the contingencies of what happens when a fault is brought to light.

Although these dramatists do know the healing power of drama, they also know that it cannot heal all wounds. Drama may be used to rectify situations but it cannot undo the past. In the early plays this insufficiency was not marked very strongly outside of the tragedies. Claudio and Hero only lose a few days together, Bassanio is humiliated, but he has not lost Portia. In contrast, Leontes and Hermione are reunited, but they have lost sixteen years and their son; Prospero returns to his Dukedom, but he and his daughter have spent twelve years on a lonely island, he has lost Miranda to Ferdinand, and will devote every third thought to his grave. In one way this shift seems to indicate pessimism, but I would argue that it is also realism. These player-dramatists are successful in using drama for renewal because they content themselves with using drama to do what it can do and accepting the limits of what it cannot do gracefully. The sense of loss remains, but this is intrinsic to the experience of repentance. In Shakespeare's time penance had a temporal component that included extended suffering like periods of fasting; when Prospero asks for "indulgence" at the end of his epilogue, he is explicitly asking the audience for a remission of the temporal punishment due to sin (Epilogue, 20). True reformation and renewal take time, and Shakespeare's latest dramas are obviously aware of this fact.

To say that the player-dramatists of these plays accept the temporal limits of drama does not imply that they are passive. Quite the opposite. Each of these plays involves a major player-dramatist who is very active and who directly creates the occasion for the free actions of others. The Duke's absence from Vienna occasions Angelo's revelation of his tendency to sin; Iago

creates the opportunity for Othello to doubt Desdemona; Paulina announces the death of her queen and Leontes responds with remorse and penitence; Prospero's spirits guide those on his island to knowledge of their sins and, at least in the case of Alonzo, to repentance. However, in addition to occasioning things directly, the late-player dramatists also seize useful opportunities for improvisation that the larger play presents to them: the Duke uses Ragozine's head, Iago picks up a handkerchief, Paulina works with her circumstances, Prospero seizes the occasion of the "most auspicious star" (1.2.182). The player-dramatists of these plays are more universally successful than those of the earlier plays because they are neither focused solely on their audience nor solely on themselves, but rather balance these two things, setting achievable goals that take into account the limits of actors, audience, and dramatist in a more comprehensive way than the player-dramatists of the earlier plays. All of them are successful in their aims because they understand that the power and the volatility of drama. Ultimately, the study of these dramatists and their successes will offer some insight into how Shakespeare uses drama not only for festive release, but also for the spiritual renewal of his audiences.

One of the key ways in which this group of player-dramatists demonstrates their understanding of the complexity of drama is their willingness to improvise and seize occasions as they are presented. Previously, this trait was most marked in Rosalind, she of the explicit "holiday humor," but all of the player-dramatists of the late dramas are able, as Rosalind, to improvise widely as the ever-changing situation demands (*As You Like It*, 4.1.69). Duke Vincentio is a perfect example of this. The Duke has, of course, long been known as a ruler who, "from behind the scenes, manipulates the other characters much as a dramatist would," and a

great deal of criticism on the play follows this view.[4] However, not all critics are comfortable with the Duke's seeming omniscience and find his methods in this play suspect for various reasons.[5] I will argue that understanding the Duke as a player-dramatist is one way to understand the sharp differences in opinion that surround his character. He is not in absolute control, but his motives are geared toward renewal.

Whatever one's view of the Duke, it is unquestionable that he begins *Measure for Measure* with only a hint of the purpose he has at heart. His decides to leave Vienna in the hands of the "prenzie Angelo," and he asks Escalus "What figure of us think you he will bear?" (*Measure*, 1.3.93, 1.1.16). Since he is about to leave all "Mortality and mercy in Vienna" in Angelo's hands, this wondering of the Duke's indicates that he has some interest in how Angelo will stand up to the test of leadership (1.1.44). This becomes especially clear when the Duke asks

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[4] Holland, Norman N. "Measure for Measure: The Duke and the Prince." *Comparative Literature* 11, no. 1 (1959): 16-20. In the mid twentieth-century, G. Wilson Knight popularized the idea that the Duke "holds, within the dramatic universe, the dignity and power of a Prospero, to whom he is strangely similar."("*Measure for Measure* and the Gospels" in *The Wheel of Fire; Essays in Interpretation of Shakespeare's Sombre Tragedies.* London: H. Milford, Oxford University Press, 1930, 79.) Josephine Waters Bennett agrees, to some extent, since her reading of the play hinges on the fact that Shakespeare wrote the play to embody the ideals of King James I, but she points out that Vincentio "is no Prospero, no wizard. He is neither omnipotent nor omniscient, since he is sometimes mistaken; and he saves the situation by his cleverness, not by his power." (*Measure for Measure as Royal Entertainment.* New York, Columbia University Press, 1966, 126.) Roy Battenhouse contends that the play is allegorical, with the Duke representing grace and Angelo law. ("Measure for Measure and the Christian Doctrine of the Atonement." *PMLA*, 61, Vol. LXI, No. 4. (1946): 1002-59.) Lucy Owens disputes this claim to divinity for the Duke since the Duke shares so much of his dramatic authority with death. In her view, because the Duke does not have power over life and death, "The Duke is not God; he is not even quite an allegorical figure of God," and yet, "much of the meaning [of the play] is based on the suggestion of such a scheme." ("Mode and Character in Measure for Measure." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (1974): 17-32, 20.)

[5] For instance, there is a trend in the criticism to see the Duke as a running a panoptical surveillance state, "which secures subjection by subtler strategies of surveillance, concession and repressive tolerance." (Ryan, Kiernan. *Shakespeare: Third Edition.* Bassingstoke:Palgrave, 2002 (1989), 134). Harold Bloom exemplifies the late twentieth-century view of the Duke, calling him "addicted to disguises, sadistic teasings, and designs hopelessly duplicitous." (*Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human.* New York: Riverhead Books, 1998, 370.) For a detailed history of this trend, see Stuart Hampton-Reeves, "Critical Assessments" in *Measure for Measure.* Bassingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, 141-55.

to disguise himself as a Friar, indicating that he never had the intention of leaving Angelo unsupervised, but rather just to let the young man suppose he was unsupervised. He intends to stay and note Angelo's response to unlimited power. The Duke elaborates on his "reasons for this action" thus:

> Lord Angelo is precise;
> Stands at a guard with envy; scarce confesses
> That his blood flows; or that his appetite
> Is more to bread than stone: hence shall we see
> If power change purpose: what our seemers be.
> (1.3.48, 50-4)

He means, by leaving Angelo in charge, to put Angelo to the test: as he said earlier, to find out "what figure. . . he will bear" (1.1.16). The Duke's supposed absence creates the opportunity for Angelo to display his true character and, as it turns out, Angelo soon becomes a ruthless enforcer of the laws that have long lain dormant.[6]

The fact that the Duke feels compelled to remain in Vienna in disguise indicates that he has some special reason for wanting to test Angelo, a reason of which the audience knows nothing. On the surface Shakespeare sets up this absence of the Duke as though the in-house audience is on a level with Vincentio in understanding Angelo's character. But this is not the case. Shakespeare creates ignorance here, hiding Angelo's behavior toward Mariana from the theater audience until much later in the play. The Duke, however, knows all along that Angelo has abandoned Mariana; he later explains that Angelo was "pretending in [Mariana] discoveries of dishonor," but the Duke suspects that it was because she lost "the portion and sinew of her fortune, her marriage-dowry" (3.1.227, 221-22). This knowledge is clearly part of what motivates the Duke to test Angelo, and certainly what motivates him to stay on hand in disguise

[6] On the Machiavellian nature of this move and the parallels between Vincentio/Angelo and Cesare Borgia/ Remirro de Orco, see Norman N. Holland, "Measure for Measure: The Duke and the Prince."

to improvise and manipulate the situation as necessary. At this point in the play, however, everyone, Angelo included, seems to expect that the Duke's stand-in will be an enforcer. But no one except the Duke (and perhaps Escalus) foresees the turn the young man's character takes next, least of all Angelo himself.

Angelo fills the office left vacant by the Duke, and his true "mettle" is revealed by an unwitting agent: Isabella (1.1.51). Claudio has been sentenced to death under Angelo's harsh enforcement of the law, so he and his friend Lucio arrange to have Claudio's sister, Isabella, plead for Claudio's life. Josephine Waters Bennett claims that Isabella needs this masculine direction in order to act because "She is, by nature, yielding, submissive, whether to Lucio or Angelo or the Friar, except when her ideals and illusions are threatened."[7] The young novice is naïve. She intends merely to use rhetoric to plead for her brother, but because of Angelo's situation of power, she does not realize fully that she is a character in this drama.

When Claudio enlists Lucio to seek out Isabella, he says

> in her youth
> There is a prone and speechless dialect,
> When she will play with reason and discourse,
> And well she can persuade.
> (1.2.182-6)

Isabella, then, is known to be adept at rhetoric,[8] although, according to Claudio, her chief persuasive power is nonverbal. Her purpose in going to Angelo is to save her brother Claudio, and the means she uses are the series of rhetorical appeals. Her initial efforts with Angelo do not seem very promising. After asking Angelo to "let it be [Claudio's] fault" that dies and not

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[7] "Isabella" in *Measure for Measure as Royal Entertainment*. New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1966, 70.

[8] For a catalogue of all the rhetorical devices used by Isabella and, indeed, by everyone else in the play, see, Jean-Marie Maguin, "Words as the Measure of Measure for Measure: Shakespeare's Use of Rhetoric in the Play." *Sillages Critiques* 15, (2013),15.

Claudio himself, she is flatly refused and, rather than try again, she attempts to leave with a "Heaven keep your honor!" (2.2.35, 42). Lucio, annoyed, stops her and sends her back to try again and again. He is, in fact, something of a director of this scene, though Isabella ultimately chooses the matter of her speeches and, with each attempt, she becomes more and more independent and persuasive. She talks about mercy, about the judgment of God, about her brother's unpreparedness for death, about the folly of man exercising authority like a god and, finally, she bids Angelo

> Go to your bosom,
> Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know
> That's like my brother's fault. If it confess
> A natural guiltiness such as is his,
> Let it not sound a thought upon your tongue
> Against my brother's life.
>
> (2.2.136-141)

Isabella's appeal is much like Escalus's plea to Angelo to look into his own heart and see if he has ever "Err'd in this point which now you censure him, / And pull'd the law upon you" (2.1.15-16). However, Escalus already knew Angelo, and Isabella's knowledge of Angelo comes from Lucio, who explains to Isabella that Angelo is

> a man whose blood
> Is very snow-broth; one who never feels
> The wanton stings and motions of the sense
> But doth rebate and blunt his natural edge
> With profits of the mind: study and fast.
>
> (1.4.57-61)

Isabella's appeal to Angelo's "natural guiltiness" is, then, a bit odd. Certainly she can count on his fallen humanity to be sinful in this respect, but her appeal to his sexual guilt is unwise.

Matthew 7:1-2 provides the title of the play, and Isabella's actions here bring it to mind: "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall

be measured unto you again."[9] Isabella's measures Angelo and brings his guilt to his mind. But her big mistake is somewhat akin to that of Friar Lawrence, or even Hamlet and Polonius: she forgets that she is not outside the action, but inside it. Possibly because of her own determination to enter a convent and be detached from the world, she imagines a detachment from her situation that does not exist. It never occurs to her as imprudent for a pretty young woman to look into a young man's eyes and beg him to think about his unchaste thoughts. Indeed, Angelo "measures" his response by Isabella's "measure" of his conscience and, in terms of the biblical passage, it is unsurprising when Angelo responds, aside, that

> She speaks, and 'tis
> Such sense that my sense breeds with it.
> (2.2.141-2)

Isabella, by acting as the agent who causes Angelo to recognize himself, that is, his own bodily "sense," unintentionally becomes an unwitting means for Angelo's self-knowledge What she brings to light is, of course, that Angelo is subject to sexual attraction. The knowledge Angelo receives of his own human (non-angelic) nature causes the wonder expected from a recognition: "What's this? what's this?" Angelo says, just after she leaves, overwhelmed by the fact that "it is [he]," himself who is to blame for this fault, even though Isabella's measure, that is, her judgment of his sin, was the means of making him aware of it (2.2.162, 164).

Angelo's recognition of himself as capable of sin and his giving in to this form the major source of the action for the rest of the play. Although the Friar/Duke stays busy moving things around and is unquestionably the governing figure, all his action is largely in response to the action that Angelo takes when, a few scenes later, he demands that Isabella "Redeem [her]

[9] Matthew 7:2, 1599 Geneva Bible

brother by yielding up [her] body" to Angelo's "sharp appetite" (2.4.163-4, 161). Having heard the Duke prepare the test in 1.3, the in-house audience ought to have been expecting some kind of action from Angelo. If this particular action is a bit surprising without any other knowledge of Angelo's character, still the audience is made aware of "what seemers be" and also knows that Angelo has recognized that he, too, is subject to sexual desires.

But if the theater audience knows that Angelo has given in to temptation, the Duke does not until he overhears Isabella telling Claudio of her plight. This overhearing is what makes the Duke more successful than Hamlet since, although Hamlet causes a recognition in Claudius, Hamlet does not see it. The Duke, however, catches Angelo in a way Hamlet did not catch Claudius. Once the Duke knows that Angelo has not only recognized his own desires but is willing to abuse his authority to gratify these desires, the test seems complete: Angelo abuses authority. Conceivably, the Duke could reveal his artifice to Angelo just after hearing Isabella's accusation and clear up everything. However, this is not what the Duke does. Rather than revealing his disguise and confronting Angelo right away, he decides to build a recognition on Angelo's recognition of his carnal nature, revealing his knowledge of Angelo's sinfulness in another recognition scene.

The Duke's motive for staging a further recognition seems to be twofold. First, there is obviously the desire to rectify Mariana's situation with Angelo. But the Duke also becomes interested in Isabella. In acquiring the knowledge of what Angelo intends, the Duke acquires some additional knowledge about Isabella. The Duke hears Isabella, disgusted with Claudio for wanting her to give in to Angelo to save his life, mince no words:

> Take my defiance;
> Die, perish. Might but my bending down

> Reprieve thee from thy fate, it should proceed.
> I'll pray a thousand prayers for thy death,
> No word to save thee.
>
> (3.1.142-146)

Although the Duke did not hear her earlier "More than our brother is our chastity," he has heard enough to know that Isabella has much to learn about compassion (2.4.185). She does not love her neighbor, and specifically her brother, as herself.[10] The Duke possesses more knowledge of Isabella than she of herself, even as he seems to have possessed more knowledge of Angelo's character than Angelo had himself. Isabella is now in exactly the same position, relative to the Duke, as Angelo was at the beginning of the play. As the Duke was interested in reforming Angelo (because of his behavior to Mariana), he now becomes interested in reforming Isabella. Bertram Evans claims that "The Duke's task is grander than merely the saving of Claudio's life: it is the salvation of Angelo and Isabella, and that, in these cases, amounts to the humanization of two 'saints.'"[11] And, indeed, two of the three recognitions the Duke stages in Act 5, which Bennett goes so far as to call "an elaborate five-act play-within-a-play." are directed at Angelo and Isabella respectively.[12]

In order to set up the first of his Act 5 recognitions, however, the Duke needs incontrovertible evidence of Angelo's wrongdoing. This is when his knowledge of Angelo's history with Mariana comes into play. Nevertheless, presenting Mariana herself is not going to be enough; the Duke already knows that Angelo is "a marble to her tears," because he "is washed with them but relents not" (3.1.229-30). But Angelo's sinister proposition to Isabella gives the Duke room to improvise: replace Isabella with Mariana via the bed trick, and he will have the

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[10] Matthew 22:39, Geneva Bible.
[11] Evans, Bertrand. *Shakespeare's Comedies*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960, 200.
[12] Bennett, 126.

proof that he needs to reveal Angelo's true character, even as Helena's replacement of Diana gave her like proof of Bertram's. By placing Angelo's betrothed in bed instead of Isabella, the Duke simultaneously draws Angelo into sin and mitigates the sin of the action. This first part of the Duke's drama goes off without a hitch; Mariana is enlisted to take Isabella's place and does so. However, it is at this point that things begin to tax the Duke's powers of improvisation, almost leading to his giving up his Friar's disguise earlier than he intends. The Duke has to overcome a number of major problems before he can execute his recognition scene properly.

The first problem is that, despite his promise to Isabella and the tryst kept by Mariana, Angelo still hastens to have Claudio put to death and, what is more, asks that the Provost have "Claudio's head sent [him] by five" (4.2.123). The Friar-Duke tries to talk the Provost out of executing Claudio, but the Provost protests that he "may make [his] case as Claudio's to cross this in the smallest" (4.2.167-8). The Friar-Duke adjures him "By the vow of [his] order," and "by the saint whom [he] profess[es]," and even offers his very "life" in a plea to have the execution delayed (4.2.169, 179, 180). However, the Provost will have none of it; he knows his job and plans to do it. And since the Provost will not yield to the Friar's "coat, integrity, nor persuasion," Vincentio is finally forced to reveal "the hand and seal of the Duke" before he "meant" to do so (4.2.92, 91).[13] This is not a full revelation of his identity as both Duke and Friar, but it is a compromise that shows he wants to maintain this disguise for reasons of his own.

[13] Evans argues that at this point "an ultimate purpose of the masquerade as is now implied is to test whether the 'friar', being only a friar, with the aid only of good but powerless mortals like Isabella, Mariana, and the Provost, could ever triumph – to prove, that is to say, what would be the fate of good in the bad world of Vienna if no force 'like power divine' existed" (*Shakespeare's Comedies*, 205). This seems an overstatement; the Duke specifically stated that he wanted to test Angelo – everything that happens after that test has been accomplished is merely about managing the outcome of said test.

The second problem the Duke has is Barnardine's refusal to die.[14] The Duke's plan to save Claudio involves having a head to send to Angelo but, understandably, Barnardine is not especially happy to have it be *his* head. Barnardine is playing a "confidence game"[15] when he says to the Duke:

> Friar, not I. I have been drinking hard all
> night, and I will have more time to prepare me, or
> they shall beat out my brains with billets. I will not
> consent to die this day, that's certain.
>
> (4.3.53-56)

He simply refuses to submit to the Duke's demand and calmly walks away. Walter Raleigh famously conjectures that "Barnardine, a mere detail of the machinery, comes alive, and so endears himself to his maker, that his execution is felt to be impossible."[16] It seems more likely that Shakespeare was simply using this device for comic effect and, perhaps indicating, through the name Barnardine, that the "bohemian" prisoner's drunkenness was, in fact, feigned; this would put the drunk who is not drunk on par with the friar who is not a friar (4.2.130).[17] In any case, the episode both expands on the theme of substitution present throughout the play and shows that the Duke, as Bennett suggested, is not as all-powerful in his play as Prospero is in his, despite G. Wilson Knight's claim. Like Hamlet, the Duke needs the help of a higher power, and

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[14] There is a significant amount of criticism on Barnardine. See Crunelle-Vanrigh, Anny. "Coming to a Head: Ragozine as Pirate Money in Act 4 Scene 3 of Shakespeare's Measure for Measure." *Cahiers Élisabéthains* 89, no. 1 (2016): 83-90.; Ford, James E., Alicia K. Nitecki, and John M. Aden. "Barnardine's Nominal Nature in Measure for Measure." *Papers on Language & Literature* 18, no. 1 (1982): 77.; Griffiths, Huw. "Hotel Rooms and Bodily Fluids in Two Recent Productions of Measure for Measure, Or, Why Barnardine is Still Important." *Shakespeare Bulletin* 32, no. 4 (2014): 559-583.; Majeske, Andrew. "Equity's Absence: The Extremity of Claudio's Prosecution and Barnardine's Pardon in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*." *Law and Literature* 21, no. 2 (2009): 169-184.
[15] Tobin, J. J. M. "How Drunken was Barnardine?" *Notes and Queries* 50, no. 1 (2003): 46-47.
[16] Raleigh, Walter. *Shakespeare*. London: Macmillan and Company, Limited, 1911, 148.
[17] See Tobin, "How Drunken was Barnardine?" This article also discusses some fascinating overlap between this play and a pamphlet of Nashe's.

it is "an accident that heaven provides" that sends the head of a "most notorious pirate," "in whom the audience has no personal interest, whose guilt is established, and who has already come to a natural death,"[18] just in the nick of time to save Claudio (4.3.77, 71). The Duke's powers of improvisation can help him greatly, but he does not control everything.

When the Duke stages his grand recognition scene, he has a problem somewhat similar to the problem with Barnardine, but this time it is Angelo who refuses to play along. The Duke has carefully orchestrated this recognition, instructing Isabella in the necessity of "speak[ing]. . . indirectly," and he warns her that he himself might speak "on the adverse side" of her but that this is "a physic / That's bitter to sweet end" (4.6.1,6,7). Isabella's accusation of Angelo at the beginning of Act 5 is, Angelo supposes, quite true. But rather than be instantly converted, Angelo denies it. He is conspicuously silent for the rest of her story, however, but this may just mean that he is unequal to speaking a denial he knows would be a show of bad acting. Even when he later says "I did but smile till now," he is only smiling in response to a stage direction obligingly given him by the Duke earlier in the scene: "Do you not smile at this, Lord Angelo?" (5.1.163, 233).

One thing that must be said for Angelo is that, unlike Bertram, he never says that he is innocent of his crime. He equivocates, certainly, by acting affronted and begging the Duke for "the scope of justice," but Mariana's particulars of time and place ("Tuesday night last gone in 's garden house") do not draw forth an absolute denial (5.1.234, 29). He is at least unsettled, and his assertion that both women are set on by "some more mightier member" speaks his worry that someone has found out his real character (5.1.37). He does not deny his actions, and in this the

[18] Gaw, J. A. "A Note on Barnardine in 'Measure for Measure'." *The Shakespeare Association Bulletin* 8, no. 2 (1933): 93-95.

Duke's recognition might be said to be successful; Angelo certainly knows more of himself than he did before. However, Angelo's endeavoring to keep this knowledge to himself by not confessing his fault directly shows that he is by no means willing to expose his real character further; he still wants to retain his public reputation as a man of unquestionably upright morals. If the Duke actually wants to change Angelo's behavior, simply bringing in Mariana will not be sufficient.

Eventually it is Lucio who resolves this scene by pulling off Friar Lodovico's hood and revealing him in his own person as the Duke. This action reveals the artifice, and it is this, at last, that draws from Angelo a recognition that his actions are known. With requisite wonder he says to the Duke,

> I perceive your Grace, like power divine,
> Hath looked upon my passes.
>
> (5.1.369-70)

Bertram Evans claims that at this point "Angelo's conversion is effected by shock; his lesson is finished, and the Duke has really nothing more to do with this pupil."[19] However, it seems less a conversion than that Angelo is clearly eager to have his public shame last for as little time as possible. His *anagnorisis* that his actions are known leads him to the strong emotion of shame. He says,

> No longer session hold upon my shame,
> But let my trial be mine own confession
>
> (5.1.371-2)

and, in accordance with his words to Escalus in Act 1 ("When I that censure him do so offend, / Let mine own judgment pattern out my death"), he begs "Immediate sentence then and sequent

[19] Evans, *Shakespeare's Comedies*, 215.

death" (1.4.29-30, 5.1.373). Though this quick exit may be in accord with Angelo's feelings, it is not at all in harmony with the Duke's plans for how this drama should turn out. Having Angelo married to Mariana is evidently part of his purpose, but she thinks it would be "mock[ing her] with a husband" if the Duke were to carry out Angelo's death sentence (5.1.417).

Fortunately, the Duke has another recognition up his sleeve. Claudio is still supposed dead by everyone except himself and the Provost. The Duke's having a further intention is revealed when he begs pardon of, but also deceives, Isabella, saying:

> And you may marvel why I obscured myself,
> Laboring to save his life, and would not rather
> Make rash remonstrance of my hidden power
> Than let him so be lost. O most kind maid,
> It was the swift celerity of his death,
> Which I did think with slower foot came on,
> That brained my purpose.
>
> (5.1.390-396)

Since the Duke might easily have revealed Claudio at this point, he must intend some further end for Claudio's supposed death; he even augments the confusion here by claiming that he tried to save Claudio but failed. There are several likely motives. First, the Duke intends a fuller rehabilitation of Angelo; the fallen man needs to reconcile himself to being alive but imperfect, in need of mercy and forgiveness. Further, Bertrand Evans astutely points out that this last part of the play is directed primarily at Isabella, and is "the shrewdest and most drastic [practice] devised by Vincentio in the entire action" of the play.[20] This "practice" is only the lead-up to the recognition, but as it is so widely misunderstood, it is worth examining closely in order to understand the recognition properly.

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[20] Ibid., 217.

The "death for death" that the Duke demands is, indeed, "measure still for measure," perfectly just: Angelo's life for Claudio's life (5.1.409, 411). But then, Isabella's disgust that Claudio asked her to "be made a man out of [his sister's] vice" was also perfectly just (3.1.137). Is the Duke's activity toward Isabella merely a "humane education" that lets her feel "the sensation of blood flowing in her veins," as Evans argues?[21] Perhaps. But a more compelling reading takes into account Isabella's earlier acknowledgement of something greater than justice. She herself, like the earlier Portia, begs for mercy when she tells Angelo:

> No ceremony that to great ones 'longs,
> Not the king's crown, nor the deputed sword,
> The marshal's truncheon, nor the judge's robe
> Become them with one half so good a grace
> As mercy does.
>
> (2.2.59-63)

As it turns out, the virgin's veil is also improved by mercy. Isabella originally asked Angelo to think of himself in Claudio's place, and thus unwittingly started him down a path that led him to sin as Claudio did. Angelo now stands in Claudio's place. In a way, it was Angelo's faulty imagination that created the necessity for the play to advance in the way it does. Angelo could have imaginatively taken on Claudio's situation when Isabella told him

> If he had been as you, and you as he,
> You would have slipped like him, but he like you
> Would not have been so stern.
>
> (2.2.54-6)

However, Angelo was not able to imagine himself in Claudio's position. The Duke accordingly arranges things so that Angelo is, in fact, in the position where he could not imagine himself. But rather than Claudio and Angelo merely switching places, it is Isabella who now stands in

[21] *Shakespeare's Comedies*, 218, 219.

Angelo's place; she is the one in a position of moral superiority over Angelo comparable to the one Angelo held over her brother. This means that what is in the balance here is not just Isabella's capacity to give up her prudishness and have human feeling. The question is whether she will measure herself by her earlier speech or whether that speech was simply an empty rhetorical appeal. When Isabella kneels down and says

> Most bounteous sir,
> Look, if it please you, on this man condemned
> As if my brother lived

she has not simply proven herself able to feel human emotions (5.1.443-5). Nor is it the case that Isabella simply "resists vengeance and acquiesces to the purity of Mariana's love," as David Strong argues.[22]Isabella is impressed by Mariana's actions, but she has not put her "faith in the healing power of love," only; rather, she has proven herself able to act on a plane altogether higher than human emotion, the divine plane of mercy.[23] Isabella was aspiring to a divine life when "wishing a more strict restraint / Upon the sisterhood" that she was joining, but she imagined that getting there involved stricture and penance (1.4.4-5). The genius of what the Duke has done is not that he has changed Isabella's character from ice block to human, but that he and Mariana have taught her that the divine life is to be attained only by the freedom that comes with mercy. It is particularly lovely that she is not less the Isabella she was but is more perfectly that Isabella. Her aspirations to higher things are unchanged, but the Duke has arranged things so that she can fulfill those aspirations. Claudio's false death at Angelo's hands actually draws Isabella out and gives her the opportunity to act in a divine way. This is a similar movement to what happens to Bassanio, Bertram or Angelo, though in an opposite direction. The

[22] Strong, David. "Isabella's Casuistry in *Measure for Measure*." *Notes and Queries* 60 [258] (3): September 2013, 424–427, 424.
[23] Ibid., 427.

men were tricked into acting wrongly and, in terms of moral culpability, there is still fault involved in their actions, although their guilt is mitigated by their wives. Isabella, by contrast, acts with virtue which, though it proves unnecessary when Claudio is revealed to be alive, yet remains a virtuous action. The fiction mitigates the vice to some extent, but the virtue remains in full force, even though brought about by a fiction.

Isabella's plea for Angelo's life contains a particularly interesting line:

> I partly think
> A due sincerity governed his deeds
> Till he did look on me.
>
> (5.1.445-7)

It is not just, as Bennett points out, that she can "plead for the life of her enemy,"[24] or even that this sounds vain, though "merely and simply the truth,"[25] but the "*partly* think" is notable. Earlier in the play, Isabella spoke so surely, absolutely, and with such certainty of her own righteousness that, as Evans points out, she shows "overtones of the deadly sin of pride." [26] At this point in the play, however, she is willing to plead for Angelo on the basis of merely partial knowledge. Though this part of the play unquestionably contains "a surprising number of noetic issues and concerns,"[27] and though the Duke's parting invitation

> So, bring us to our palace, where we'll show
> What's yet behind that's meet you all should know,

is explicitly about imparting knowledge, yet Isabella acts here without full knowledge of Angelo (5.1.538-9). Unlike juridical justice, mercy has little use for particular details; Isabella knows

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[24] Bennett, "Isabella," 72.
[25] Ibid., 72.
[26] Evans, *Shakespeare's Comedies*, 217.
[27] Adams, Barry. *Coming-to-Know: Recognition and the Complex Plot in Shakespeare.* New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2000, 163.

Angelo needs mercy, and that is enough. Like Hamlet at the end of his play, the new, more perfect, and merciful Isabella can act without the certainty she needed earlier.

This change in or development of Isabella is part of what the Duke has been intending ever since he came upon her angry tirade in the prison, and his success is admirable. The recognition that Claudio is alive is, by comparison, easy to interpret. When possessed of the head of Ragozine, the Duke made it clear that he wanted to keep Claudio's rescue hidden for a time, especially from Isabella, so as "To make her heavenly comforts of despair / When it is least expected" (4.3.110-111). To what end the Duke intends this heavenly comfort is suggested by the fact that almost the first thing he says to Isabella after Claudio is revealed is "say you will be mine" (5.1.492). The Duke began the play as a man with "a complete bosom" invulnerable to "the dribbling dart of love," but he has been influenced by his own drama and by Isabella (1.3.3, 2). Presumably the Duke fell in love with Isabella while she was still raging for justice. It is possible that he wanted to use the wonder created by the recognition of Claudio as a way to make his proposal of marriage more agreeable. He specifically reveals his artifice, explaining the substitution of Ragozine's head for Claudio's, before he proposes again at the end of the play.

It is impossible to judge Isabella's reaction to the *anagnorisis* about her brother because after he is revealed she is silent for the rest of the play. Possibly the work of reconciling the "Now and Here" of her brother's presence with the "Then and There" she had supposed true is overwhelming. But her silence at this point has become, as Elisa Oh says, "a critical barometer for registering audiences' changing gender ideologies."[28] However, I would argue that the much-debated question of whether she accepts him or not is unimportant in comparison to the

[28] Oh, Elisa. "The Silences of Elizabeth I and Shakespeare's Isabella." *English Literary Renaissance* 45, no. 3 (Autumn 2015): 351-376, 351.

development of her character from a mere object, a "*thing* enskied and sainted," to a real woman equal to acting mercifully in the face of overwhelming odds (1.4.34, emphasis added). If Shakespeare wanted to portray the Duke as the ultimate controlling figure, he could have had Isabella accept the proposal. But the Duke has not been in absolute control in this play. Isabella's silence on the question of the marriage proposal leaves her choice a mystery, but it likewise highlights her free will: the Duke does not absolutely control Isabella, and she is free to make her own choice.

The Duke, as a player-dramatist, stages his recognition scenes with the help of absences: his supposed absence from his city and Claudio's supposed death. His drama gives his primary in-play audiences, first Angelo and eventually Isabella, a chance to reveal their true characters in the occasions these absences create. In Angelo's case, this revelation is distasteful; one feels for Mariana the same sort of pity one feels for Helena. In Isabella's case, however, the Duke's drama gives her the opportunity to grow into the sort of woman she wanted to be all along, one able to act on a divine plane. The Duke's supposed absence from Vienna gives Angelo "scope" in which to act, and this inevitably leads him to act in a way that reveals his true character (1.1.64). In this case, it is easy to see the holiday structure, although life in Vienna under Angelo's rule was anything by saturnalian. But structurally, it is when Angelo is unsupervised, released, as he thinks, from the pressure of watching eyes, that he behaves lustfully toward Isabella. This clarifies his tendency to sin, but it also eventually leads to his renewal by rectifying his situation with Mariana, a woman who is willing to love him even though she knows his faults and that Angelo must "become much more the better / for being a little bad" (5.1.440-1). Claudio's false death is not so obviously an opportunity for release, but it does provide Isabella a

chance to act in a way that not only reveals her true nature, but even raises that nature to a level to which she aspired but could not otherwise reach. The Duke's dramas provide the occasion for release and renewal. Claudio's false death, in particular, provides the opportunity not just for revealing virtue, but for growing in virtue. Isabella may begin her participation in the drama at the hands of Claudio and Lucio, but the Duke's orchestration of Claudio's false death gives her the opportunity to demonstrate that she is a strong character in her own right.

In *Measure for Measure* Shakespeare shows that drama can reveal where people are lacking, as it does for Angelo, or provide occasion for ennobling people as it does for Isabella. But in *Othello* he shows that fictions can also work like poison, even on a mature and supremely virtuous, battle-hardened hero. Among Shakespeare's villains, none exerts more control over his play than Iago. Don John, Edgar, Richard of Gloucester; each is a powerful force in his own drama, but none has the sort of absolute mastery exercised by the "honest Iago" (*Othello*, 1.3.294). Ágnes Matuska discusses Iago's various presences in the play saying, "He is Othello's ensign or flag-bearer; he is the intriguer who concocts the plot of the play; he is the director who makes the show go on; and he is the master of ceremonies who moves easily between the world of the play and the world of the audience."[29] Understanding Iago as a player-dramatist encompasses all of these presences. However, although Iago lies throughout the play, not all of these instances are embedded dramas that result in recognition. In the case of Roderigo, for example, Iago is simply using him for money. His behavior toward Othello, however, more obviously involves *anagnorisis*.

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[29] Matuska, Ágnes. "An Ontological Transgression." *Anachronist* 9, (2003): 46-64. Matuska, drawing on works like Hunter's in *Shakespeare and the Comedy of Forgiveness*, has a particularly interesting discussion of Iago as related to the "Vice" character in morality plays, a character often played by the director.

In order to understand Iago properly, it is important to remember that *Othello* begins after a recognition has already taken place. Not long into the play, Othello describes how he and Desdemona fell in love, and it is evident that this involved recognition, though Othello creates this recognition using narrative rather than drama. The stories he tells in Brabantio's house become a means of causing recognition in Desdemona. Brabantio accuses Othello of using "spells" and "witchcraft" to enchant his daughter, but in actual fact, all he did was tell stories about himself (1.3.61,64). Desdemona knows nothing about Othello's life or character until he begins to reveal it through the "drugs…charms… conjuration, and . . . mighty magic" of his narrative (1.3.64, 1.2.65, 1.3.91-93). Like Prospero, Othello is a kind of magician, but it is his stories, not magic, that create an opportunity for Desdemona to encounter Othello in a new, somewhat imaginative, way. Whether Othello initially set out with a desire to court Desdemona is uncertain, but that he takes advantage of his occasion is abundantly clear. At some point he must have begun to know himself contriving to gain Desdemona's affections; he takes "a pliant hour" and uses "good means" to interest her in knowing more about himself (1.3.151). Othello capitalizes on Desdemona's interest in him and aims at creating a strong emotion in her; when the compassionate "world of sighs" that his stories create causes her to openly invite his addresses, he is quick enough to act "upon this hint" and gain her for a bride (1.3.159, 166). Desdemona knows Othello because she knows his stories, and she accordingly "loved [him] for the dangers [he] had passed," and Othello loves her for her compassion (1.3.167). The stories become an occasion by which both Othello and Desdemona recognize the quality of the other. The recognition of Othello by Desdemona and Desdemona by Othello has already taken place offstage before the play begins and the wedding the traditional symbol of societal renewal, has

already taken place. This is important because it contextualizes Iago's actions in this play because it serves as a foil to them. Desdemona says she "saw Othello's visage in his mind" and this is how she came to love him (1.3.252). Iago's plan is the inverse: to create a false image of Desdemona in Othello's mind.

Iago, like the Duke, shows himself a master of improvisation, but unlike the Duke Iago is not trying to test or rectify or renew anything. Rather, he is an inversion of the pattern seen in the other player-dramatists in this chapter. He is primarily interested in an individual, as are the others, but rather than renewing creatively, Iago uses fiction in a diabolical way, convincing Othello of falsehood. Iago destroys relationships, first of Othello and Cassio, then of Othello and Desdemona. Like Don John, but more obviously, Iago is a descendant of the medieval Vice character tradition, a tradition that involves narrating one's motives to the audience.[30] Hugh Richmond explains that "diabolic forces traditionally can accurately recognize the nature of evil in themselves and in others, thereby achieving more conscious control of their own actions and skill in penetrating the minds and swaying the behavior of others."[31] Iago is obviously this kind of controlling, directorial figure. Ann Barton, in her discussion of the evolution of the Vice figure, says that Vice has two main purposes in regards to the audience: first, "They were guaranteed to amuse the onlookers and keep their attention from wandering," and second, "they preserved throughout a period of transition some sense of familiar contact between actors and spectators, relieving the self-containment of the rest of the play."[32] Iago does both of these

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[30] On this point, see Bernard Spivack, *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil: The History of a Metaphor in Relation to His Major Villains.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1958.
[31] Richmond, Hugh. *Shakespeare's Tragedies Reviewed: A Spectator's Role.* New York: Peter Lang, 2015, 88.
[32] Barton [Righter], Anne. *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play.* London: Chatto & Windus, 1962, 55.
[32] Ibid., 82.

things. He is peculiarly interesting as a player-dramatist of recognition because of his frequent thinking-aloud asides to the in-house audience; as spectators, the in-house audience is able to watch all of his plans for Othello as they are born and worked out in response to the happenings of the moment, the audience sharing Iago's awareness for almost the whole play. Aristotle explains that a precise imitation is pleasurable even when the thing imitated is painful in itself, and that is what is happening here.[33] Audiences may, in fact, enjoy watching Iago's virtuosity even though he displays it in evil and destruction. Kent Cartwright points out that "Through fourteen of the fifteen scenes of Othello, the audience shares its discrepant awareness [Bertrand Evan's term for dramatic irony] with Iago."[34] Hugh Richmond supposes that "because of our superior knowledge of the plot, we can never identify fully with Othello's consistent misreading of characters and circumstances."[35] He speculates that Iago's equivocal speeches are a "seductive appeal to audiences' egotism" because the dramatic irony seems to give the audience members superiority over Othello.[36] On this reading, the danger is that "if the Devil is traditionally self-aware, we risk seeing everything from his perspective and appreciating his seeming mastery over the doomed awareness of his native victims."[37] Hunter points out that this is the same danger of Milton's *Paradise Lost* – a diabolic character may, and often does, prove more interesting than a virtuous character. And this is the main thing to remember about Iago as a player-dramatist: he is

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[33] He says "we enjoy contemplating the most precise images of things whose actual sight is painful to us." *Poetics. IV* 1448b.
[34] Cartwright, Kent. *Shakespearean Tragedy and its Double: The Rhythms of Audience Response.* University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991, 147.
[35] Richmond, Hugh M. *Shakespeare's Tragedies Reviewed: A Spectator's Role.* New York: Peter Lang, 2015, 90.
[36] Ibid., 88.
[37] Ibid., 88.

a diabolic character. His goals are fundamentally destructive. If the festival structure generally brings clarification and renewal, Iago inverts it, bringing obfuscation and chaos.

Iago's diabolical plot of destruction is evident from the beginning of the play. In the first scene, Iago is already insulted by Othello's preference for and promotion of Cassio, and he makes it clear that his sole motive is to ruin Othello. As he says, "I follow him to serve my turn upon him" (1.1.42). It is not immediately clear what Igao's "peculiar end" is, though it appears that Othello's marriage may have given him the inspiration for how to work his evil (1.1.60). He does, however, openly make it clear that he is evil, saying "I am not what I am" (1.1.65). Iago's very character is a negation of the fullness of being. Accordingly, by Act one, scene three, he has formulated a "double knavery" that he describes a plan that involves negation and destruction:

> After some time, [he will] abuse Othello's ear
> That [Cassio] is too familiar with his wife.
> [Cassio] hath a person and a smooth dispose
> To be suspected – framed to make women false.
> The Moor is of a free and open nature
> That thinks men honest that but seem to be so,
> And will as tenderly be led by th' nose
> As asses are.
>
> (1.3.394, 395-402)

Like Don John before him, Iago is using what is not, causing Othello to recognize a fact that is not there: Othello does not know that his wife has been cheating on him with Cassio. This is exactly what Don John did to Claudio, though in the earlier case Don John was not accusing a particular man of taking Claudio's place. Here, Iago clearly wants to have the doubt he plants in Othello happen at Cassio's expense. He has two dramatic goals: to ruin Othello and to get Cassio's job for himself.

If Iago's goals are clear, his motives for desiring those goals rather confused and manifold. In addition to wanting Cassio's job, Iago also explains that

> it is thought abroad that 'twixt my sheets [Othello]
> Has done my office. I know not if 't be true,
> But I, for mere suspicion in that kind,
> Will do as if for surety.
>
> (1.3.387-390)

Iago is not sure that the accusation against Othello is true, but as Leontes later will, he conflates surety and suspicion and desires revenge. Iago is accordingly pleased that Othello "holds [him] well" because it will allow his "purpose" to "work on him" (1.3.390-391). Iago wants "to get [Cassio's] place and to plume up [his own] will" (1.3.393). He also wants to revenge himself on Othello for supposedly sleeping with Emilia and be "evened with him, wife for wife" (2.1.299). However, this confused discussion of motives makes it clear that his dramatic goals may be contradictory. If Iago ruins Othello, then the promotion to Cassio's place is for naught. Iago is unconcerned that his own lust for destruction eventually destroys his own position as well because, as a Vice character, he by nature seeks to destroy at any cost, even if the cost be to himself.

Iago begins by collecting false evidence to help him create doubt in Othello's mind. He is given an opportunity when Cassio is speaking to Desdemona as she waits for Othello's ship to come to shore in Cyprus. As the two speak, Iago narrates his observation and plans to the in-house audience:

> He takes her by the palm. Ay, well said, whisper. With as little a web as this will I ensnare as great a fly as Cassio. Ay, smile upon her, do. I will gyve thee in thine own courtship. You say true, 'tis so indeed. If such tricks as these strip you out of your lieutenantry, it had been better you had not kissed your three fingers so oft, which now again you are most apt to play the sir in. Very good; well kissed; an excellent courtesy! 'Tis so, indeed.

(2.1.167-176)

Iago's use of prose here makes the narration seem more intimate and off the cuff, and the audience gets some insight into the fictional "Then and There" he will pass off to Othello as the "Now and Here." Iago, the self-described spider, is weaving strong filaments from thin evidence. At this point, he is serving both of his intended ends: getting Cassio's "lieutenantry" for himself, and using Cassio to make Othello jealous (2.1.172). After working out how to present Cassio's behavior towards Desdemona in the worst possible light, Iago forms a plan that will disgrace Cassio and get him dismissed from his office. He will get Cassio drunk, "full of quarrel and offense," and have Roderigo "Provoke him" into a fight that will "cause these of Cyprus to mutiny" (2.2.50, 2.1.273-275). There are so many overlapping plots and motives here that even Iago says that his plan is "here, but yet confused" (2.1.311).

Iago's two objects, taking Cassio's place and getting revenge on Othello, are sought through the same means. If he cannot actually sleep with Desdemona, Iago is willing to improvise and "put the Moor / At least into a jealousy so strong / That judgment cannot cure" (2.1.300-302). This jealousy will be built upon doubt about Desdemona's love for and fidelity to Othello. Using Cassio as the means to cause this doubt ensures that Iago can serve both of his purposes. Iago's plan takes more definite shape once he has successfully had Cassio thrown out of office by the drunken brawl described above. His first objective is now complete, he has become ensign, and now he can focus on creating doubt in Othello in revenge for the various wrongs Othello supposedly did him. Iago wants so to practice that Othello will "thank…. love… and reward" him for "making him egregiously an ass" (2.1.398-309). He decides to use Cassio's

present state of disfavor to forward this end by sending the former lieutenant to Desdemona to enlist her assistance:

> for whiles this honest fool
> Plies Desdemona to repair his fortune,
> And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,
> I'll pour this pestilence into his ear:
> That she repeals him for her body's lust;
> And by how much she strives to do him good,
> She shall undo her credit with the Moor.
> So will I turn her virtue into pitch,
> And out of her own goodness make the net
> That shall enmesh them all.
>
> (2.3.353-362)

Iago is still working to create doubt in Othello, weaving something out of next to nothing, but in this instance Iago gets the strength of his drama from something true and sound: Desdemona's virtue. However, like Don John before him, what Iago actually has to show is rather innocuous. Desdemona, like the later Hermione, will simply be acting with her native kindness toward her husband's best friend. Iago knows he can count on Desdemona's kindness; as with Don John's reliance on Borachio's staging of the window scene, his concern is not primarily with his actors but rather with forming, in advance, the sight of his in-play audience. It is not so much about the drama, though he is using the scene that is really present, but the real work is metaphysical, preparing Othello to see it in a particular way. In this case, Iago's method is to predispose Othello to read, or rather misread, what he sees.

Iago's first task is to "draw the Moor apart / And bring him jump when he may Cassio find / Soliciting his wife" (2.3.385-387). This done, he masterfully manipulates the situation all through the rest of 3.3. He begins by saying, as though to himself, "Ha, I like not that," when he sees Cassio leaving from Desdemona (3.3.34). Othello is curious about what Iago mumbled but

Iago does not repeat himself. Rather, when Othello asks, “Was not that Cassio parted from my wife?” Iago responds in a way clearly meant to plant seeds of doubt:

> Cassio, my lord? No, sure, I cannot think it
> That he would steal away so guiltylike
> Seeing your coming.
>
> (3.3.37-40)

Iago knows full well who it was, and his dissembling answers are only meant to prod Othello into curiosity. Again, he is using something that is not, something he does not say, to draw Othello into doubt. Later in the scene Iago continues to ask questions he refuses to account for, wondering with apparent nonchalance about Cassio’s relationship with Desdemona. Eventually he “echo’st” everything Othello asks

> As if there were some monster in [Iago’s] thought
> Too hideous to be shown.
>
> (3.3.106-108)

The more Othello asks to hear what Iago is thinking, the more certainly Iago refuses since, as he says,

> It were not for [Othello’s] quiet nor [his] good,
> Nor for [Iago’s] manhood, honesty, and wisdom,
> To let [Othello] know [his] thoughts.
>
> (3.3.152-154)

Without saying anything directly about Cassio and Desdemona, Iago’s warning to Othello to “beware…of jealousy” is clearly supposed to suggest the very thing it warns against, occasioning a doubt that Iago can exploit (3.3.165).

What Iago does here is deftly lead Othello into a mindset the Moor would never have come to by himself. Iago’s hints and half-truths create an imaginative possibility in which Othello, by trying to fathom, finds himself immersed. Iago is masterfully seizing upon

circumstances that the world of the play presents him, but it becomes clear at this point that his primary method of destroying Othello involves driving the main action of the play inward into Othello's mind. Iago cleverly does not ask his listener to change his ideas; he simply presents a possible reality. By leading Othello into a mindset that he normally scorns, jealousy, Iago is able to redirect the same energy Othello normally would expend on virtue and turn it to vice. As Barber describes the festival saturnalia, here "the energy normally occupied in maintaining inhibition is freed;" Barber supposes that this release will be used "for celebration," but here, rather than working with external celebration, Iago has created an imaginary drama in Othello's mind. [38] Othello sees the danger of a purely interior drama, and he begins to protest that "[he]'ll see before [he] doubt[s]; when [he] doubt, prove" (3.3.190). Iago accordingly speaks more openly, but even then Iago does not openly accuse Desdemona. That would be to weaken his argument since her virtue is so manifest. Iago must eschew anything that points to exteriors. Rather, he speaks in general about the "disposition" of wives in Venice for hiding their guilt and, when Othello is skeptical that Desdemona is a typical Venetian woman, Iago points out that

> She did deceive her father, marrying you,
> And when she seemed to shake and fear your looks,
> She loved them most.
>
> (3.3.201, 206-8)

Iago is, of course, echoing the distraught parting words of Othello's father-in-law who leaves the play with this warning about Desdemona:

> Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see.
> She has deceived her father, and may thee.
>
> (1.3.292-3)

[38] Barber, 6.

There is no indication that Othello was given to jealousy before this point, but given Iago's manipulation, his character takes a jealous turn. Iago's parting shot is to beg Othello to keep his eyes open since "Much will be seen" in the behavior of Cassio and Desdemona, but Iago also adds to his ethos by pretending to worry that Othello should think his interference in this matter "too busy" (3.3.252, 253). This is almost exactly what Don John does so successfully in *Much Ado.*

Iago has done his work well, and the headache that comes on Othello at this point that does the villain a further service: in treating it, Desdemona drops the prize handkerchief that was Othello's first gift to her. Iago's gleeful reaction to obtaining it speaks to his construction of a recognition:

> Trifles light as air
> Are to the jealous confirmations strong
> As proofs of holy writ.
>
> (3.3.322-324)

In this case, Iago is using an external, acquired sign to bring about a recognition of Desdemona's guilty relation to Cassio. His original plan in this regard is to "in Cassio's lodging lose this napkin / And let [Othello] find it" (3.3.321-322). But before he can actually get to Cassio's chambers to plant the handkerchief, Othello comes back to him in distress, demanding proof. Of course, Iago can offer none, so he is forced to resort to a plain falsehood in the story of Cassio's sleep talking which, if true, would be highly inappropriate. Just as Othello's true tale of himself moved Desdemona, Iago's false tale of Cassio moves Othello deeper into the pit of jealous doubt.

Iago proceeds to drive this home by stationing Othello where he can see Cassio

> And mark the fleers, the gibes, and notable scorns

That dwell in every region of his face

as he supposedly speaks of Desdemona (4.1.82-83). Once again, this is a situation of noting like the one arranged by Don John for the Prince and Claudio; Iago is building a false recognition with true material. In this case, he knows he can count on Cassio to speak disrespectfully of Bianca; Cassio is not hiding anything and has no reason to fear speaking freely. What Iago has to do is prepare Othello to see, not what is really there, but what Iago wants him to see; he has already done this with Desdemona, and here with Cassio. It is this conversation that moves Othello to want Desdemona dead. Iago shows a yet darker side of his character when, rather than thinking of some way to save Desdemona, whose death was not part of his original plan, he responds to Othello's request to procure him poison with a veritable stage direction: "Do it not with poison. / Strangle her in her bed, even the bed she hath contaminated" (4.1.207-208). Iago not only has no scruple about sacrificing Desdemona to his revenge, he also has a playwright's eye for the dramatic, suiting the punishment to the supposed crime.

Shakespeare has made it clear that knows that drama can be restorative, but when Iago says "Work on, My medicine, work!" over the ghastly spectacle of Othello's epileptic fit, the use of the word is obviously ironic (4.1.43-44). Iago earlier says of his drama that "a little [will] act upon the blood" and "Burn like the mines of sulfur" for Othello (3.3.328-329). It is not a medicine, but a "pestilence" and a "dangerous conceit" that has a poisonous nature (2.3.356, 3.3.326). Iago's "medicine," though administered with same kinds of feigning as Maria's unfortunate "physic" of Malvolio, or Vincentio's treatment of Angelo and Isabella, is manifestly causing more ills than it cures. Othello said earlier that, if he should stop loving Desdemona, "Chaos is come again" (3.3.92). Othello's love for Desdemona was creative, but Iago has taken

the play, not from chaos to order, but from order to chaos; the move is anti-creative, diabolical. His medicine is a poison that sows destruction.

As Iago's drama progresses, he speaks less and less to the in-house audience about what he is doing. He goes from being one of the most vocal and extempore player-dramatists at the beginning of the play, explaining himself in lengthy asides, to being the most notoriously silent about his motive in the end. This silence evidences a kind of nonbeing suitable to Iago's status as an evil character. After Emilia reveals Iago's lies as such, Iago is at the center of a recognition scene he did not plan. When Othello asks, "Why [Iago] hath thus ensnared [his] soul and body," Iago is famously taciturn:

> Demand me nothing. What you know, you know.
> From this time forth I never will speak word.
> (5.2.302, 304)

He makes good on this promise and does not speak again in the play.

It is Emilia who helps orchestrate the final, true recognition in the play. She is the first to recognize Iago's artifice. She has already shown herself an astute judge of human nature when she says of Othello's accusations against Desdemona's honesty,

> I will be hanged if some eternal villain,
> Some busy and insinuating rogue,
> Some cogging, cozening slave, to get some office,
> Have not devised this slander. I will be hanged else.
> (4.2.130-133)

She is just as clear-sighted at the end of the play as she is in this speech. Once she verifies, through an Iago-like repetition of the word, that Othello's anger against Desdemona began with her "husband," she knows instantly that "He lies to th' heart!" (5.2.152, 156). She adds weight to her accusation against Iago by being willing to die for the truth of it, telling Othello that she

"care[s] not for [his] sword" (5.2.165). When she finds, through Othello's testimony, that the principal proof Iago produced was the handkerchief, she insists on speaking "as liberal as the north" and tells how she "found it / And [she] did give 't [her] husband" (5.2.220, 226). The strong emotion this true recognition produces in Othello causes him first to attempt to kill Iago, but eventually to turn against himself. This true recognition, in revealing the artificial falsehood of the one that drove him to kill Desdemona, drives Othello to kill himself. If Iago's drama to create destructive jealousy in Othello is the one that shapes the play, Emila is the one who brings about a recognition when she reveals the artifice and thus produces a measure of healing, although it is too late to save Othello and Desdemona. It is this recognition that, arising from the incidents planned by her husband, derails his plan and ends the play.

When Emilia frees Othello of the fictional "Then and There" Iago created in Othello's mind, Othello sees that Iago's artifice has divided him into two men. Othello knows what he has done, but he also knows he is "not easily jealious" and that this emotion was "wrought" on him by the clever and duplicitous Iago (5.2.345). Iago drove the play into Othello's mind, where it became a psychomachia, with Othello's reasons and what he knows on one side, and his jealousy and what he has imagined on the other.[39] Iago's conscientious narrative gaps were a metaphysical nothing that Othello filled with imaginary thoughts of Desdemona's infidelity. Iago's non-being – "I am not what I am" – has divided Othello into two, "one that lov'd not wisely but too well" (5.2.344). Othello is simultaneously the lover of Desdemona and her murderer. Emilia's revelation of Iago's artifice brings a measure of sanity back to Othello by freeing him from his own false thoughts, but he is still left with the problem of what to do now.

[39] For elaboration on *Othello's* debt to the medieval morality plays and especially psychomachia, see Bernard Spivack. *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil: The History of a Metaphor in Relation to His Major Villains.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1958.

Time will not heal this wound. There is no Duke here to raise Desdemona unexpectedly from the dead. Othello takes it upon himself to resolve this difficulty. Knowing himself divided, Othello's noble self takes arms against his murderous self. His last words describe this allegorically, telling a story from his earlier life when he was in Aleppo

> Where a malignant and a turbanned Turk
> Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
> I took by th' throat the circumcisèd dog,
> And smote him, thus.
>
> (5.2.353-6)

When Othello kills himself upon the completion of this speech, it becomes clear that he sees himself as both criminal and executioner, his noble nature executing the "malignant and turbaned Turk" who had injured a Venetian, Desdemona, and therefore, like the "circumcisèd dog" in Aleppo, "traduced the state" and deserves death. Othello restores order to this play by becoming one man again, rejecting the "chaos" Iago created and owning his own guilt. It is not so much that Othello kills himself in despair as that he, as the most noble character in the play, executes the judgment of the state upon his own evil actions. Othello "die[s] upon a kiss" to show that the jealous man Iago's non-being had created is gone and only the Othello who loves Desdemona remains; the play has returned to where it began: the love between Othello and Desdemona. Iago, as a master manipulator who uses what is not, does ruin Othello's life with the false drama his nothing causes in Othello's mind, but once Othello is free of Iago's deception, the Moor is noble enough to bring the play to a just, if tragic, conclusion.

This pattern of internal, metaphysical drama that leads to external destruction rather than to renewal is repeated in the first half of *The Winter's Tale*. However, this play gets a second half in which Time and Paulina are able to help things to a happier conclusion. In relation to *The*

Winter's Tale, Ben Jonson famously quipped that Shakespeare "wanted art and sometimes sense; for in one of his plays he brought in a number of men, saying they had suffered ship-wrack in Bohemia, where is no sea near by 100 miles."[40] Jonson's irritation is excusable. Bohemia is unarguably land-locked, although there was a brief period when it boasted a coast on the Adriatic Sea. However, to accuse Shakespeare of mere bad geography is unsatisfying, especially since Abraham Ortelius's contemporary atlas *Theatrum orbis terrarium* has an accurately seacoast-less map of Bohemia.[41] It seems more likely that Shakespeare knew what he was about.[42] Coleridge's view of *The Tempest* is that "errors in Chronology and Geography…count for nothing" and his words can apply equally to *The Winter's Tale.*[43] The "unpath'd waters [and] undream'd shores" emphasize the imaginary nature of the play (4.4.567). There is no seacoast of Bohemia, just as there is no Leontes, no Polixenes. All of these people and places exist only because the playwright and the audience have a tacit agreement that allows them to come into being. The bear-ridden seacoast that is not there acts in much the same way that the chorus's speech in *Henry V* does: it invites the audience to take an active role in the creation of what they see on the stage. Here, though, rather than merely filling in gaps between reality and fiction, the spectators are invited to fill in details of a wholly imaginary world.

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[40] Jonson, Ben, and David Laing. *Notes of Ben Jonson's Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden.* London: Printed for the Shakespeare Society, 1842, 46. See Adkins, Joan F. "'Unpath'd Waters, Undream'd Shores: Art and Artifice in the Winter's Tale." *Shakespeare and Renaissance Association of West Virginia - Selected Papers* 13, (1988): 25-32.

[41] Ortelius, Abraham. *Theatrum orbis terrarium Abrahami Orteli Antuerp.* London: John Norton, 1606, Plate 2. *Luna: Folger Digital Collection*, Digital Image 58679.

[42] Shakespeare reversed the locations of Silicia and Bohemia as found in Robert Greene's *Pandosto* but Greene actually refers to "the coast of Bohemia." Greene, Robert. *Pandosto: The Triumph of Time.* London: Thomas Orwin, 1588. *Early English Books Online*, image 24.

[43] Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. "Lecture 1: Thursday, 17 December 1818 (The Tempest)." In *Coleridge: Lectures on Shakespeare (1811-1819)*, edited by Roberts Adam, 131-140. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016, 136.

John Arthos observes that, in this play, "Time after time an occasion is taken to give the idea of something staged."[44] Self-consciously theatrical, *The Winter's Tale* famously deals with issues regarding art and nature, especially in the pastoral sheep-shearing scene, but the chief player-dramatist, Paulina, is a touchstone of this exploration of art versus nature as well. Paulina's statue unveiling scene at the end of the play is a justly famous example of recognition and it brings healing, although it does not undo the past. However, there are several other player-dramatists in the play who stage recognitions, including one of the strangest in all of Shakespeare: Leontes.

Leontes's behavior in the first half of *The Winter's Tale*, and especially in the beginning of the play, is, to put it mildly, difficult, and the cause of his jealousy attracted a great deal of attention in the mid twentieth-century.[45] Roger J. Triennes and Nevill Coghill, to name only two critics of that time, both invent prehistories for Leontes to explain his sudden descent into jealousy.[46] Criticism on Leontes since the 1960s has been scarce, though Scott Colley did write an article in 1983 explaining Leontes's jealousy by claiming that "Leontes must understand suffering and loss before he can really know love and happiness."[47] Critical interest in Leontes has generally waned, but recently Scott Crider persuasively argues that Leontes is performing "the roles of both Iago and Othello."[48] This completes the internal movement seen in Othello;

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[44] Arthos, John. *The Art of Shakespeare.* London: Bowes and Bowes, 1964, 173.
[45] For a history of criticism on Leontes in the first half of the twentieth century and prior, see Norman Nathan, "Leontes' Provocation." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 19, no. 1 (1968): 19-24.
[46] See Roger J. Trienens, "The Inception of Leontes' Jealousy in The Winter's Tale." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 4, no. 3 (July 1953): 321–26 and Nevill Coghill, "Six Points of Stage-Craft in *The Winter's Tale*." *Shakespeare Survey* 2 (1958).
[47] Colley, Scott. "Leontes' Search for Wisdom in The Winter's Tale." *South Atlantic Review* 48, no. 1 (January 1983): 43–53, 43.
[48] Crider, Scott F. (Scott Forrest). *With What Persuasion: An Essay on Shakespeare and the Ethics of Rhetoric.* New York: Peter Lang, 2009, 147.

Leontes does not need a Vice character to manipulate him from the outside, but rather the danger originates in his own mind. For no particular reason, Leontes becomes possessed by a mania that involves an imagined idea: the idea that Hermione is sleeping with Polixenes. The doubt apparently begins when Hermione assures Leontes that Polixenes will lengthen his visit. Leontes becomes doubtful because, as he says, "At my request" Polixenes "would not" agree to stay longer (1.2.87). The implication is that Polixenes is more moved by the petition of Hermione than by that of Leontes. Wondering about this tiny discrepancy is enough, and Leontes soon imagines a fiction that will drive the action of the rest of the play. Once Leontes admits a doubt about his wife and Polixenes, every "trifle light as air," as Iago would say, becomes something with which he proves it (*Othello*, 3.3.322). Leontes himself creates the circumstances that allow his supposed recognition to take shape. By the time Hermione gives Polixenes her hand, Leontes has already decided that it is "Too hot, too hot!" and his "heart dances" in the kind of wonder recognition creates (1.2.108, 110). The fact he has supposedly recognized, Hermione's infidelity, is, in truth, false, but his own doubt has made it seem reality.

In terms of structure, there is no question that the greatest effect of Leontes's "recognition" of Hermione's infidelity is to set the play on a tragic trajectory. Insofar as there is any discernable motive of his behavior, it is apparently self-contained in the act: having allowed the thought that his wife is unfaithful, he would rather prove her unfaithful than be mistaken in his supposition. He is unwilling, as Antigonus expresses it, to use his "silent judgment" to "tr[y]" the idea of his wife's infidelity, see it as unlikely, and let it go "without more overture," precisely because it would reveal his idea of her as incorrect (2.1.171, 172). At its root, then, Leontes's

fault is more pride than jealousy. It is the unquestioning insistence on his own way of seeing things that causes trouble for the other characters.

As with Don John and Iago, Leontes has to work to make sure his audience, that is, himself, sees things in accord with his predetermined end. He tries hard to reason himself into his conclusion with "a catalogue of only apparently reasonable enthymemes and mania exercises of *energeia*."[49] He has much ado to keep himself sure of his conclusion about Hermione. A long section at the end of Act 2, scene 1, is comprised of Antigonus and a Lord trying to talk the king out of his madness. Antigonus not unreasonably assumes that Leontes has been "abused. . . by some putter-on / That will be damned for 't" (2.1.141-2). But Leontes himself is the villain, willing to sentence his wife while admitting that he "lack'd sight" of this matter for proof (2.1.177). "All other circumstances made up to th' deed," but as for "seeing," Leontes deems it unimportant (2.1.278-9). Like Hamlet with Claudius, Leontes is so "satisfied" that he "need[s] no more than what [he] knows" (2.1.189-90).

Paulina becomes an important character at this point in the play, although she does not appear until Act 2, scene 2. Paulina comes to the prison and begs to take Hermione's newborn baby girl to the king so as to "soften" his heart (2.2.38). Emilia, the queen's maid, acknowledges that

> There is no lady living
> So meet for this great errand.
>
> (2.2.43-44)

Leontes himself acknowledges as much: he "knew she would" come and speak to him and preemptively "charg'd" that Paulina should not come near him (2.3.44, 43). Paulina's initial

[49] Crider, Scott F. *With What Persuasion*, 147.

method with Leontes is to use her own "wit" and "boldness" and apply "words as medicinal as true" to move the King to repentance (2.2.50, 51, 2.3.37). She does use her words to some extent, but she trusts chiefly in the "silence. . . of pure innocence," that is, in the baby girl whose "very mould and frame" mark her as the true child of Leontes (2.2.38, 2.3.103). Paulina knows that the queen is innocent, and she accordingly leaves Leontes with what she supposes to be the best agent of that truth: the baby. Paulina naïvely trusts that Leontes will let himself be moved by the child. In a play concerned with the tension between art and nature, it is worth noting that Paulina begins with a natural approach, leaving the baby to act upon Leontes without the aid of art. However, this project backfires. The King is not moved by the simple, natural truth. The baby Paulina left as a rhetorical tool is sentenced to death, which ultimately loses Paulina her husband Antigonus as well. Paulina's pleading with unadorned nature is in vain.

Leontes offers his wife what he calls a "just and open trial," but when he says that Hermione's "actions," that is, the actions he has imagined for her, "are [his] dreams," he speaks with more truth than he knows (2.3.205, 3.2.82). The unfaithful actions he assigns to Hermione are, indeed, just that: dreams, fictions. Even the oracle, whose truth ought to cause a recognition of his fault, Leontes spurns as "mere falsehood" (3.2.141). Leontes's mistaken conviction lacks logic, visual confirmation, and sanction from the gods; he is operating under the influence of his own illusion. Scott Crider reads Leontes's actions as a cautionary tale of "how we ought to, and ought not to, speak to ourselves."[50] This certainly gives a more thematic and less structural interpretation to the sudden jealousy of the King. However, there is an irony to taking the play as

[50] Crider, *With What Persuasion*, 147.

a moral injunction since this, in itself, is to allow something fictional to inform reality, the very thing Leontes is doing to such disastrous effect.

It is not until Mamillius is suddenly struck down that Leontes sees his error. Just as suddenly as his jealous fit comes on, the spell is broken, which Shakespeare brilliantly illustrates with a single broken line of iambic pentameter:

> SERVANT: The Prince your son, with mere conceit and fear
> Of the Queen's speed, is gone.
> LEONTES: How? Gone?
> SERVANT: Is dead.
>
> (3.2.144-145)

Leontes's setting down of his "own suspicion" is as sudden as his taking it up (3.2.151).

Paulina, having failed previously, begins a different drama at this point that will ultimately bring this play to a happier conclusion than *Othello*. When the queen falls down in response to news of Mamillius's death. Paulina says that the "news is mortal to the Queen" (3.2.148). After she exits and returns, she laments all of Leontes's actions singly, but none so much as his causing the death of the queen:

> I say she's dead. I'll swear 't. If word nor oath
> Prevail not, go and see. If you can bring
> Tincture or luster in her lip, her eye,
> Heat outwardly or breath within, I'll serve you
> As I would do the gods.
>
> (3.2.203-207)

There seems to be no question about the queen's death, but of course one will be raised relative to this moment at the end of the play. For the moment, the false death of the queen does what false deaths have done in the other plays: it causes repentance. Leontes sees the error of his ways, and he admits that he has "desrv'd / All tongues to talk their bitt'rest" (3.2.215-6).

Hermione's false death is different from her analogues in Hero and Helena because of how much time passes before she and Leontes are reunited. Paulina is waiting for the oracle to be fulfilled, but dramatically, the sixteen-year pause also gives Leontes time to have a more convincing conversion then either Claudio or Bertrand.

Indeed, the time that has often been lacking in other plays whose recognitions happen at the end, is present in this play in abundance. The bridge between the tragic and comic sections of the play is built by Time, who here becomes a character in the play. Time creates by far the widest "gap" or occasion of any player-dramatist: fully "sixteen years" embodied in a mere sixteen couplets during which the "Gentle spectators," that is, the in-house audience, are explicitly asked to "imagine" (4.1.7, 6.). Soji Iwasaki makes the case for Time as "responsible for the whole action of *The Winter's Tale.*"[51] This is borne out by the text, which describes Time as able to "o'erthrow law" and "o'erwhelm custom," giving his "wings" and "glass" power to move the play along in defiance of the law of unities (4.1.8, 9, 4, 16). José A. Pérez Díez has recently observed something similar about the way Time has been staged in a wide range of twenty-first century productions of this play. Commenting specifically on a Branagh and Ashford production in London that gave Time's speech to Paulina, played by Judi Dench, Díez follows the speculation of Richard Wilson and theorizes that Dench "was meant to be interpreted. . . as a kind of surrogate authorial figure, almost standing for the Shakespearian

[51] Iwasaki, Soji. "Veritas Filia Temporis and Shakespeare." *English Literary Renaissance* 3, no. 2 (1973): 249-263, 261. Specifically she ties the plot of the play to Geoffrey Whitney's use of "Veritas temporis filia" in his popular 1586 *A Choice of Emblemes,* and follows the motif to Peter Pett's 1599 *Time's Journey to seeke his Daughter* which associates the emblem with the calumniated wife motif taken up in *The Winter's Tale.*

establishment, and perhaps even for Shakespeare himself."[52] Time does claim authorial provenance over the play when he enjoins the audience to "remember well, I mentioned a son o' th' King's, which Florizel I now name to you."[53] The "I mentioned" is particularly interesting. It is Hermione, not Time, who voices the only previous reference to Polixenes's son in 1.2.[54] The implication is that all things said in the past belong to Time, becomes part of Time's "argument" or "Time's News" (4.1.29,26). It is Time that brings Florizel to Perdita,[55] Time that parts them,[56] Time that indicates the propitious moment for Hermione's statue to take life and descend.[57] Although there are clearly characters at work to help bring about specific outcomes, none of them can escape the context of Time. Since all things are "brought forth" by Time, Time is the dramatist of recognition *par excellence* (*Winter's Tale*, 4.1.27).

Although Time, here a player-dramatist of recognition by virtue of his explicit presence in the play, is responsible for the whole action, Nature seems, at least implicitly, to be the main shaper of the sheep-shearing scene.[58] Here the play is firmly in the realm of comedy, specifically pastoral. The pastoral setting is one that, by proposing a contrast between the natural and the artificial, already invites the sort of self-consciousness Shakespeare is showing in using player-

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[52] Diez, Jose A. Perez. "The Wide Gap of Sixteen Years: The Performance of Time in the Winter's Tale in Britain, 2001-2017." *Shakespeare Bulletin* 36, no. 2 (2018): 299 -317, 308, 309.
[53] Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, 4.1.21-23
[54] Hermione suggests that, if Polixenes had desired to leave Silicia because he "longs to see his son," then it would have been a good reason for him to go home. (1.2.34).
[55] He says, "I bless the *time* when my good falcon made her flight across Thy father's ground" (4.4.14-16, emphasis added.)
[56] Polixenes to Camillo, "'Tis time to part them." (4.4.343).
[57] "'Tis time. Descend." (5.3.99).
[58] cf. Iwasaki, 261. "as far as the pastoral Act IV is concerned, Nature seems equally responsible for what happens."

dramatists.[59] Edward Tayler points out that "Pastoral is by definition implicitly concerned with the discrepancies that may be observed between rural and urban, country and courtly, simple and complex, natural and artificial."[60] This results in a high self-consciousness because "Bucolic fiction requires before all else a poet and audience sufficiently civilized to appreciate primitive simplicity, to recognize that the gain of Art means the loss of Nature."[61] Bringing together so many opposites makes the pastoral setting a space eminently suitable for the kind of holiday C.L. Barber describes. Indeed, he himself says that "festive comedy, as [he] discuss[es] it . . ., is a 'version of pastoral.'"[62]

Shakespeare introduces Polixenes as the player-dramatist to stage a recognition in this pastoral situation. Structurally speaking, comic recognitions are generally at the end and, indeed, the recognition is often, though not always, what facilitates the happy ending. Polixenes, however, is using drama as Polonius does, to seek information, though his method is the oft-used disguise. Since his son is "missingly. . . retir'd from court," the King and Camillo "disguise" themselves to investigate (4.2.31-2, 53). He already knows that his son's behavior might have to do with a woman, but he wants to find out for himself, to see her and, if possible, to separate his son from her. Specifically, the King desires to "have some question" with the shepherd whose daughter he suspects of having entangled the young Prince's affections (4.2.47). In order to speak freely with such a lowly man, the King and Camillo must "not appear… what [they] are" (4.2.46-7). Polixenes and Camillo are clearly baiting their hook with falsehood and hoping to

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[59] For a concise history on the genre, see Frank Kermode, *English Pastoral Poetry: From the Beginnings to Marvell.* London: G.G. Harrap, 1952.
[60] Tayler, Edward William. *Nature and Art in Renaissance Literature.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1964, 5.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Barber, 12, n.6.

catch truth. The king could simply go in his own person and demand answers, but his taking up a disguise makes it clear that he plans on using the force of recognition, revealing himself as King, if he can break off the match between Florizel and Perdita in no other way. The King is materially assisted in his endeavor by the context of the sheep-shearing. The pastoral situation is naturally home to imaginative transgressions of the boundaries that hold the workaday world. In this case, there is a prince "obscur'd / With a swain's wearing" and a "poor lowly maid, Most goddess-like prank'd up" (4.4.9-10). The dissembling is frightful for Perdita, who feels presumptuous, but Florizel justifies his descent into common habits with reference to stories of the gods and their loves (4.4.25ff).

Though she is dressed as Flora, not all of Perdita's role in the sheep-shearing is imaginary. She really is the hostess of the feast and, as such, it is her duty to welcome the disguised Polixenes and Camillo. The charm of her conversation with Polixenes regarding art and nature is well known.[63] She prefers nature since it comes from God and so she argues against art; he argues that art is part of nature, since God created the minds that create the art. The lovely irony is that she argues against her own marriage with Florizel since it would be, as she supposes, to "marry / A gentler scion to the wildest stock" (4.4.92-3), while Polixenes, who is there expressly to break up such a match, argues for just such a grafting. Indeed, though arguing against art, Perdita feels that the sheep-shearing has made her a part of a "play" like the "Whitsun pastorals" (4.4.133-4). She complains that her "robe," that is, her artful costume, "does change [her] disposition," and yet she is happy enough to accept the wooing of Florizel in this guise, even though fearful of the King (4.4.134-5).

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[63] See Tayler, Edward William. "Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*" in *Nature and Art in Renaissance Literature.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1964, or Livingston, Mary L. "The Natural Art of the Winter's Tale." *Modern Language Quarterly* 30, (1969): 340-355.

In terms of information gathering, Polixenes is more successful than Polonius or Hamlet. After Polixenes has learned of Florizel's intentions toward Perdita from the shepherd, he begins to prepare his recognition scene by asking Florizel where his father is (4.4.394). He repeatedly enjoins Florizel to tell his absent father of the match with Perdita, and when Florizel persists in denying this request, he dramatically unveils himself. Although Perdita feared some such revelation, the shepherd has had no reason to expect it. The wonder that the King's sudden unmasking reveals is, accordingly, felt most by the old shepherd who cries, "Oh my heart!" when he is apparently overwhelmed by wonder (4.4.24). The King puts on a serious and punishing tone fitting to his state and threatens "hanging" for the old shepherd and torture for Perdita before storming off in a rage (4.4.416, 421, 425). Perdita is "not much afeared" by this since she sees herself, even as a shepherdess, as equal to the King in the eye of heaven. The "self-same sun that shines upon [Polixenes's] court" warms her forest cottage as well (4.4.442,444). However, this idealism is unpractical and she knows it, so she gives Florizel full freedom to back out of his promise to her.

At this point, the in-house audience knows there is an easy resolution to these difficulties. Perdita does, indeed, have lineage that justifies Florizel's intentions and, further, one that speaks even to her own stated ideas about what is natural and what is not. Enter Camillo, who here acts as a sort of dramatist, even one of recognition, though not wittingly since he does not know Perdita's origins. He does, however, help the young people feign their way into Leontes's court.[64] His purpose, indeed, is not merely good will to the young people. Camillo also hopes to

[64] Perdita speaks of it in dramatic terms. When Camillo instructs her to put on a disguise, she says "I see the play so lies that I must bear a part" (4.4.655-6).

"force" the King after the pair so that he, himself, may "re-view Silicia," "for whose sight [he] has a woman's longing" (4.4.665-7).

The key unknown issue that must be revealed for all of this to end well is Perdita's true origin. The shepherd and his son provide for this when, in their zeal to prove themselves unrelated to Perdita, they produce the box of things found with her. This box will eventually prove her to be the daughter of the unfairly disgraced Hermione because it contains "The mantle of Queen Hermione's; her jewel about the neck of it" and "the letters of Antigonus found with it, which [the King's court] know to be his character" (5.2.32-35). This is to be a classic recognition by token. But this touching reunion, toward which the play has been building, is kept from the sight of the audience. In Act 5, scene 2 the reunion is simply narrated by people who were there. This switch from *mimesis* to *diegesis* is odd: why should Shakespeare deprive his audience of this consoling and emotional ending?

Two overlapping explanations suggest themselves. The first is that this is not, in fact, the end of the play; Paulina still has her statue scene to stage, and putting less emphasis on this first reunion scene throws more emphasis on the second. But also, the *diegesis* invites imagination from the audience. Rather than showing the in-house audience a scene that may or may not be affecting, they are rather told of one and left to imagine it themselves. This ensures that each viewer imagines the scene in the way most affecting to him or herself. It is the same sort of creation of imaginative opportunity that Shakespeare has been using since the play began in a country that does not actually exist as he presents it. By not showing the reunion, Shakespeare ensures that each person there sees a personalized construction of it in his or her inward eye. The off-stage recognition also sets the stage for what happens next when the gentlemen discuss the

work of "Julio Romano" who has created a statue "so near to Hermione. . . that they say one would speak to her and stand in hope of answer" (5.2.97, 100, 101). And thus the play comes to Act 5, scene 3, one of the most famous recognitions in the whole Shakespearean canon.

There is some ambiguity about how exactly this recognition works: Either Paulina is lying in 3.2 when she says of Hermione that "The sweet'st, dear'st creature's dead," thus making the later statue scene something akin to Hero's resurrection in *Much Ado*, or she was telling the truth and she really has the magical power to make a statue come to life (3.2.201).[65] The analogues to both Proserpina and Pygmalion are simultaneously present.[66] In either case it is clear that Paulina's experience of Leontes and the infant Perdita has taught her not to trust in unaided nature. The in-house audience is told that she has been going to her "remov'd house" "twice or thrice a day, ever since the death of Hermione" (5.2.107, 105-106). Whether this indicates that Paulina kept Hermione hidden for sixteen years or that she studied magic that will bring stone to life, in either case it indicates that she is using an artifice of some kind.

When Paulina first announced the Queen's death, Leontes repented. Her drama therefore immediately brought a measure of healing. But Paulina did not reunite Hermione and Leontes right away because she was being obedient to the oracle that said Leontes would "live without an heir, if that which is lost be not found" (3.2.135-6). As Paulina waits on the oracle, she keeps the memory of Hermione, "a perfect woman," alive for the King, and does not hesitate to add reminders about who it was who "kill'd" her (5.1.15). She even gets Leontes to "swear" not to marry anyone without her leave, while also qualifying this injunction by saying he must abide by

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[65] The statue scene is interpreted in both ways. Bruce R. Smith accounts for Paulina's going to her home a few times a day by saying that he has made "Hermione's effigy. . . the object of a cult." Smith. Bruce R. "Sermons in Stone: Shakespeare and Renaissance Sculpture." *Shakespeare Studies 17 (1985)*,19.
[66] See DiMatteo, Anthony. "'Antiqui Dicunt': Myth and its Critic in the Winter's Tale." *Notes and Queries* 43, no. 2 (1996): 165.

his oath unless he sees "another, / As like Hermione as is her picture" (5.1.69, 73). Now that Perdita has returned, Paulina knows that the revelation of the supposedly dead queen has divine sanction, and Leontes's period of penance is over.

Paulina's use of artifice is, in a way, superfluous. After the gods have returned Perdita, Paulina could simply have told everyone the queen was alive. But her dramatic staging of the statue scene adds particular consolation to the reunion, gradually preparing everyone for the shock. This recognition is accordingly brilliantly choreographed. First, Paulina has drawn the King and Perdita (as well as everyone else) to her "gallery" of "singularities" (5.3.10, 12). She has, therefore, complete control over the physical space involved in this scene. She keeps the "dead likeness" of the queen "apart," and she bids her in-play audience to "prepare" to see before she reveals the statue (3.15,18). She describes the space as a "chapel" and says she keeps a "curtain" over the image (5.3.86, 68).[67]

At first the mere sight of the statue produces "silence" that "shows off. . . wonder," a reaction appropriate to recognition, here a recognition – the in-play audience supposes – of amazing artistic skill (5.3.21, 22). Paulina then presses her in-play audience for verbal reaction, asking the King if the image "Comes not something near" to his wife's looks (5.3.23). Asking Leontes to compare what he currently sees with his memory of Hermione keeps him focused on the statue as statue. The question is, how does it measure up, as art? He notices that the image presents Hermione's "natural posture" and so fits his memory of her, but he also remarks that "Hermione was not so much wrinkled" when last he saw her (5.3.23, 28). This discrepancy Paulina attributes to the skill of the carver, who "makes her as she liv'd now" (5.3.31, 32). The

[67] Described thus, Shakespeare is cleverly hearkening to his Blackfriar's theater which was built in a former religious house; although it was not the part of the house that had been the chapel, the idea would have suggested itself to the contemporary audience.

"makes" emphasizes the artificial, while the "liv'd now" hints at what is to come later in the scene. Paulina repeatedly juxtaposes art and nature, subtly preparing her audience.

The statue has "majesty," but it also has "magic": it causes Leontes to remember his "evils" and it causes Perdita to "stand… like stone" herself (5.3.39, 40, 42). Leontes's response to the image, his initial recognition, is predominantly shame. The statue "chide[s]" him, "rebuke[s]" him, "pierc[es]" him (5.3.24, 37, 32). The statue has, simply by being seen, caused the same kind of remembrance in Leontes that Paulina has been actively creating for the past "sixteen winters," revealing again the guilt that is already there (5.3.50). Camillo is struck with Leontes's reaction, as is Polixenes, and both of them wish to assuage the guilty feelings the statue has created, telling Leontes his "sorrow was too sore laid on" (5.3.49). Clearly the sight of the statue is hugely powerful. But there are limits to this power. Leontes can recognize his wrong, he can feel it anew, he can repent, but none of this brings his wife back to life. Even if the statue were to artificially come to life, it would not undo the past, would not replace the natural presence of his wife. At this point, Paulina again emphasizes the artificiality of the statue: the paint is not dry on the "poor image," and she attempts to draw the curtain on it. But she also cleverly warns that the King "will think anon [the statue] moves" and hints at what is to come (5.3.61).

The statue scene in *The Winter's Tale* is unique in that it creates an analogous kind of imaginative experience for the in-play audience and the in-house audience at the same time. In both cases, the "Now and Here" and "Then and There" are overlaid on top of each other in a way that makes it hard to know which is which. For the audience in the theater, Paulina's constant reminders about the artificial nature of the statue are necessary, since it is clear that the statue is

simply an actress standing still. However, for the in-play audience, the hints that the statue is alive prepare them for what is going to happen next. When Paulina insists, “You do awake your faith,” the “you” could apply equally to either audience: the one needs to believe something natural is artificial, the other that something artificial is natural (5.3.95). In both cases Paulina’s directing heightens the impact of the statue’s coming to life. The in-house audience has already, by virtue of coming into a theater, tacitly agreed to see whatever they are supposed to see: if Paulina says it is a statue, it is a statue, even if it is obviously an actress. But by constantly emphasizing the artificiality, Paulina creates a distance between perception and reality. This distance ensures that when the statue comes to life, even though the actress playing Hermione was obviously alive the whole time, it is still surprising. For the audience in the play, however, the process is reversed. For them, Paulina must create a doubt about the artificiality of the statue, and she does this, Iago-like, by using what is not, suggesting that they ought not to think exactly what she wants them to think. They begin to imagine that the statue is alive and, when their imagined reality turns out to be actual reality, Leontes, especially, is consoled for his earlier fault.

What happens at the moment of recognition is marvelous. Paulina dramatically strikes music and commands the statue:

> ’Tis time; descend; be stone no more; approach;
> Strike all that look upon with marvel. Come;
> I’ll fill your grave up. Stir; nay, come away;
> Bequeath to death your numbness; for from him
> Dear life redeems you. You perceive she stirs.
> (5.3.99-103)

When Hermione descends, it is clear that artifice of some kind has been used. But this art, Paulina insists, is not “wicked” or “unlawful” but rather “holy” and “lawful” (5.3.91, 96, 104).

The revelation of a living Hermione is so shocking that Perdita is overcome, and she does not speak again before the play ends. Leontes, too, wonders, partly incredulous, but willing to accept the miracle. He famously begs "If this be magic, let it be an art as lawful as eating" (5.3.110-111).[68]

Leontes, the chief offender, has repented, order has been restored to his kingdom, and he has been given back what his foolishness lost. But all is not as it was. At the end of the play, everyone goes off stage to "answer to his part perform'd in this wide gap of time" (5.3.153-4). This is a fitting end since Time, in fact, has left his mark on this play as well. Although it is he who held both parts of the plot together and helped effect the reunion, Hermione's wrinkles are a testament to a different side of his presence. The family has been reunited and all the breaches healed, but this was not without its cost. For one thing, Mamillius is still dead. However, Martin Mueller argues that Time triumphs in the play because the characters become resigned to the way things are. "The wrinkles of Hermione," he say, "symbolize the acceptance of temporality, and in the spirit of resigned acceptance. . . time is both conquering and conquered."[69] Paulina's drama brings a measure of healing, but this healing cannot undo the past because Time was essential in bringing it about. Time was essential for "unfold[ing] error" and revealing Perdita, but meanwhile he also made "stale" the characters who began the play sixteen years ago (4.1.2, 13). Time can help to resolve difficulties, but not without cost.

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[68] See Robert Appelbaum "'Lawful as Eating': Art, Life, and Magic in the Winter's Tale." *Shakespeare Studies*, vol. 42, 2014, for an extensive discussion of Leontes's meaning in this passage. The gist of his argument is that "to ask or command that the art of magic be as lawful as eating is to ask or command that art be classified among those activities that, like eating, cannot be prohibited. It is to ask or command that it be fitted into a scheme where an art may be assimilated to nature in this sense" (38).

[69] Mueller, Martin. "Hermione's Wrinkles, Or, Ovid Transformed: An Essay on 'The Winter's Tale.'" *Comparative Drama* 5, no. 3 (1971): 226-239, 236.

The acceptance of temporality is also an important theme in Shakespeare's final play, *The Tempest.* As with the seacoast of Bohemia, so Prospero's island is a fictional place (admittedly loosely based on the Bermuda pamphlets), but also somewhere in the Mediterranean, between Tunis and Naples.[70] Because of his mastery of his art, no other player-dramatist has things so fully in hand, and no other manipulates his audience, both in the play and out of it, with such consummate skill as Prospero. Perhaps this is why Prospero has always dominated the critical tradition of the play. Not that there is much consensus about him in twenty-first century criticism. Recent critics have a wide variety of interpretations of Prospero; he is seen variously as a Catholic priest, a homeschooling parent, a vehicle for expressing Shakespeare's doubt about humanist pedagogy, a proto-scientist, and, most often, a tyrant or colonizing oppressor.[71] Twentieth-century criticism often saw Prospero as a magus or theurgist.[72] But the most common critical tradition is exemplified when Mary Ann McGrail casually says that Prospero has "directorial control" over the plot of the play.[73] It has become almost a commonplace in the critical tradition to see Prospero as a stand-in for Shakespeare himself. Samuel Taylor Coleridge

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[70] See Stritmatter, Roger A., and Lynne Kositsky. *On the Date, Sources and Design of Shakespeare's the Tempest.* Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2013. Even though the authors have some questionable theories about the date of the play, they concede that it must have been revised and restaged after the Bermuda pamphlets.

[71] Edmondson, Todd. "Prospero's Exile and the Tempest of the English Reformation." *Religion and the Arts* 14, no. 3 (2010): 252–66.; Shin, Hiewon. "Single Parenting, Homeschooling: Prospero, Caliban, Miranda." *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 48, no. 2 (2008): 373-393.; Kumamoto, Chikako D. "Magic and the Early Schoolroom of Humanist Learning in The Tempest." *Journal of the Wooden O* 13 (2013): 63–80.; Spiller, Elizabeth. "Shakespeare and the Making of Early Modern Science: Resituating Prospero's Art." *South Central Review* 26, no. 1 (2009): 24-41.; McGrail, Mary Ann. "The Tempest: A Plague upon the Tyrant That I Serve." in *Tyranny in Shakespeare*, 117-55. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2001.

[72] Curry, Walter Clyde. "Sacerdotal Science in Shakespeare's 'The Tempest.'" *Shakespeare's Philosophical Patterns.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1937.

[73] Ibid., 117.

first called Prospero "the very Shakespeare himself, as it were, of the tempest," but it is Thomas Campbell's reading that widely influenced subsequent criticism:

> Shakspeare, [sic] as if conscious that [*The Tempest*] would be his last [play], and as if inspired to typify himself, has made its here a natural, a dignified, and benevolent magician, who could conjure up spirits from the vasty deep, and command supernatural agency by the most seemingly natural and simple means. – And this final play of our poet has magic indeed; for what can be simpler in language than the courtship of Ferdinand and Miranda, and yet what can be more magical than the sympathy with which is subdues us? Here Shakespeare himself is Prospero, or rather the superior genius who commands both Prospero and Ariel.[74]

It is easy to see why this interpretation became so prominent. Consider the beginning of the play. Gillian Woods points out that "The very first scene, the tempest itself, establishes an ongoing sense of representational uncertainty."[75] Actors come on to the stage and present a ship sinking in a tempest. The theater audience knows they are watching actors present a storm on a stage but assumes that, on the level of the play, there is really a storm and a shipwreck. When the mariners yell "All lost! To prayers, to prayers! All lost!" the audience assumes that the fictional ship is done for (1.1.51). However, the in-house audience learns in the next scene, along with the in-play audience of Miranda, that even on the level of the play the storm was fictional. Prospero explains that, as to the "direful spectacle of the wrack" he has

> with such provision in [his] art
> So safely ordered that there is no soul –
> No, not so much perdition as an hair
> Betid to any creature in the vessel
> Which thou heardst cry, which thou saw'st sink.
> (1.2.26, 28-32)

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[74] Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. "The Tempest" in *Shakespearean Criticism, Vol. 1*, edited by Thomas Middleton Rayson, London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, 1961, 113 – 123, 119; Campbell, Thomas. *The Dramatic Works of William Shakspeare: With Remarks on His Life and Writings.* London: Routledge, Warnen, & Routledge, 1838, lxiv.

[75] Woods, Gillian. 2014. "Indulgent Representation: Theatricality and Sectarian Metaphor in The Tempest." *Literature Compass* 11 (11): 703–14, 706.

Prospero's art has upset the usual conventions of how the imagination of the audience is supposed to work, defamiliarizing the play-going experience, as Brian Gibbons says, making the audience "question how they interpret what they see and how they interpret the codes by which art reflects reality."[76] Where theater-goers have learned to fill in the gaps, imagining a thousand men for every one they see, Prospero's storm needs no such imaginative filling up: it really was imaginary the whole time. The distance between the matrices of "Then and There" and "Now and Here" is being confused from the very outset of the play. James Russell Lowell is the first to draw attention to the self-consciously theatrical nature of the play, claiming "[t]he whole play, indeed, is a succession of illusions."[77] What this means is that those in the theater audience learn in the first scene that nothing about this play will be predictable. The play challenges the expectations of both the people in it and the people watching it.

Prospero is analogous to Shakespeare, but he is not Shakespeare himself; he is rather a powerful player-dramatist who controls nearly every aspect of his play.[78] Prospero is a powerful player-dramatist because he has a thorough understanding of human nature that allows him to plan for all contingencies. He has had to gain this understanding in a hard school. The long scene at 1.2 is vital to understanding his character and the character of his play. Prospero explains to Miranda how it was his art that led to the bitter experience of exile. He explains that, in Milan, he

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[76] Gibbons, Brian. "The Tempest and Interruptions." *Cahiers Élisabéthains: A Biannual Journal of English Renaissance Studies* 45 (April 1994): 47–58, 52.

[77] Lowell, James Russell. 1870. "Shakespeare Once More" in *Among My Books.* Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1888,151-227, 200.

[78] Mary Ann McGrail concedes this, but she also argues that it is "a play in which nothing happens. There are no deaths and no marriages, even the guilty are not adequately punished." (117). McGrail is obviously biased toward exterior actions, though even of these there are quite a number that she ignores. But to hold that nothing happens in *The Tempest* is to ignore the many individual human dramas that develop over the course of the play.

was “the prime duke” and was “for the liberal arts / Without a parallel” (1.2.72-74). It was these liberal arts that got Prospero into trouble since,

> those being all [his] study,
> The government [he] cast upon [his] brother,
> And to [his] state grew stranger, being transported
> And rapt in secret studies.
> (1.2.74-77)

Prospero, the duke, gave all of his time to his art, but he gave the government of his dukedom to his brother Antonio. Like the imprudent King Lear, Prospero kept the titles attendant on leadership but not the work that goes with the title. Now, a dozen years later, Prospero has come to see that his actions in this regard were not irreproachable:

> I, thus neglecting worldly ends, all dedicated
> To closeness and the bettering of my mind
> With that which, but by being so retir’d,
> O’er-priz’d all popular rate, in my false brother
> Awak’d an evil nature, and my trust,
> Like a good parent, did beget of him
> A falsehood in its contrary, as great
> As my trust was, which had indeed no limit,
> A confidence sans bounds.
> (1.2.89-93)

Prospero, though still angry with Antonio, is able to see that it was his own absence from his office that brought out the evil nature in his brother: unwittingly, he used what was not to awake an evil nature. In this way, Prospero is a bit like Duke Vincentio, whose absence awakens the sin latent in Angelo, except that Prospero was, at that point, unaware that his absence from his office would have such dire consequences for himself and Antonio. His actions, or rather his lack of action, has given Antonio the ability to live in a world of illusion, “To credit his own lie” and “believe / He was indeed the Duke” himself rather than Prospero (1.2.102-3). Antonio, in the

absence of Prospero's oversight, conspires with the King of Naples to take control of Milan and exile Prospero and Miranda.

Prospero's neglect of his duty embodies two mistakes: a too-great concentration on his art, and a too-small understanding of his brother's nature. After his exile, Prospero is left to ponder both. He still has his art since "a noble Neopolitan, Gonzalo" furnished him "with volumes that / [Prospero] prize[s] above [his] dukedom" (1.2.161, 167-168). Accordingly, he has been able to continue his study of his art. But he has also had time to think about human nature and what caused his brother's fall. He sees now that it was he, Prospero, who put "a screen between this part [Antonio] play'd" of being the Duke and "him he play'd it for," that is, the absent Prospero (1.2.108-109). Prospero pursued his art to the neglect of his duties, and this paved the way for his brother to pursue his ambition to the neglect of Prospero.

Prospero's time on the island has not only given him time to think about both of these errors, but also to work on amending them. Prospero is aided in this work by Ariel and Caliban. Lionel Abel discusses the relationship between these three in theatrical terms, casting Prospero as a "playwright" with Ariel as "his choreographer" and Caliban "his stagehand."[79] Although neither creature is human, through his work with these two Prospero gains greater insight into the power and limits of drama as a teaching tool.

Ariel is the first of these to enter, and it quickly becomes clear that the obedient spirit is, in fact, the stage manager of Prospero's dramatic art. It was he who "Perform'd to point the tempest" that the audience has just witnessed (1.2.194). But Ariel is not simply obedient; he is also "moody" and complains about Prospero's many orders (1.2.244). As a spirit, Ariel is not by

[79] Abel, Lionel. *Metatheatre: A New View of Dramatic Form.* New York: Hill and Wang, 1963, 69.

nature subject to things that are related to bodily realities like feelings and the passage of time. Prospero "must / Once in a month recount" to Ariel the torture Prospero saved him from (1.2.261-2). The "damn'd witch Sycorax" had trapped Ariel "Into a cloven pine" in such a way that it was "a torment" to the spirit, subjecting him both to pain and to time, since he had to wait to be released (1.2.263, 277, 289). Prospero does release him. However, although Prospero and his daughter have been cruelly exiled, Ariel only has thought of "what [Prospero] hast promis'd" him and "Which is not yet perform'd" for him, that is, his "liberty" (1.2.243-245). He shows no particular concern for Prospero's plight. In fact, one of the earliest extensive commentaries on Ariel's character, by Maurice Morgann, circa 1790, points out that "tho' He does his spiriting cheerfully in the near view of Freedom yet has no tender affection or any Common Sympathy or Feeling with Prospero."[80] Sycorax's treatment has, perhaps, made Ariel overly self-focused. Prospero, who knows the possible consequences of being too caught up in one's own concerns first-hand, thanks to his experience with Antonio, seems to desire to help Ariel out of this selfishness. This is partly revealed when Prospero threatens actions identical with Sycorax, as when he says to Ariel:

> If thou more murmur'st, I will rend an oak
> And peg thee in his knotty entrails till
> Thou has howl'd away twelve winters.
> (1.2.294-296)

But though Prospero threatens to act like Sycorax, all of the actions he actually asks of Ariel put the spirit in the service of others, drawing him out of himself and his own concerns and into the concerns of others.

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[80] Morgann, Maurice. *Shakespearian Criticism.* Edited by Daniel A. Fineman. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972, 332.

The other of the two creatures is Caliban, "A freckled whelp, hag-born" and "not honor'd with / A human shape" (1.2.283-4). If Ariel offers an analogy to Prospero's selfishness, Caliban offers an analogy to Antonio's. Caliban insists, like Antonio, on his own power, claiming that "This island's mine by Sycorax my mother" and that he "was mine own king" before Prospero arrived to rule him (1.2.331, 342).[81] Caliban complains that Prospero has enslaved him, but Prospero takes issue with this, and the speech clarifies his motives toward Caliban:

> Thou most lying slave,
> Whom stripes may move, not kindness! I have us'd thee
> (Filth as thou art) with human care, and lodg'd thee
> In mine own cell, till thou didst seek to violate
> The honor of my child.
>
> (1.2.344-349)

Prospero was willing to work with and help educate Caliban, but the incident with Miranda taught him that, for some natures, kindness is not so effective as harsh treatment. All of the ways Prospero treats Caliban during the play have to be seen in this light: there is no other way for Prospero to educate Caliban than with apparently cruel punishments.

In the end neither Caliban nor Ariel is utterly humanized by Prospero – since neither is human this would be impossible – but both Caliban and Ariel have come to learn something of humanity that they would not have were it not for Prospero. Ariel and Caliban help teach Prospero lessons about the capabilities of both drama and human nature, but he has other, more specific goals for the drama he is currently arranging than teaching Caliban and Ariel. He explains to Miranda that:

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[81] For a recent overview of Postcolonial criticism about Caliban and "*The Tempest* as the struggle between the colonizer Prospero and the indigenous character Caliban," see Ricardo Castells. *From Caliban to Lucifer: Native Resistance and the Religious Colonization of the Indies in Baroque Spanish Theater*. Department of Romance Studies, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2018, 41-54, 42.

> By accident most strange, bountiful Fortune
> (Now my dear lady) hath mine enemies
> Brought to this shore; and by my prescience
> I find my zenith doth depend upon
> A most auspicious star, whose influence
> If not I court not, but omit, my fortunes
> Will ever after droop.
>
> (1.2.178-184)

Specifically, Prospero is going to have a chance to reclaim his dukedom and make up for his earlier faults. After the supposed shipwreck, he has Ariel disperse the passengers on the boat "In troops. . . 'bout the isle" (1.2.220). Wright argues that each of the troops is audience to, and actors in, "three separate plays within the play."[82] Shakespeare's goal, judging from the way he structures the play as a chiasmus with 3.1 at the center, is for Ferdinand and Miranda to fall in love; he literally builds the play around them. These two are Prospero's chief concern as well, and a marriage of these young people will form an alliance between Naples and Milan much more satisfactory than the onerous one arranged by Antonio. The King of Naples, Antonio, and their attendants provide another audience. In their case, Prospero clearly desires to humble his enemies, but he is also prepared to console the King of Naples by revealing Ferdinand alive and engaged to Miranda. Prospero orchestrates all of these things simultaneously with the help of his art, chiefly through the aid of Ariel and the other spirits.

Prospero's first recognition is the easiest since he is assisted by circumstances. Both Miranda's beauty and innocence assist his plan for his daughter and Ferdinand to fall in love. Miranda has never seen a man of her own age, so it is to be expected that a young woman whose memory and emotions are shown tender during Prospero's story of his exile should fall in love easily. As she gushes upon seeing Ferdinand, Prospero is pleased that "It goes on. . . As [his]

[82] Wright, "Reality and Illusion," 261.

soul prompts it" (1.2.420-1). Ferdinand has been in love before, but the fact that Miranda excels all the other women he knows (he later calls her "So perfect and so peerless…created of every creature's best") offers Prospero's plan material assistance (3.1.47-48). Right on cue, the two young people see each other and "are both in either's powers" (1.2.451). Note that the "power" involved comes from the young people and not from Prospero. Frank Kermode argues that "in Shakespeare's romances, the virtue of royal children is *given*; it controls their behaviour, and cannot be mistaken; they have it by nature."[83] Although he arranges the circumstances, Miranda and Ferdinand recognize their love themselves. Their meeting is occasioned by Prospero's art, but Michael Mack points out that "Unlike all of Prospero's previous spectacles, this one is not the produce of his Art but of human nature." [84]Undoubtedly this marriage is a political match that benefits Prospero, yet Prospero is a good father too. He is not content merely to have the two young people in love, he wants them to have lasting happiness. Accordingly, as with the storm that is not a storm, so here, too, he introduces a storm of opposition. This is not because he is averse to the union – far from it – but because "too light winning" of Miranda might "make the prize light" (1.2.452-3). Prospero is using art to increase natural affection. This is part of what keeps the theater audience from settling into their expectations of what Prospero will do: although he speaks as though he wants the marriage, his actions sometimes seem to belie his words. In this instance he artfully creates some imaginary difficulties for the young people because he knows that the trial will be good for them in the long term: the difficulty, faced together, will draw them closer as a couple. Prospero is testing the mettle of his future son-in-

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[83] Kermode, Frank. "Introduction to *The Tempest.*" in *The Arden Edition of the Works of William Shakespeare: The Tempest.* New York: Methuen, 1975, lvi.
[84] Mack, Michael. "The Consolation of Art in the *Aeneid* and the *Tempest*." in Marc Berley, ed. *Reading the Renaissance: Ideas and Idioms from Shakespeare to Milton*. Pittsburgh, Pa: Duquesne University Press, 2003, 57-77, 77.

law, certainly, but the test itself also helps to create the mettle he wishes Ferdinand to have: it takes vigor to survive the sort of punishment Prospero outlines for Ferdinand:

> I'll manacle thy neck and feet together.
> Sea-water shalt thou drink; thy food shall be
> The fresh-brook mussels, wither'd roots, and husks
> Wherein the acorn cradled.
>
> (1.2.462-464)

Of course, Prospero does not make his punishments so cruel: Ferdinand, like Caliban, mostly just carries wood. It is chiefly this drama between the young people that is influential for Ariel's character growth, as becomes clear later. At this point, Prospero links this testing of Ferdinand pointedly to Ariel, playing on the spirit's desire for liberty by saying, "Thou shalt be as free as the mountain winds" for carrying out "All points of [Prospero's] command" (1.2.499, 500).

King Alonzo, Antonio, Sebastian, Gonzalo, and their attendants offer a bit more of a challenge to Prospero than Ferdinand and Miranda. Prospero must be curious about the character of his former enemies. They have had twelve years to regret what they did to Prospero, and they may have repented. Alonzo quickly reveals a character capable of love, at least, when he agonizes about the lost Ferdinand and Claribel:

> You cram these words into mine ears against
> The stomach of my sense. Would I had never
> Married my daughter there [Tunis], for coming thence
> My son is lost and (in my rate) she too,
> Who is so far from Italy removed
> I ne'er again shall see her.—O, thou mine heir
> Of Naples and of Milan, what strange fish
> Hath made his meal on thee?
>
> (2.1.107-114).

Clearly Alonzo is, at the very least, a concerned father. Antonio and Sebastian, however, meet the trouble of the storm with flippancy, voicing vulgar comments like "Temperance was a

delicate wench" and placing bets on who will try to console the King next (2.1.44). Prospero subjects these men to a test not unlike the test the Duke sets for Angelo, the very test that Antonio has already failed. Ariel puts everyone but Antonio and Sebastian to sleep so that he can note what the two men do when they are unobserved by the others. Wright points out "[t]hese two offenders are thereby presented with an opportunity to redeem themselves in some degree by dutifully guarding the king and his entourage or, on the contrary, to recriminate themselves by repeating their original deed of murder and usurpation."[85] And once the men assume they are alone and that "there is no power of justice watching over their affairs and judging their actions," Antonio demonstrates his true character.[86] Not only is he unrepentant about supplanting Prospero, but he is willing, for his own personal gain, to incite Sebastian to a similar deed, telling him

> My strong imagination sees a crown
> Dropping upon thy head.
>
> (2.1.208-209)

Antonio's motives here are hardly disinterested. He has been forced to pay taxes to Alonzo ever since the king helped him take over Milan and, accordingly, if he gets rid of Alonzo and replaces him with Sebastian, the new King will "free [Antonio] from the tribute which [he] payest" to Naples (2.1.293). Building on the opportunity created by the sleep of the King and his other courtiers, Antonio uses the "no hope" created, as he supposes, by Ferdinand's drowning, to build a "great hope" that Sebastian can supplant his own brother (2.1.239, 240). He augments this hope by stressing the "space" between Tunis and Naples that will keep Claribel from claiming the

[85] Wright, 252.
[86] Ibid.

throne there (2.1.257).[87] Antonio, who "feel[s] not" the pangs of conscience, is seizing the opportunity created for him by the various absences he observes (2.1.277). Prospero already knows, because of his own exile, that Antonio is capable of using this opportunity to his advantage, and this has been confirmed. Ariel claims that Prospero "through his art foresees the danger," and sends Ariel to wake Gonzolo and the King and derail Antonio's plan (2.1.297). Ariel gives some insight into Prospero's motive here, saying that the King, Gonzalo, and the courtiers must be kept alive for Prospero or "else his project dies" (2.1.299). If all he wanted was to kill his enemies, Prospero could easily let Antonio carry out his plan to kill the king and then revenge himself on Antonio later. But whatever Prospero intends for these men, it is not a sudden death. Having confirmed for himself that his brother's character is unchanged, Prospero leaves these men to their own devices for a time.

The next scene offers Prospero a chance to study a nature like his brother's in some way. The scene when Caliban meets the drunkards is a kind of parody of two different situations: both Prospero's arrival on the island, and Antonio's situation relative to Prospero. Although Ariel's storm is over, it "come[s] again" into play in this scene to help Caliban meet Trinculo and Stephano (2.2.37). In this meeting, there is a comic mirror image of Caliban's initial meeting of Prospero. Caliban described Prospero's arrival thus:

> When thou cam'st first,
> Thou strok'st me and made much of me, wouldst give me
> Water with berries in't, and teach me how
> To name the bigger light, and how the less,
> That burn by day and night; and then I lov'd thee
> And show'd thee all the qualities o' th' isle,
> The fresh springs, brine-pits, barren place and fertile.
> (1.2.332-338)

[87] For a discussion on Shakespeare's interest in the creative potential of absences, see Daniel R. Gibbons, "Inhuman Persuasion in the Tempest." *Studies in Philology*, 114, no. 2(2017): 302-330.

Stephano and Trinculo decidedly do not treat Caliban with the same kindness Prospero did. Stephano immediately calls him a "monster" and, instead of giving him sweetened water, he gives Caliban a "taste of [his] bottle" (2.2.65,73). Caliban's exposure to men other than Prospero shows his naivety: Caliban instantly takes Stephano for "a brave god" (2.2.117). Of course, the fact that he also tastes Stephano's "celestial liquor" helps considerably (2.2.117). Although Prospero taught him the proper names for sun and moon, Caliban instantly believes that Stephano has "dropp'd from heaven" and is "the Man i' the Moon" (2.2.137, 139). When Prospero had earned Caliban's love, Caliban gave him a tour of the island. When Stephano humiliates Caliban and makes him kiss his foot, Caliban swears a servile oath:

> I prithee let me bring thee there crabs grow;
> And I with my long nails will dig thee pig-nuts,
> Show thee a jay's nest, and instruct thee how
> To snare the nimble marmazet. I'll bring thee
> To clust'ring filberts, and sometimes I'll get thee
> Young scamels from the rock.
>
> (2.2.167-172)

Caliban's meeting of Stephano and Prospero are parallel episodes in that Caliban shows enthusiasm in both, but the irony is that the tasks Caliban promises to do are even more menial than the wood-carrying he does so unwillingly for Prospero. When Caliban chooses for himself, his "freedom" is worse than the servitude he owes to Prospero (2.2.186). Act 3, scene 2 makes it clear why Caliban is so willing to give his services to Stephano. Caliban, in the depths of his annoyance with Prospero, sees Stephano as an opportunity to rid the island of the magus. Caliban complains of the "tyrant" who has "Cheated [him] of the island" (3.2.42, 44). Caliban wants Stephano to "brain" Prospero, "Batter his skull or paunch him with a stake" or simply slit his throat (3.2.87, 90). He promises that once Stephano has killed Prospero this will create the

opportunity for the former butler to be king of the island and to take Miranda as his wife. Caliban dwells on the beauty and fertility of Miranda, along with the promise of the kingship; it is the description of Miranda that finally draws out of Stephano the promise that he "will kill this man" (3.2.106). Caliban is manipulating Stephano for his own ends but, though he complains of Prospero stealing the island from him, in this case he is willingly giving it to a man much inferior to Prospero. This is the same thing that happens to Antonio: he was able to act freely as the Duke of Milan while he was willing to submit to Prospero having the title of Duke, but once he got rid of Prospero he was beholden to the King of Naples, leaving him with less freedom than before. Caliban's part in the play therefore offers a comic parallel to Antonio's, and the fact that his eventual resolution is ultimately more heartfelt than Antonio's speaks to the fact that Prospero has at least managed to teach Caliban something other than language.

Prospero returns to staging his brother's drama in the next scene. Ariel and a whole group of spirits first lull the King and his court into a false sense of security with "Marvellous sweet music" and "viands" (3.3.19, 41). But just as the King, Sebastian, and Antonio have gotten comfortable, Ariel dramatically appears in harpy form, making the banquet vanish and announcing that he and the spirits with him "are ministers of fate" (3.3.61). He tells them that they are "most unfit to live:" and then elaborates why they must endure his terrifying presence:

> But remember
> (For that's my business to you) that you three
> From Milan did supplant good Prospero,
> Expos'd unto the sea (which hath requit it)
> Him, and his innocent child; for which foul deed
> The pow'rs, delaying (not forgetting), have
> Incens'd the seas ans shores – yea, all the creatures
> Against your peace.
>
> (3.3.58, 68-75)

Ariel's mention of remembrance is indicative of his purpose. These men have forgotten what they did to Prospero. This forgetting, *anamnesis*, is part of what provides the opportunity for *anagnorisis*; the men must recognize the evil of what they have done if they are to repent. The reactions of the in-play audience to accusation in the harpy scene are revelatory of their various characters. Alonzo's reaction is recognition of how his actions have brought him to this pass. He has just the sort of wondering reaction expected of recognition:

> O, it is monstrous! monstrous!
> Methought the billows spoke, and told me of it;
> The winds dis sing it to me, and the thunder,
> That deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pronounc'd
> The name of Prosper; it did base my trespass.
> (3.3.95-99)

Alonzo, thanks to the harpy scene Prospero arranges, finally knows that his "trespass" is the reason his "son I' th' ooze is bedded" (3.3.99,100). Ariel, in fact, also set him up for a recognition later when he says, "Thee of thy son, Alonso, [the sea powers] have bereft" (3.3.75-76). This is true, in one way, since Ferdinand no longer belongs to Alonso but to Miranda, but Alonso takes it to means that his son is dead, which prepares him for the later recognition. His situation is clarified, but the healing will come in the final revelation of the young couple. He does not yet say that he is sorry about what he did to Prospero, but he is at least overcome by wonder. By contrast, Sebastian and Antonio do not wonder but simply leave the stage fighting "legions" of spirits (3.3.103). Gonzalo, who after all has nothing to repent of or recognize, is characteristically thinking of others, and he directs the younger men to keep the others from harming themselves.

Prospero is pleased with the results of this scene, even before he has verbal confirmation of them. He sees that the spectacle has accomplished his design:

> My high charms work,
> And these mine enemies are all knit up
> In their distractions. They now are in my power;
> And in these fits I leave them.
>
> (3.3.88-91)

There is no indication here of what Prospero ultimately intends to do with his power over his enemies. Presenting Ariel as a harpy has made the matter particularly ambiguous since "harpies were signs of both classical vengeance and Christian repentance."[88] It could be, as with his treatment of Caliban, that Prospero is applying stripes instead of kindness in order to lead his audience to repentance; but it could also be driven by a desire for vengeance. For the moment it remains unclear, since at this point Prospero exits to visit Ferdinand and Miranda, leaving his enemies to suffer.

While these men languish, Prospero begins his next drama, which is explicitly theatrical. He asks Ariel to collect the spirits and "incite them to quick motion" so that Miranda and Ferdinand can experience "some vanity of [Prospero's] art" (4.1.39, 41). Prospero promises the play as a wedding gift, and his purpose seems akin to that of Don Pedro's stated purpose: helping wile away the time before a wedding. But the spectacle of the young people themselves is also helpful to Ariel who, observing Prospero's love for Miranda and that between Ferdinand and Miranda, thinks to ask Prospero, "Do you love me, master? no?" (4.1.48). Ariel, by observing so much human feeling, is becoming curious about it in a way he previously was not, which bodes well for his eventual freedom, perhaps not only from Prospero, but also from selfishness. As to the young couple themselves, the masque of Ceres could be seen as a didactic play because of Prospero's injunctions to Ferdinand about chastity, and the matching remonstrance in the masque

[88] Woods, 707.

itself.[89] Iris pointedly reminds the young couple that their "vows are, that no bed-right shall be paid / Till Hymen's torch be lighted" (4.1.96-97). Prospero may well be using the drama to teach; although he is well aware that the masque is built on "baseless fabric" and is an "insubstantial pageant," he is also aware that drama can be powerful (4.1.151, 155). He lost his Dukedom because his magic, the same magic driving the drama, caused him to neglect reality. Here, it is by losing himself completely in the masque that Prospero "forgot that foul conspiracy of the beast Caliban and his confederates" (4.1.139-40). In this case, he remembers reality in time, but only just. Prospero made it clear earlier that he learned from his mistake, but here he reveals that he still has a weakness for his art. He is able to keep both himself and the young couple from becoming too enthralled by the drama in this instance, but it is evidently still a dangerous medium for him.

When Caliban and the fools come on, Prospero is able to continue his work with Caliban, "a born devil, on whose nature / Nurture can never stick" (4.1.188-89). Stephano and Trinculo immediately make the mistake Prospero has just avoided. Rather than focusing on the end for which they have come, the men are distracted by the "trumpery" Prospero has Ariel leave out "as stale to catch these thieves" (4.1.186, 187). Interestingly, Caliban sees right through this ruse, upbraiding Trinculo to "leave [the clothing] alone" since "it is but trash" (4.1.223). He attempts to get the other men to focus on killing Prospero rather than on "such luggage," but in vain (4.1.231). Prospero, with a dramatist's intuition, uses lavish costumes to distract an audience, in this case Stephano and Trinculo, from focusing on the plot, here their desire to kill Prospero. The delay gives Caliban time to become frustrated, which will ultimately be part of how the creature

[89] The Globe Theater's 2013 version of the play directed by Jeremy Herrin stages it this way, with Prospero explicitly putting the chiding words in Iris's mouth, mouthing them sternly from behind the spirit players.

sees the error of his ways. For the moment, though, Prospero assures that Caliban and the fools are "hunted soundly" by the goblins (4.1.262). He then proclaims

> At this hour
> Lies at my mercy all mine enemies.
> Shortly shall all my labors end.
>
> (4.1.262-264)

The fact that he speaks these lines in the context of discussing physical torture gives them a sinister ring.[90] However, the "project" that now "gathers to a head," is ultimately one filled with "mercy" (5.1.1, 4.1.263). Like the Old Testament Joseph, whose story Prospero's echoes, Prospero is able to pardon those who have wronged him. Prospero has power over his enemies, but, like Duke Vincentio in sentencing Angelo, Prospero chooses not to exercise it.

When Prospero asks Ariel about "the King and 's followers," Ariel demonstrates that he has learned not to be so self-focused (5.1.6). First, he gives a detailed and captivating description. He says that the King and court are

> Confined together
> In the same fashion as you gave in charge,
> Just as you left them; all prisoners, sir,
> In the lime-grove which weather-fends your cell.
> They cannot budge till your release. The King,
> His brother, and yours, abide all three distracted,
> And the remainder mourning over them,
> Brimful of sorrow and dismay; but chiefly
> Him that you termed, sir, "the good old lord Gonzalo,"
> His tears run down his beard like winter's drops
> From eaves of reeds.
>
> (5.1.7-17)

So far this is simply description. But at the end of this description, Ariel offers a suggestion:

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[90] There are some obvious parallels between Prospero and Joseph of the Old Testament that would have been obvious to Shakespeare's audience – a brother who is exiled and left for dead by his own kith and kin who, later, finds that kin at his mercy. As Joseph acts with mercy, the audience may well expect Prospero to act this way as well. See Sutton, Brian. "'Virtue rather than Vengeance': Genesis and Shakespeare's *The Tempest*." *Explicator* 66, no. 4 (2008): 224-229.

> Your charm so strongly works 'em
> That if you now beheld them your affections
> Would become tender.
>
> (5.1.17-19)

Ariel does not tell Prospero what to think: he merely offers his own speculation of what Prospero "would" think "if" he saw the scene Ariel describes.[91] Ariel does not know what Prospero is planning, and he does not feel emotions as humans do, but he is somewhat worried about these new strangers on the island. Prospero's follow-up question, "Dost thou think so, spirit?" implies that Prospero is noting Ariel's opinion: the spirit who previously could only think of his own freedom, is now asking for the freedom of someone else (5.1.19). That in itself is a sign of his growing freedom. In reference to feelings becoming tender, Ariel is definitive: "Mine would, sir, were I human" (5.1.20). This is not the same Ariel who began the play totally focused on himself. He implies that he is incapable of human affections, naturally, but the drama that Prospero has planned has made him feel pity for those under Prospero's spell. When Prospero says, "And mine shall," he is affirming Ariel's view of the matter (5.1.20). Like Angelo, who thinks of himself as spiritual and not earthly, Ariel discovers something about what it is to be human. Prospero recognizes this change in Ariel when he says:

> Hast thou, which are but air, a touch, a feeling
> Of their afflictions, and shall not myself,
> One of their kind, that relish all as sharply
> Passion as they, be kindlier mov'd than thou art?
>
> (5.1.21-24)

Ariel has nearly taken on human feelings, and Prospero, though he is still "strook to th'quick," chooses to show compassion (5.1.25). It is after this revelation about Ariel that Prospero says

[91] Daniel Gibbons points out that, in this passage, "Ariel implies that as a nonhuman, he is incapable of the sort of sincere compassion that seeing the suffering of the captives ought to provoke," and yet he mentions the suffering to Prospero all the same. ("Inhuman Persuasion in the Tempest." *Studies in Philology*, 114, no. 2(2017): 302-330, 305).

that "the sole drift of [his] purpose" has simply been to make his enemies "penitent," but he has conspicuously left this unclear until after this exchange (5.1.28, 29). Prospero has been angry, and he still is, but after the scene with Ariel, with whom Prospero is almost finished, Prospero definitely states his purpose to take up his "nobler reason, 'gainst [his] fury" (5.1.26). In addition to Ariel's being free of selfishness, Prospero is ready to be free of his art. He knows it was his art that caused him to turn in on himself in his previous life in Milan, and if he is to return to Milan, he knows that it must be without "this rough magic" (5.1.50). He will "work [his] end" upon the King and company, but after that he will

> break [his] staff,
> Bury it certain fadoms in the earth,
> And deeper than did ever plummet sound
> [he]'ll drown [his] book.
>
> (5.1.54-57)

When Prospero finally has the King and company before him, he releases them from his spells. The recognition Prospero offers at this moment is, for all Prospero's talk of his art, noticeably direct and natural. Barry Adams points out:

> Unlike most of the corresponding figures from other Shakespearean comedies, Prospero in revealing himself speaks almost as if he were delivering a formal proclamation: "Behold, sir King, / The wronged Duke of Milan, Prospero." Instead of cultivating and oblique, indirect, or apparently coincidental coming-to-know. . . Shakespeare here seems to be striving for directness and immediacy. Even Rosalind's self-revelation at the end of *As You Like It* with its similarly pronounced staginess is noticeably indirect by comparison with Prospero's.[92]

Prospero, who is leaving his art, here gives an artless and natural entrance, wearing the robes of his lost office rather than his magic garment. It is notable that he also does not reveal his artifice at this point, nor could those watching (except for Gonzalo, who gave Prospero his books) have

[92] Adams, *Coming-to-Know,* 205.

guessed how he came to be on the island in the first place. Prospero even resists directly answering questions that would reveal his story, saying that it is “Not a relation for a breakfast, nor befitting this first meeting” (5.1.162-165). Neither does Prospero reveal the role he played in the shipwreck and the various other dramas of the island. Prospero’s appearance, apparently from the dead, is so dramatically powerful that he has no need of augmenting his recognition by compounding it with a recognition of the artifice that brought his recognition about.

Even without the recognition of the artifice, Prospero’s in-play audiences all react to seeing Prospero in ways that reveal something about their characters. First is Alonzo, who, immediately upon seeing Prospero resigns the Dukedom of Milan and begs Prospero to “pardon… [his] wrongs” (5.1.119). His experience of losing his son (which he still does not know is simply feigned), as well as the accusation by the harpy, has changed the King. He was willing to back Antonio before, but now he sees his mistake. Antonio, meanwhile, has no response. The drama does not seem to have changed him in any way. Prospero lets it be known that he is aware of the plot against the King, but he promises to “tell no tales” at present, presumably so that he can keep Antonio in line if need be (5.1.129). The fact that Antonio barely speaks from this point on (his only comment is about how to turn Caliban into a profitable attraction) indicates that the recognition that his brother is alive is shocking, to say the least, but there is no indication that his character is changed in any way.

Prospero is artful in his revelation of Miranda and Ferdinand, playing on the double meaning of how he has “lost [his] daughter” in the storm (*Tempest* 5.1.148). His delay here creates an even greater impact for the scene because it teaches Alonzo to desire the very marriage Prospero has already arranged, saying:

> A daughter?
> O heavens, that they were living both in Naples,
> The King and Queen there!
> (5.1.148-150)

Prospero subsequently fulfills this desire, giving the sight of Miranda and Ferdinand to the King in order to "requite" Alonzo for the latter's return of Milan with "as good a thing" as the city (5.1.170). The return of Ferdinand is not just a reward for Alonzo's repentance, but a sign of his total salvation and reconciliation with Prospero and himself. At this point, Sebastian reveals that he is slightly more affected than Antonio because he is able to recognize the "most high miracle" of Ferdinand's preservation from the storm (5.1.177). Miranda herself, accustomed to Prospero's artifice as she is, is much more overcome with wonder at reality untinged by art. The "brave new world" of human beings is new to her, and this is what causes her wonder (5.1.183).

When Gonzalo recovers from his wonder long enough to regain the ability to speak, he insightfully praises the "gods" who "have chalk'd forth the way" that brought everyone to the island (5.1.201, 203). His speech is a bit reminiscent of Hamlet's about the divinity who shapes our end, but in this case Prospero exercises so much agency in assembling everyone that he might fairly be considered as the one shaping the end of this play. When the boat crew enters, everyone (Miranda excepted) learns that the storm was not real. They do not yet know that Prospero was behind it, but they are overwhelmed by having to process this new reality.

Caliban's response to finding everyone assembled is particularly interesting. First he is struck with the appearance of what he assumes are "brave spirits" (5.1.261). This is his habitual response to new sights, as evidenced earlier in the play. But here he is also specifically interested in "how fine" Prospero looks, and he even acknowledges him as his "master" (5.1.262). Unlike most of the people on the island, Caliban knows that, whatever is happening, Prospero is at the

back of it. In the light of his frustrating experience with Stephano and the clothes, he is willing to allow that Prospero is a better master than Stephano. When he says that he will "be wise hereafter" and "seek for grace," he is driven to do so partly because he recognizes that taking a "drunkard for a god" has made him a "thrice-double ass" (5.1.295, 296). Unlike Antonio, who is simply bitter at what he has lost, Caliban is able at least to desire a rightly ordered relationship to Prospero. He has not become human in feeling, but there are signs that he may at least have learned something. This is a signal that perhaps all is not lost for Antonio. Prospero will certainly not ever trust Antonio wholeheartedly again, in the same way that he would not leave Caliban and Miranda alone together. Still, if Caliban has made progress, perhaps Antonio will as well. That Prospero will give Antonio such an opportunity cannot but make the audience wonder.

In *The Tempest* Prospero creates illusions for various audiences, but in each case "the protagonists are not merely an audience to the play – they are themselves the actors in it."[93] Only Ferdinand and Miranda are merely an audience, and that only during the masque.[94] Prospero maneuvered everyone on the island into acting a part in the drama he had planned. He does this for Alonzo chiefly through the harpy scene, which reveals to the King that his participation in the overthrow of Prospero is known and remembered. In the case of Sebastian and Antonio, as well as Stephano, Trinculo, and Caliban, Prospero creates the illusion that no one is marking the choices they decide to make. In both cases, the ultimate recognition involves a recognition that their actions are seen and known. Part of why revealing the artifice is such a powerful medium for any player-dramatist is that, when the in-play audience learns that they have been treating fiction as reality, they know that they have been caught in whatever behavior it was that they

[93] Wright, 247.
[94] Wright argues that earlier in the play the two were under "the illusion of ideal love," 259.

performed when they thought they were unwatched. In this instance, though, Prospero's very life is something of a judgment on Alonzo, Antonio, and Sebastian: by virtue of seeing him alive, they know that there is someone who knows the full extent of their crimes. In Alonzo's case, this leads to repentance, but in Antonio's case, mostly just to sullen silence.

Shakespeare's Jacobean player-dramatists habitually engage their audiences in recognition by arranging for the audience to participate in the drama by acting. By hiding their artifice, the player-dramatists create opportunities that involve true action in a fictional setting. Consider Iago's manipulation of Othello. If Desdemona really had been as flagrantly unfaithful as Iago painted her, Othello's jealousy would be somewhat more understandable. However, that Othello could carry his jealousy to the point of murder is a surprise to everyone, himself included. He now knows what sort of jealousy he is capable of, even though he actually had nothing of which to be jealous: the infidelity was a fiction created in Othello's mind by Iago. However, the fictional situation has drawn him into real actions, not fictional ones. Othello's tragedy is that the self-knowledge Iago's fiction created comes only after he has irrevocably killed Desdemona. Alonzo is more fortunate in that Prospero's death, which he thinks he caused, turns out to have been prevented. The fiction of Prospero's loss and the fictional shipwreck has led Alonzo to true repentance, and his consolation is that he has not, in fact, committed a crime so terrible as he supposed. Claudio's false death likewise gives Isabella the occasion to embrace a more merciful and understanding character than she had before, and this remains true even after she finds that Claudio is still alive.

Here, at the end of his plays, I want to argue that Shakespeare's treatment of his audience resembles that of his player-dramatists in this respect: he designs his fictions to elicit real

participation from the audience. Admittedly, Shakespeare's dramas do not usually do much in the way of eliciting particular actions from his audience, at least not ones that are textually evident. Prospero is, however, an exception to this rule as well. His epilogue, spoken after he has given up his art, is worth quoting in full:

> Now my charms are all o'erthrown,
> And what strength I have's mine own,
> Which is most faint. Now 'tis true,
> I must be here confin'd by you,
> Or sent to Naples. Let me not,
> Since I have my dukedom got,
> And pardon'd the deceiver, dwell
> In this bare island by your spell,
> But release me from my bands
> With the help of your good hands.
> Gentle breath of yours my sails
> Must fill, or else my project fails,
> Which was to please. Now I want
> Spirits to enforce, art to enchant,
> And my ending is despair,
> Unless I be reliev'd by prayer,
> Which pierces so, that it assaults
> Mercy itself, and frees all faults.
> As you for crimes would pardon'd be,
> Let your indulgence set me free.
> (Epilogue, 1-20)

This epilogue, like other of Shakespeare's epilogues, shifts authority from the actors to the audience, and the audience holds two different kinds of authority in this case.[95] First, the audience sits in judgment of the play itself.[96] At the most basic level, then, the "prayer" the Epilogue speaks to the audience is simply a standard appeal for applause, similar to the King's epilogue in *All's Well*. The audience exercises a God-like power because the future of the play

[95] On this point, see Robert Weimann, *Author's Pen and Actor's Voice: Playing and Writing in Shakespeare's Theatre.* Eds. Helen Higbee and William West. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, especially 220-226.

[96] R.G. Hunter points out that, "for the artist," the audience sits as "the God of Judgment." *Shakespeare and the Comedy of Forgiveness.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1965, 242.

might depend on an early performance having enough applause: applauding enough will bring the characters back to the stage for another performance.[97]

The "release" that Prospero begs could come from simple applause, since clapping was believed to break magical spells. But in addition to release. Prospero asks for "indulgence," which implies that the audience has a still greater authority, one more akin to divine authority than simply passing judgment on the quality of the play.[98] An indulgence is a release from the temporal punishment due to sin. Prospero's captivity on the island was due to his neglect of his office in Milan. By asking the audience for indulgence, Prospero indicates that they do not merely have the power to release him from the drama, but also the power to release him from the punishment he has suffered for his sin. R.G. Hunter's study on *Shakespeare and the Comedy of Forgiveness* ends with the idea that the success of this drama depends "upon the ability of its audience to participate in a celebration of the virtue of charity."[99] Here it is not simply the case that the audience should condone Prospero's display of mercy toward his enemies. In the course of the play, Prospero has demonstrated the exercise of mercy, but also his own need for it. Those watching the play have seen Prospero's faults: they heard that it was through his own neglect that he lost Milan, for instance, and they have seen him be severe and practice a kind of magic he himself calls "rough" (5.1.50). The *plaudite*, like Prospero's examination for Antonio and Sebastian, has been a test: can the audience show mercy to Prospero as he has shown mercy to Antonio and Alonzo?

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[97] See Woods, 710.
[98] For a thorough treatment of the term and the implications of the word in the post-Reformation context, see Gillian Woods. She argues that the use of a "Catholic" term "extends the forgiving action of the fiction into the real space of the audience" (706).
[99] 243.

But Prospero does more than call us to show mercy. Woods points out that in "inviting spectators to show mercy 'as you from crimes would pardoned be,' Prospero moves the onstage action of forgiveness offstage, turning the audience into Prosperos and Antonios who should grant pardon because they are in need of it."[100] Prospero's accusation of the audience is key to his appeal. R.G. Hunter points out that, in what he calls the "comedies of forgiveness" such as *The Tempest*, the "dramas invite us to forgive the sins of others not because we (unlike them) are good, but because we (like them) are not good."[101] Prospero has made an appeal to the audience on the basis, not just of common humanity, but also of common sinfulness. The "Then and There" of Prospero's sinfulness is identical to the sinful "Now and Here" of the audience: Prospero has brought that action from inside the play to outside of it. But the play itself cannot fully restore Prospero's fortunes. He has to look to a higher power – here, the audience – for forgiveness. He uses drama itself, his "insubstantial pageant," a something that is not, to remind us that drama is insufficient of itself (4.1.155). Prospero's appeal reminds the audience that although they, too, are sinful, they can also have recourse to a higher power. He has brought us to self-knowledge, but his *plaudite* has not simply left us accused, it has also indicated the path to renewal.

[100] Woods, 706.
[101] Hunter, 244.

Conclusion:

"Beyond a Common Joy": The Consolation of Drama's Limits

Observing Shakespeare's dramatization of drama provides insight into his understanding of the scope and limitation of the dramatic process. It must be said, however, that in terms of practical stagecraft, the direct parallels between Shakespeare and his player-dramatists are limited. Koestler's idea of bisociation helps explain why. Koestler describes bisociation as "the spontaneous flash of insight which shows a familiar situation or event in a new light, and elicits a new response to it."[1] Shakespeare's in-house audience experiences the interaction between two matrices, the "Then and There" of fiction and the and "Now and Here" of the theater, in many small flashes over the course of the whole play, moving back and forth between fiction and reality the whole time. In his 2018 article "Are Shakespeare's plays always metatheatrical?" Stephen Purcell cites the example of Launce's dog Crab from *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* to illustrate this point: "The image of the dog operates at once on both matrices: the fictional Crab and the real dog playing him."[2] What makes this situation particularly delightful to audiences, Purcell says, is that "spectators know that the dog cannot be aware that it is 'acting.' Any behavior it exhibits is inescapably its *own* behavior, and the comedian playing Launce must incorporate that element of the "Now and Here" into the "Then and There" of the fiction."[3] This sort of situation, with the unpredictable play between the matrices, always produces delight in an audience. Purcell also cites a description of a pigeon landing during Macbeth's speech "Life's but a walking shadow," and an actor's impromptu inclusion of the pigeon into the scene, to

[1] Koestler, Arthur. *The Act of Creation.* New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966, 45.
[2] 28.
[3] Ibid.

illustrate how powerfully delightful spontaneous moments of bisociation can prove, even in tragedies. This sort of experience of oscillating between fiction and reality is common for Shakespeare's in-house audience.

The in-play audiences I have considered in this dissertation cannot use bisociation in the same way as the in-house audience because the artifice, the "Then and There," has either been hidden from them or has been presented as part of the "Now and Here" as though it were not fictional. Rather than experiencing tiny flashes of delight, when the artifice is revealed, the in-play audience has to bisociate in an instant as the matrices clash together, applying the bisociation retroactively, as it were. Bassanio eventually learns that the lawyer at the trial who saved his friend was, indeed, Portia, but the knowledge comes to him all at once. He has to adjust his knowledge of what happened at the trial to include this new information, to sort out that what he perceived as a "Now and Here" was, in the case of Portia's lawyer disguise, a "Then and There." And the effect, for Bassanio, is overwhelming awe. To build upon Koestler's "flash" analogy, the experience of bisociation had by the in-play audiences I have considered have is not made of many small flashes, like the in-house audience, but rather of one blinding light of insight. This blinding light is essentially the same thing Aristotle describes as the wonder appropriate to recognition scenes, and that is why Koestler's framework for understanding bisociation is useful in understanding such scenes. My thesis is that, by examining player-dramatists who use recognition scenes as their particular method, patterns emerge that provide insight into how Shakespeare thought about drama. A last example will help clarify what I think it is that this study shows.

In Act 4 of Macbeth, there is an odd episode involving Macduff and Malcolm. Macduff has come to England "to pray the holy king" Edward to help establish Malcolm as the rightful king of Scotland (3.6.30). Malcolm, however, has doubts as to the purity of Macduff's intentions. The last Malcolm knew of the matter, Macduff had "lov'd [Macbeth] well" and, to the best of Malcom's knowledge, the usurping king has not "touched" Macduff yet (4.3.13, 14). Macduff has no way to prove his honesty and is about to depart in despair when Malcolm begins to take a different approach with him. Malcolm concedes that "There would be hands uplifted in [his] right" since "from gracious England" he has "offer / Of goodly thousands" (4.3.42, 43-44). However, Malcolm warns that, should he take the kingship, Scotland "Shall have more vices than it had before" (4.3.47). He explicitly clarifies this for Macduff, saying:

> It is myself I mean; in whom I know
> All the particulars of vice so grafted
> That, when they shall be open'd, black Macbeth
> Will seem as pure as snow, and the poor state
> Esteem him as a lamb, being compar'd
> With my confineless harms.
>
> (4.3.50-55)

Macduff is skeptical that anything could be worse than Macbeth, so Malcolm elaborates on his vices of "voluptuousness" and "staunchless avarice" (4.3.61, 78). When even this does not deter Macduff from continuing to press Malcolm to take up the kingship anyway, Malcolm continues to proclaim himself unfit for office:

> The king-becoming graces,
> As justice, verity, temp'rance, stableness,
> Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,
> Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude,
> I have no relish of them, but abound
> In the division of each several crime,
> Acting in many ways. Nay, had I pow'r, I should
> Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,

> Uproar the universal peace, confound
> All unity on earth.
>
> (4.3.91-100)

At this point, Macduff volubly despairs, yelling "O Scotland, Scotland!" (4.3.100). Macduff voluntarily turns to leave on his self-appointed exile.

It is only at this point, after having drawn such a dramatic response from Macduff, that Malcolm reveals what he has been about. He was actually trying to elicit just such a response, and he accordingly tells Macduff that Macduff's "noble passion" has "Wip'd the black scruples" from Malcolm's mind and convinced him of Macduff's "good truth and honor" (4.3.114, 116, 117). Malcolm, in a difficult position of doubt, needed some way to test Macduff. Malcolm uses his "first false speaking" to create an image of himself so black that it draws Macduff into despair, revealing Macduff's truly upright intentions for Scotland and demonstrating that Macduff is not simply a henchman of Macbeth (4.3.130). Malcolm lures Macduff into releasing his true feelings. The emotional reaction of Macduff's clarifies things for Malcolm, and he now feels he can trust Macduff's character and act accordingly. Malcolm is not a player-dramatist, exactly, since he is simply speaking of his own supposed vice, but the effect is the same: like the embedded dramas of the other player-dramatists, Malcolm's falsehood draws Macduff into a particular action, and this action clarifies the character of Macduff.

Malcolm is concealing his artifice, as are the player-dramatists that I consider, and he exemplifies a reoccurring pattern of why this device is used: to reveal something about an audience. In Malcom's case, he learns about Macduff; Petruchio presents a false version of himself that helps Katherine take on the role of Kate; Friar Lawrence conceals the marriage of Romeo and Juliet to try to reconcile their families; Don Pedro organizes the fake conversation

that helps Benedick overcome his pride and embrace his love for Beatrice; Maria composes a letter as though it were from Olivia and Malvolio dresses accordingly. In each of these cases, something concealed helps to reveal something about the actors and audiences involved. It is, of course, unsurprising to find player-dramatists using drama to reveal audiences to themselves, since it was an early modern commonplace that drama was a kind of mirror. Anne Barton points out that, "For Elizabethans…the relation of illusion to reality was anything but simple. The play, holding a mirror up to nature, was bound to reflect the reality represented by its audience. Yet this audience was also forced to recognize the encroachments of illusion upon its own domain."[4] The most successful player-dramatists are the ones who use this mirror-like quality of drama, as Malcolm does with Macduff. Afraid that Macduff might just be acting a part, Malcolm becomes an actor himself in an effort to test Macduff's intentions. In terms of bisociation, Malcolm's "Then and There" is a false version of his own character. Observing how Macduff, his "Now and Here" audience, responds to this feigning gives Malcolm the information he needs.

Drama functions as a mirror because it shows us the sort of people we could be in different circumstances. In his *Life of Sidney*, Fulke Greville comments on how his own work is different from Sidney's. Greville says his own "creeping Genius [is] more fixed upon the Images of Life, than the Images of Wit" Sidney would use to produce a golden world.[5] Greville sees this difference as an advantage since, for him, the realism that provides a parallel between life and theater is not something to be feared. Rather, it is constructive:

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[4] *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play*, 83.

[5] Greville, Fulke. *The Life of the Renowned Sr Philip Sidney. with the True Interest of England as It Then Stood in Relation to All Forrain Princes: And Particularly for Suppressing the Power of Spain Stated by Him. His Principall Actions, Counsels, Designes, and Death. To*. England: Printed for Henry Seile over against St Dunstans Church in Fleet-street, 1651. *Early English Books Online.* 245.

> [H]e that will behold these Acts upon their true Stage, let him look on that Stage wherein himself is an Actor, even the State he lives in, and for every part he may perchance find a Player, and for every Line (it may be) an instance of life, beyond the Authors intention, or application, the vices of former Ages being so like to these of this Age, as it will be easie to find out some affinity, or resemblance between them, which whosoever readeth with this apprehension, will not perchance thinke the Scenes too large, at least the matter not to be exceeded in account of word.[6]

What Greville describes of his own dramatic vision is true of Shakespeare's plays as well. Consider an impatient person watching *Hamlet,* for instance. By the time the Prince of Denmark gets to his famous Act 3 soliloquy and starts to contemplate suicide, someone impatient with the length of the play may wish him to act on the thought. Shakespeare has made sure that Hamlet's hedging and non-action have become so irksome that the prospect of some actual advance in the plot is appealing, even if that advance involves precipitous action. In the real world, one does not usually long for murder or suicide, but an audience who desires rapid action will find *Hamlet* a tedious play. There is no particular moment of the drama orchestrated to bring attention an impatient audience, as when the cross is raised in the York *Crucifixion,* but the potential recognition is much similar. As the audience of the medieval play is able to recognize that they have been acting in a most inappropriate way, laughing at the crucifixion, so an audience watching *Hamlet* may recognize that they have been thinking in an inappropriate way, wishing for a character to kill himself or someone else. Similarly, an audience may delight in having insight into Iago's plots or cheer for Helena to bring off the bed trick or laugh at Malvolio's discomfiture. If an audience has desired any of these things, it is revelatory of the audience more than it is of the drama. Malcolm's fiction reveals more about Macduff than it does about

[6]Ibid. 246.

Malcolm. And this, ultimately, is the magic of theater: the ability to elicit real emotions and opinions in the context of imaginary scenarios.

Investigating instances of player-dramatists staging recognition scenes across Shakespeare's whole career, it is obvious that Shakespeare experiments with the power of drama. This is also unsurprising. As I mentioned in Chapter Two, the antitheatrical debates of the 1580s illustrate, as Leah S. Marcus astutely points out, that "Both the friends of London's theater and its enemies agreed that it potentially had great power. Where they differed was in their evaluation of that power's dominant effects."[7] Shakespeare's presentation of player-dramatists staging recognition scenes clearly demonstrates, in harmony with the discourse of the decade before he began writing, his awareness that drama is a powerful medium. However, rather than falling into line on either side of the moral/immoral binary around which so much of the debate revolved, Shakespeare shows drama used powerfully in both ways, investigating moral and immoral dramatists, receptive and unreceptive audiences, didactic and selfish motives, successful and unsuccessful scenarios.

The mistakes of the player-dramatists are almost always related to a neglect of the human component: the Abbess merely upsets Adriana, Rosalind accidentally causes Phebe to fall in love with Ganymede. Drama is not a tool to be used upon inert material that can respond in only one way. Consider the failure of Friar Lawrence. Because he has all the details of the drama of Romeo and Juliet mapped out ahead of time, he assumes that all will go according to his plan. But he does not account for things like quarantines sending letters astray and the hasty emotions of youth that might provoke suicide. If he had really been directing a play, Lawrence would have

[7] Marcus, Leah S. "Antitheatricality: The Theater as Scourge" in *A New Companion to Renaissance Drama*. Edited by Arthur F. Kinney and Thomas Warren Hopper. Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2017, 182-192, 184.

left out all these inconveniences, but as it is, he cannot control all the details. Similarly, Maria has a vague idea that she will treat Malvolio's pride by making him act a ridiculous part, but she does not account for the fact that she might enjoy his humiliation so much that she allows it to go too far, particularly under the influence of Feste, who is driven by a grudge of which Maria knows nothing. Hamlet has his ideas about Claudius, but they have come from the unreliable ghost, and this blinds him to the fact that he does not end up with the information that he is seeking when he stages his play. Drama is a difficult tool to use because there are so many variables to consider, and the player-dramatists examined in this dissertation often find that drama can be difficult to manage effectively.

In the late plays, the player-dramatists manage better than those in the early plays. Sometimes this is because the player-dramatist is on the spot, as with Vincentio and Iago, or perhaps because of more careful planning, as with Paulina and Prospero. But the player-dramatists of the late plays are also just much better at what they are doing; they maneuver with agility and foresight well beyond that of the early player-dramatists. Duke Vincentio is always in the right place at the right time, seeming to see everything in Vienna; Iago is a master of destruction; Paulina keeps her drama going for sixteen years from beginning to dramatic end, Prospero has an entire magical island at his disposal. Each of these player-dramatists use the revelatory power of drama in powerful ways. Iago, as an anti-type, uses this power for destruction and chaos, but the others for repentance and renewal. This is something latent in the early plays, as C.L. Barber's moniker "festive comedies" would lead us to expect. However, in the late plays Shakespeare's idea has matured to include moral renewal on a grander scale. Vincentio reveals Angelo's fault, but many in Vienna, and especially Isabella, participate in the

renewal that results; Paulina's drama of the queen's death helps Leontes repent, and when the oracle is fulfilled Silicia is restored; Prospero's renunciation of his magic helps bring about the union of Naples and Milan; even Malcolm's trial of Macduff helps, ultimately, to free Scotland of the evil tyrant Macbeth.

However, Macduff's situation is also typical of the late plays in another way. Just before the scene with Malcolm, the theater audience has seen his wife and child brutally murdered by order of Macbeth. Even when Macduff kills Macbeth and Scotland is free, the cost Macduff paid for this victory is very steep. His life will never be as it was before. All of the late plays have this same sort of awareness that some things are irrevocably lost, and that victory and defeat are in some way linked. Mariana lost years with Angelo; Mamilius is dead and Hermione wrinkled, reminding us not only of the passage of time but also of the many lost years of married love; Prospero is returning to a duty he previously spurned to govern imperfect subjects, including his traitorous brother Antonio. Always in the late plays the triumph of drama is diminished by problems that drama cannot solve. It is possible to read this awareness of dramatic limits as "strangely disturbing," as Anne Barton does, but I think this reading neglects to account for the consolation and sense of spiritual renewal the final plays produce.[8] Prospero's epilogue, playfully placed in the border between the play and the world, is anything but disturbing. Purcell is right to emphasize the pleasure of moments like this: it seems clear that it is specifically engineered, as Prospero says, "to please" (Epilogue, 13).

Shakespeare's increasing awareness of the limits of drama indicates a profoundly realistic perspective about the people watching his dramas. Drama is a mirror, but human beings are

[8] *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play,* 203.

resistant to self-knowledge. The experience of an audience coming-to-know itself is highly unpredictable. It may produce happy acceptance, as it does for Benedick and Beatrice, but it may also create anger, as it does for Adriana. In either case, because reactions are so specific to each audience, as witnessed by Rosalind's various audiences' reactions to her drama, there is no guaranteeing any kind of homogeneity of response to any given drama. Claudius plots murder to keep his action hidden; Alonzo repents once he realizes his actions are known and he has suffered for them; Angelo tries, desperately, to keep anyone from knowing what he has done, but once it becomes clear to him that everyone knows his sin, he would rather die than live with a spotted reputation. Living with self-knowledge requires more humility than Angelo can muster. Once Adriana knows her shrewishness is known, she resents it bitterly. When Malvolio realizes he has been a fool, he runs off the stage with threats of revenge. But this is not a necessary reaction. Claudio, for instance, realizes his jealousy has (as he supposes) killed Hero, but he is sorry and willing to make amends.

In addition to negative results, it is possible for drama to evoke noble responses as well. Isabella, for instance, gains all of the merit of forgiving a murderer without actually having to lose her brother. An in-house audience might likewise, while watching the play, desire temperance for Ferdinand, or success for Don Pedro, or repentance for Alonzo. In addition to inviting space for negative thoughts and ideas, drama invites imaginative virtue, too. If it draws people into the worst kind of thought, it might just as easily draw them into the best kinds as well. Prospero does this at the end of *The Tempest*, asking the audience to exercise forgiveness and mercy through applause.

When the "Then and There" of the drama "shall dissolve" and "leave not a rack behind," it does not thereby necessarily leave the "Now and Here" unchanged (*Tempest* 5.1.154, 156). The in-play audiences of Shakespeare's player-dramatists staging recognition scenes are always changed, for better or worse, by their experience of the drama. The in-play audience members always return to their normal state, that is, the state outside of the embedded drama, wiser in some way. Ultimately they do give up the experience of drama but this dramatic magic does shape those characters that experience it.

And that, in the end, is what Shakespeare is inviting his own audiences to. He is not concerned that drama is lying, nor is he concerned about raising difficult emotions in his audience; his plays simply create an opportunity for those who experience them. Shakespeare reminds us that we, like the actors in the play, are ourselves guilty of faults. But this does not create alienation as though all life were an unreal stage, but rather, as with Barber's study of saturnalia, it creates clarification: as a result of the release produced by the drama, in the end we ought to know ourselves better and thus be more grounded in reality. Far from being pessimistic about drama, the end of Shakespeare's career is full of realism about people. He has, in fact, mastered the art of establishing the same sort of "awesome immediacy" that "pervades most of the mysteries" like the York *Crucifixion*.[9] The audience is not just watching the drama; they are participating in it. But the pattern of Shakespeare's player-dramatists suggests that his dramas are, like those of his medieval forebears, opportunities for growth in self-knowledge to which only some can respond appropriately. The knowledge may not always be comfortable – in

[9] Ibid., 16.

extreme cases the terror of it could drive us to actions like Angelo's death wish or Othello's suicide – but Shakespeare leaves what we make of this knowledge to us.

The moments of bisociation Shakespeare gives us across all of his plays provide delightful flashes of insight because they make us present in two worlds at once, heightening our impression of each: the world informs our impression of the play and the play our impression of the world. The drama Shakespeare has shown us is not set up over and against reality, but the experience of the "Then and There" he shows us ought to help us experience reality better, with new or renewed insight, and this experience is always powerful. However, given what he shows in his plays, Shakespeare evidently understands that the dramatic process is not reducible to fixed categories of any kind because it is made up of human beings – dramatists, actors, and audiences – who are complex, free, and consequently unpredictable. In the face of this uncertainty the power of drama is limited; Shakespeare repeatedly shows us this. A drama may go so far as to prick our conscience, but the regeneration of our nature has to come from a higher power than the drama: the "grace" that Caliban seeks for, or the "most high miracle" of the love between Miranda and Ferdinand, or the "indulgence" shown to Prospero (5.1.296, 177, Epilogue, 20). Drama, art, magic: these can create an occasion, but the power that brings about regeneration has to come from outside the play. Prospero renounces his illusion-producing magic, not because it is useless, but because real life is even more powerful than drama. As Michael Mack points out, the discovery of Ferdinand and Miranda "playing chess is the final spectacle of the *Tempest,* and the first wonder worked by Prospero after abjuring his wonder-

working art."[10] Prospero's art was powerful, but the real regeneration of Milan will come from the union of Ferdinand and Miranda. At the end of his career, Shakespeare has mastered the power of drama in part because he understands that drama has to look beyond itself. Drama can provide occasions of insight, but the power to forgive, love, or cooperate with grace – the truly transformative power – does not lie in the drama itself, but rather in the hands and hearts of the audience.

[10] Mack, Michael. "The Consolation of Art in the *Aeneid* and the *Tempest*." in Marc Berley, ed. *Reading the Renaissance: Ideas and Idioms from Shakespeare to Milton*. Pittsburgh, Pa: Duquesne University Press, 2003, 57-77, 76.

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