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# *Misreading and Misogyny: Ariosto, Spenser, and Shakespeare*

## KASEY EVANS

In act 2, scene 1 of *Much Ado About Nothing*, the city of Messina celebrates the victorious return of the Aragonese army with a masquerade, rehearsing in a comic key the motifs of disguise and misrecognition that will later modulate into tragic threats. Beatrice seizes the opportunity to torment her rival Benedick, pretending not to know him under his mask, railing about him in the third person. Her teasing hits home, and Benedick fulminates to the Aragonese Prince Don Pedro:

> She speaks poniards, and every word stabs. . . . I would not marry her, though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgressed. She would have made Hercules have turned spit, yea, and have cleft his club to make the fire too. . . . I would to God some scholar would conjure her, for certainly, while she is here, a man may live as quiet in hell as in a sanctuary, and people sin upon purpose, because they would go thither. . . . (2.1.231–43)[1]

Repeatedly, Benedick imagines Beatrice assuming the masculine part. Her verbal assaults take the form of phallic penetration. She seems simultaneously to play the prelapsarian Adam and his imaginary widow ("endowed" in the particular sense of "possessing a dowry")—roles that both entail the exercise of masculine prerogatives.[2] To Benedick, Beatrice seems more emasculating even than Ovid's Omphale, who enslaved Hercules, dressed him in women's clothes, and forced him to spin like a maid; Beatrice would render him "turnspit": a dog running on a treadwheel to turn a roasting spit over the fire (OED 1). Emphasizing the sexual nature of this humiliation, Benedick describes Hercules's phallic club "cleft" like the female genitalia and consumed as kindling in the roasting fire. Benedick's defense against these effeminizing threats is an explicitly theatrical one; he imagines a scholar performing a conjuration, exorcising Beatrice to hell like an evil spirit.[3] This speech thus establishes a constellation of concerns central to *Much Ado About Nothing* and to early modern English culture: disguise and identity; reading and misreading; gender and sexuality; performance and efficacy. Specifically, the speech identifies Benedick's virulent misogyny as a consequence of misreading and sexual anxiety. Supposing himself incognito, Benedick interprets Beatrice's "poniards" as public slander, texts that render him an object of common scorn. He experiences this textualization as emasculating and retaliates with this misogynistic rant. Finally, his fantasy of exorcism, the imagined performance that will expel Beatrice's scorn, calls attention to the masquerade, the actual performance that has engendered her mockery. Theatricality here is both cause and consolation for a threatened sense of masculinity.

I begin with this scene not just because it encapsulates prominent concerns in *Much Ado About Nothing;* the claim that a Shakespearean comedy demonstrates the subversive potential of gender performance hardly needs rehearsing. Instead, I want to locate these concerns at the end of a sixteenth-century textual genealogy that begins with Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* (1516, 1521, 1532); enters the English canon with Spenser's *Faerie Queene* (1590, 1596); and makes its transition to the English stage with *Much Ado About Nothing* (1598–99).[4] The Ferrarese poet's tale of Ariodante and Ginevra becomes Spenser's parable of Phedon and Claribella, which yields in turn to Shakespeare's plot of Claudio and Hero. The problems of theatrically staged misreadings and their misogynistic consequences, I will show, inhere in the tale from its Italian beginning. While Shakespeare's play offers one compelling, carnivalesque answer, these questions of gender and interpretation are cultural preoccupations spanning multiple decades, genres, and linguistic traditions. In using Ariosto and Spenser to trace the literary history of Shakespeare's tale of Claudio and Hero, then, I aim to limn an early modern intellectual tradition and to establish the ubiquity of ideas perhaps too narrowly understood, in Renaissance studies, as Shakespearean preoccupations.

## Rinaldo: Reading as Writing

The mechanics of the Ariodante-Ginevra plot of the *Orlando furioso,* which remain relatively unchanged throughout this textual genealogy, might encourage the misprision that the poem shares the familiar early modern obsession with female chastity and circulation. The knight Ariodante and the princess Ginevra are betrothed and in love. Ariodante's envious friend Polinesso, resenting their happiness, seduces Ginevra's handmaid, Dalinda, who receives Polinesso at night on the balcony of Ginevra's bedchamber. Stationed below, Ariodante witnesses this apparent proof of Ginevra's infidelity and leaves the court in despair, while his loyal brother demands Ginevra's death. Her father schedules a tournament to try her innocence. Ariodante, surmising the truth, returns in disguise to defend Ginevra's honor and defeats Polinesso, who confesses before dying on the field.

Despite the ostensible importance of chastity in this plot, the narrative takes pains to establish interactions among men as its primary interest. In fact, opportunistic fraternal alliances characterize allegedly chivalric conduct from the outset of the *Furioso.* In canto 1, Charlemagne's knight Rinaldo forgets his political fealty and suggests joining forces with the Saracen knight Ferraù to capture the fleeing maiden Angelica: "Come l'avremo in potestate, allora / di ch'esser de' si provi con la spada" (Once we have her in our power, then we will fight for possession of her with our swords).[5] Rinaldo suggests abandoning their literal swords for their phallic counterparts, turning their *spade* not against each other but against Angelica. Their common sexual agenda trumps their divisive militaristic one, and masculine confraternity precedes and enables both sexual and martial virility. Whether we read the planned gang rape as a heterosexual encounter or a mediated homosexual one, the opportunistic union of Rinaldo and Ferraù effaces the possibility—or, here, the actuality—of female resistance. Singularly unconcerned with preserving female chastity, the knights instead forge a fraternal alliance dedicated to the plucking of Angelica's legendary rose.

These are precisely the stakes of the Ariodante episode, where fraternity confers the authority and the authorship to ignore, or to erase, the reality of the virginal female body. In this tale, male homosocial alliances serve as the guarantors of an authorial prerogative: the privilege of having one's readings and misreadings poetically performed and protected.

In defiance of the uxorious mandates of chivalric courtly love and bolstered by fraternal support, Rinaldo appropriates the female body as a text, an opportunity to author his own worldly reputation. Egregious and slanderous misreadings are the occasion for, and the consequence of, the masculine authorial prerogative.

The episode begins when Rinaldo travels to Scotland to draft troops for Charlemagne's holy war. Again, he forgets his martial responsibility in favor of a self-serving mission; and again, the narrative is concerned less with the damsel in distress than with Rinaldo's homosocial alliances. He immediately encounters an abbey, whose monks (*frati*) institutionalize and literalize fraternal bonds. When Rinaldo inquires "dove si possa in qualche fatto eggregio/l'uom dimostrar, se merta biasmo o pregio" (where by some notable deed a man could show whether he deserved blame or praise; 4.55.7–8), the monks reveal Ginevra's plight, but they warn Rinaldo against accepting the charge:

> Risposongli ch'errando in quelli boschi,
> trovar potria strane aventure e molte:
> ma come i luoghi, i fatti ancor sono foschi;
> che non se n'ha notizia le più volte.
> -Cerca (diceano) andar dove conoschi
> che l'opre tue non restino sepolte,
> acciò dietro al periglio e alla fatica
> segua la fama, e il debito ne dica. (4.56)

They responded that by wandering in those woods, he could find many strange adventures, but that deeds accomplished there often remained as hidden as the place itself, and frequently escaped notice. "Try," they said, "to go where you can be certain that your actions will not remain buried, so that your risks and triumphs will be attended by fame, who will recount them in turn."

The monks assert an authorial prerogative: the power to predict whose fame will endure and whose will remain buried. This preoccupation with worldly renown, a set piece of anticlerical satire, has a specific, local function here: extending this fraternity to the poet-narrator of the *Furioso,* who, not four stanzas earlier, offered a different prediction about Rinaldo's fortunes.

> Sopra la Scozia ultimamente sorse,
> dove la selva Calidonia appare,
> che spesso fra gli antiqui ombrosi cerri
> s'ode sonar di bellicosi ferri.

> Vanno per quella i cavallieri erranti,
> incliti in arme, di tutta Bretagna,
> e de' prossimi luoghi e de' distanti,
>
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
>
> Chi non ha gran valor, non vada inanti;
> che dove cerca onor, morte guadagna.
> Gran cose in essa già fece Tristano,
> Lancillotto, Galasso, Artù e Galvano,
>
> ed altri cavallieri e de la nuova
> e de la vecchia Tavola famosi,
> restano ancor di più d'una lor pruova
> li monumenti e li trofei pomposi. (4.51.5–4.53.4)

Finally he landed in Scotland, when the Caledonian forest appeared, where so often amid the ancient shadowy oaks one could hear the clash of warlike swords. Through that would travel knights errant, legendary in battle, from all over Britain, and from other places, near and far. . . . The man who lacks great valor should not venture within, for where he seeks honor he will earn only death. Great deeds were done there by Tristan, Lancelot, Galahad, Arthur, and Gawain, and other famous knights of the new Round Table and of the old. Proud trophies and monuments to more than one of their great deeds still survive.

The monks' counsel poses subtle, but crucial, challenges to the narrator's predictions. While the narrator cautions that unworthy adventurers will find death, the monks extend this grim fate to all deeds performed in the forest, which will go as unremarked as if entombed (*sepolte*). And while the narrator testifies to extant monuments of chivalric triumphs, the monks object that deeds remain *foschi,* shadowy as the woods themselves.

The narrator settles these disagreements by erasing the monks from the narrative altogether. In a silent intervention, the poet-figure thus obscures the challenge of the *frati* to his authorial prerogative, and the narrative goes on to fulfill his predictions (the *selva oscura* reveals, rather than buries, the truth of Ginevra's story, and the text of the *Furioso* spreads Rinaldo's fame). Robert Durling has ascribed this kind of despotic judgment by the *Furioso*'s narrator to a "divine analogy" between the poet-figure and God.[6] Exercising an omnipotent prerogative, the narrator effaces dissent from the poem. The appearance of the fraternity in the poem has served, in the end, as merely a temporary demurral of the power to erase resistance and opposition to the mandates of the narrator-author.

Conversely, the narrator rewards Rinaldo, a hero *degradato*[7] who satirizes the ideals of chivalric romance.[8] Although Rinaldo undertakes

Ginevra's defense, his intentions defy the chivalric mandate of uxorious worship of the unattainable woman:

> Sia vero o falso che Ginevra tolto
> s'abbia il suo amante, io non riguardo a questo:
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
>
> Non vo' già dir ch'ella non l'abbia fatto;
> che nol sappiendo, il falso dir potrei;
> dirò ben che non de' per simil atto
> punizion cadere alcuna in lei;
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
>
> S'un medesimo ardor, s'un disir pare
> inchina e sforza l'uno e l'altro sesso
> a quel suave fin d'amor, che pare
> all'ignorante vulgo un grave eccesso;
> perché si de' punir donna o biasmare,
> che con uno o più d'uno abbia commesso
> quel che l'uom fa con quante n'ha appetito,
> e lodato ne va, non che impunito?
>
> Son fatti in questa legge disuguale
> veramente alle donne espressi torti;
> e spero in Dio mostrar che gli è gran male
> che tanto lungamente si comporti. (4.64.1–4.67.4)

Whether it's true or false that Ginevra received her lover [on her balcony] does not concern me. . . . I cannot say that she did not do it; not knowing the truth, I might speak falsely. What I will say is that no punishment should fall on her for such an act. . . . If the same ardor, the same urge drives one sex and the other to the gentle consummation of love, which to the ignorant throng seems a grave sin, why should a woman be punished or blamed when with one or several men she has done the very thing a man does with as many women as he has an appetite for, and earns for it praise rather than censure? It is clear that this unequal law does women outright wrong. I hope by God to show what a great wrong it is that this law has survived so long.

Rinaldo remembers his Arthurian romance; however unjustly, he assimilates *this* Ginevra to her literary antecedent, Guinevere, the courtly adulteress *par excellence.* But Rinaldo seems less interested in the Arthurian tradition than in his own reputation; he passes quickly over the possibility of Ginevra's innocence in order to project his own condition, narcissistically, onto her plight. In the tortuous logic of his speech, Rinaldo imprecates the cruel author of the sexist law three times; he twice reiterates

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that he neither knows nor cares about Ginevra's actual innocence and twice declares that he would excuse Ginevra even if she had consummated her passion. His reluctance to blame resounds with the terms of his own endeavor in Scotland: proving himself worthy of *biasmo o pregio.* Empathetically identified with Ginevra's susceptibility to judgment, Rinaldo suddenly finds himself blame-averse. When he announces his intention to defend any woman who has committed sexual acts *con uno o più d'uno*—a description irrelevant to Ginevra's plight as he has heard it described—Rinaldo seems to be less concerned with Ginevra than with the project of defense in general. If he could only obviate the category of blame altogether, Rinaldo would secure not only Ginevra's pardon but also his own noble legacy.

Although unconcerned with Ginevra *per se,* Rinaldo is singularly preoccupied by the men whose legal precedents he will overturn. He curses "chi tal legge pose" (the man who founded this law; 4.63.5) and then "chi la può patire" (he who can endure it; 4.63.6). Rinaldo returns compulsively in his speech to various incarnations of this imaginary man. He repeats, "fu ingiusto o . . . fu matto / chi fece prima li statuti rei" (whoever first made these royal statutes was unjust or mad; 4.65.5–6), and when he concludes with a final reiteration of this conviction, his fraternity chimes in to agree: "Rinaldo ebbe il consenso universale, / che fur gli antiqui ingiusti e mali accorti, / che consentiro a così iniqua legge, / e mal fa il re, che può, né la corregge" (all concurred with Rinaldo that the ancients were unjust and careless when they consented to such an iniquitous law, and that the king did wrong in failing to right it though he could; 4.67.5–8). Rinaldo and his peanut gallery concentrate not on Ginevra's *difesa* but on the figures whom Rinaldo will overcome, whose imagined unjustness, madness, imprudence, and irresponsibility set the bar low for Rinaldo's chivalric success. In the tale of Ginevra, Rinaldo can read only the image of his projected success.

The misreading of Ginevra enabled by Rinaldo's projection and the monks' approval leads to an ideological erasure, similar to that effected by Rinaldo and Ferraù over Angelica or by the narrator over the monks. More specifically, and more importantly for the Spenserian and Shakespearean adaptations, the episode explores the gendered implications of such misreading, implicating Rinaldo in a sexual politics of gynophobia, slander, and misogyny. In Rinaldo's imagination, Ginevra is utterly available, in multiple senses of that word. She is available as a sexual object whose indefatigable appetites excuse the sexual aggression of her suitors. She is available narratively as an opportunity, an *impresa,* which the *frati* suggest he should exploit to advance his reputation; the submerged pun on *impresa* as sexual exploit emphasizes the continuity between these first two forms of availability (4.57.2). Finally, Ginevra is available rhetorically, to the terms of interrogation Rinaldo uses for self-evaluation: *biasmo e pregio,* blame and praise.

By thus assuming Ginevra's availability, Rinaldo begs the question of her consent, the *sine qua non* of medieval courtly love, specifically invoked by the Arthurian context of this episode. *Amour courtois* is defined by the mutual and free decision of both parties to enter into its bonds, a willingness that distinguishes courtly love from nonaristocratic servile relations. And although the Renaissance adaptation of courtly love typically omits the woman's consent, in Joan Kelly's famous argument, the result of this withholding is nonconsummation, not capitulation.[9]

Despite his transgressions against *amour courtois,* the narrator grants Rinaldo unqualified success; the tragic death predicted by the monks converts neatly into comedy. Stumbling across the runaway handmaid, Dalinda, Rinaldo scares away two villains who threaten to murder her. But it is Dalinda, not Rinaldo, who confirms Ginevra's innocence, and when he arrives at the tournament, Ariodante himself triumphs over his traitorous brother.[10] Despite his slander of Ginevra, despite flaunting the mandates of *amour courtois,* Rinaldo evades both literal and literary death. With the silent assistance of the Ariostan narrator, Rinaldo transforms Ginevra into a narrative occasion, a cipher onto whom he can project his own ambitions. And Ginevra succumbs entirely to this conscription, quietly eliding the paradoxes of Rinaldo's chivalric ethos. She makes herself rhetorically available for his purposes, allowing Rinaldo to earn his *pregio.* She does not, however, make herself sexually available, as Rinaldo suggested she might. The hero is thus forced neither to fulfill his most radical promises to reform the harsh laws of Scotland and to eliminate the sexual double standard for men and women nor to recant his outlandish speculations. Capitulating to the role of the traditional courtly woman, pledged to one man alone, Ginevra becomes the text of Rinaldo's projected fantasy.

Thus circumscribed by the exigencies of Rinaldo's *pregio,* Ginevra, like the monks, bears witness to the way the *Furioso* allows fraternal relations to foreclose the possibility of resistance and dissent. As if to punctuate this authorial accomplishment, the narrative figures Ginevra's doppelgänger in Dalinda, her handmaid. Guilty of the very crimes that Ginevra avoids, Dalinda suffers for resisting the imperatives of the *Furioso*'s fraternity. Unlike Ginevra, whose chastity secures Rinaldo's reputation, Dalinda is a figure of continued circulation. Most obviously, she yields her body to Polinesso's sexual advances. Furthermore, she opens the inviolate space of Ginevra's bedchamber to Polinesso, and, unwittingly, to the voyeuristic gaze of Ariodante and his brother, making the private public. Finally, as a narrator, Dalinda repeats her story to Rinaldo, who narrates it for the Scottish court, whence it passes to the poet-figure of the *Furioso,* recording Polinesso's conspiratorial plot for posterity. For revealing the truth, however, Dalinda receives not the *pregio* of a heroine but the *biasmo* of one disgraced: "molto sazia . . . del mondo" (tired of the world; 6.16.3-4), she leaves Scotland for a Danish convent, where she will be permanently removed from sexual and discursive circulation. Why, exactly, should Dalinda suffer this fate? The answer might lie once again in the fraternal alliances that organize the poet-figure's allegiances in the poem. While the pun on "plot"—Polinesso's conspiracy and the narrator's literary composition—works less neatly in Italian than in English, the connection is implicit. Polinesso has "ordito" (5.85.8) and "tramato" his plot ("l'inganno") (87.8); *tramare* means "to plot, to scheme, or to conspire," but the derived noun, *trama* can refer both to a conspiracy and to the weave of a textile. *Ordire* can mean either "to plot, to hatch a plot," or, in relation to textiles, "to warp," relevant here because the narrator's primary metaphor for his poem in the *Furioso* is that of a great web or tapestry. The poet-figure describes his strategy of romantic narrative *entrelacement* using the verb *ordire*—the same verb used to describe Polinesso's handling of the *inganno:* "varie fila a varie tele/uopo mi son, che tutte *ordire* intendo" (I require many threads and cloths to weave my entire tapestry; 2.30.5-6, emphasis added).[11] Like Penelope resisting her suitors, Dalinda has the audacity to unweave the threads of masculine aggression, importunity, and narrative, and she suffers poetic excision for this audacity.

Rinaldo thus ends the episode comfortably ensconced within the narrative fraternity, protected by the poet-figure who has *ordito* the poem and its many *inganni.* This hero *degradato* enjoys the prerogative of sanctioned misreading. Ginevra's silent capitulation is a privilege of authorship extended by the narrator to the poem's chivalric fraternity. At whatever cost—the monks' erasure, Ginevra's silence, Dalinda's exile—Rinaldo's narcissistic misreading effectively writes Ginevra into the role he needs her to fulfill.[12]

## Phedon: Misreading and Rereading

From its outset, when the Redcrosse Knight confronts his own error in the form of a monstrous maternal body, *The Faerie Queene* associates acts of misreading with misogyny. In keeping with this correspondence, Spenser makes explicit what Ariosto's poet-figure would suppress. If the latter effaces Rinaldo's misogyny via narratorial intervention, the former introduces his first extended Ariostan adaptation of *The Faerie Queene* with a patent example of misogynistic misreading.

Immediately before encountering Ariodante's English double, Guyon is accosted by a madman and "a wicked Hag":

> In ragged robes, and filthy disarray,
> Her other leg was lame, that she no'te walke,
> But on her staffe her feeble steps did stay;
> Her lockes, that loathly were and hoarie gray,
> Grew all afore, and loosely hong vnrold,
> But all behind was bald, and worne away,
> That none thereof could euer taken hold,
> And eke her face ill fauourd, full of wrinckles old. (2.4.4)[13]

As Guyon will learn in a stern rebuke from his Palmer, this old woman is Occasion, the mother to the madman Furor and "the root of all wrath and despight" (2.4.10.9). In the classical tradition, occasion (L. *occasio*) is the climactic time of the event, in contrast to the undifferentiated time of delay (*tempus*). Renaissance emblem books embody this contrast in Occasion's pate, bald except for a single forelock; the time for action must be seized at once, ungraspable once it has passed.[14] Occasion is thus strict but not malevolent. In Geffrey Whitney's *A Choice of Emblemes,* for instance, she solicitously "warne[s] all people not to staye,/But at thee firste, occasion to imbrace,/And when shee comes, to meete her by the waye."[15] Even Reformation theology, prioritizing patient sufferance, sanctions the seizure of occasion, as in Luther's gloss on Ecclesiastes: "The maker of a thing hath nothing but his time and season. Till this cometh, he can do nothing. *If the houre be hit so doth he likewise hit it.*"[6] Occasion is not a threat but a reward: the moment of action, realization, culmination.

Guyon and the Palmer, however, treat Occasion as a menacing figure. Citing her "reprochfull blame" as the cause of Furor's wrath, the Palmer counsels, "With her, who so will raging Furor tame, / Must first begin, and well her amenage" (2.4.11). This apparently temperate counsel belies a metaphoric stratum of misogynistic violence. The iconography of *manège* as horsemanship goes back to Plato's *Phaedrus,* which allegorizes the mind controlling the passions as a charioteer reining a steed. Early modern writers embrace this metaphor, commonly depicting the appetitive body as an unruly horse that must be reined in by reason.[17] Occasion, though, is not a horse, and the Palmer's application of the equestrian metaphor to a woman is misogynistically suggestive.[18] Given Occasion's similarity to the medieval *Fortuna,*[19] this metaphor creates a sinister register for the Palmer's advice, for Renaissance writers often depicted Fortune as the wayward woman in need of physical domination. Machiavelli is only the most famous progenitor of this image, in this notorious passage from *The Prince:*

> It is better to be impetuous than cautious, because Fortune is a woman and it is necessary, in order to keep her under, to cuff and maul her. She more often lets herself be overcome by men using such methods than by those who proceed coldly; therefore always, like a woman, she is the friend of young men, because they are less cautious, more spirited, and with more boldness master her.[20]

Machiavelli advocates what Sidney reproves: the deployment of misogynistic violence to ensure masculine sovereignty.

Guyon enthusiastically embraces the mandate of the Machiavellian *vir virtutis:* "Therewith *Sir Guyon* left his first emprise, / And turning to that woman, fast her hent / By the hoare lockes, that hong before her eyes, / And to the ground her threw" (2.4.12.1–4). He then binds her hands to a stake and secures her tongue with an iron lock; rather than seizing Occasion's "hore lockes" of hair—that transient opportunity that must be seized actively before it passes—Guyon turns his attention to a different sort of lock, one designed for complete immobilization.[21] This exchange of the hoarie lock for the iron one represents a failure of Guyon's nominal virtue. Instead of seizing Occasion at the appropriate moment, Guyon arrests her entirely, in a violent attempt to subdue the march of *tempus* to his authority. Even the "varlet" Atin finds Guyon's conduct reprehensible: "Vile knight, / That knights and knighthood doest with shame vpbray, / And shewst th'ensample of thy childish might, / With silly weake old woman thus to fight" (2.4.45.2–5). Guyon's zealotry here reveals its Machiavellian excess. It is one thing to "imbrace" Occasion, "and when shee comes, to meete her by the waye," and quite another to beat up on little old ladies. Spenser thus opens the canto by associating misreading, like that of the Ariostan episode, with Machiavellian misogyny, conflating the narrative violence of the *Furioso* with the physical violence of the Machiavellian *vir virtutis.*

The sexual-political stakes of misreading are thus in full view when *The Faerie Queene* undertakes its first major Ariostan revision, the story of Phedon and Claribella. Spenser's adaptation is simultaneously less and more dramatic—in every sense of that word—than the original. Characteristically, the oscillations between hope and fear are psychologized; much of the action occurs in Phedon's mind.[22] As an allegorical poem, though, *The Faerie Queene* projects Phedon's psychological dynamics onto the poem's landscape, realizing even Phedon's private affective states in the material world and staging, in an explicitly theatrical way, the problems of misreading. In what he comes to describe as "my tragedie," Phedon struggles with the sexual implications of the spectacle he thinks he sees. He faces a double threat of feminization: first as an emasculated cuckold, and subsequently as a text, a theatrical spectacle, whose cuckold's horns render him legible to all audiences. In his desperation to remain the subject rather than the object of the feminizing gaze, Phedon misreads Claribella as unfaithful, gaining temporary and illusory interpretive control. Unlike Rinaldo, he suffers brutal repercussions, realizing precisely the humiliation he feared and assuming the burden of guilt.

The failure of Phedon's desperate salvo is finally complete when Guyon and the Palmer allegorize the event. Phedon has become their spectacle, their object of interpretive control, the malleable, Ginevran text to their definitive interpretive desire. Spenser's adaptation thus demonstrates the failure of two interpretive schemes. Neither masculine desire nor allegorization provides control over *The Faerie Queene*'s female characters; neither Phedon nor Guyon can solve the interpretive problem that Claribella presents. Phedon kills her, Guyon transforms her into an abstraction, and the poem and its readers register the aporia, and the misogyny, of gendered misreading.

Phedon begins his narrative by articulating two complementary anxieties: a sense of isolation in his masculinity and a fear of his own feminization. He begins, "It was a faithlesse Squire, that was the sourse/Of all my sorrow, and of these sad teares, / With whom from tender dug of commune nourse, / Attonce I was vpbrought" (2.4.18.1–4). Phedon shares with Philemon, Spenser's Polinesso, a wet nurse: a shadowy feminine presence who functions as nothing more than a measure of the boys' intimacy and betrayal. Otherwise, Phedon is alone, lacking Rinaldo's fraternal alliances. His friends and parents barely haunt the edges of the narrative, registered grammatically as objects of prepositions in subordinate clauses: "Accord of friends, consent of parents sought, / Affiance made, my happinesse begonne" (2.4.21.3–4). Thus isolated, Phedon doubts his masculinity. Philemon's intimations about Claribella's infidelity produce a "gnawing anguish and sharpe gelosy," which become "infixed in [Phedon's] brest" (2.4.23.1, 2); later, he confesses that he still harbors grief and fury "Of which in me yet stickes the mortall sting" (2.4.33.5). Later, Phedon explicitly feminizes such coronary penetration, describing the handmaid Pryene's response to Philemon: "glad t'embosome his affection vile" (2.4.25.3).[23]

Phedon's sexual uncertainty becomes increasingly explicit when Philemon positions him for the staged deception: "Me . . . in a secret corner layd" (2.4.27.5). "Layd" underscores his emasculation and passivity, "cast down from an erect position" (OED s.v. "lay," v.[1] 1) while his location in the "secret corner"—echoing the "darksome inner bowre" where Claribella allegedly welcomes her illicit lover (2.4.24.5)—suggests the fear and shame Phedon associates with female sexuality. Even before witnessing the staged infidelity, Phedon suffers from a sense of his feminized position and of the shameful unknowability of female sexuality, a foreboding of its "darksome" ensnaring potential.

What Phedon witnesses in the spectacle is not a resolution but a symptom of these anxieties. Philemon, disguised as the "groome of base degree," arrives at the appointed place along with Pryene, who is dressed in Claribella's clothes. But from his secret vantage, Phedon can see nothing more:

> . . . Her proper face
> I not descerned in that darkesome shade,
> But weend it was my loue, with whom he playd.
> Ah God, what horrour and tormenting griefe
> My hart, my hands, mine eyes, and all assayd? (2.4.28.3–7)

With this tortuous logic, Phedon moves precipitously from unknowing to certainty. He cannot see the face of the woman in lines 3–4; he suspects it to be Claribella's in line 5; but in line 6, after the full stop, the tenuousness of "weening" in a "darkesome shade" disappears. Phedon begins to experience his emotional pain as a physical assault from outside: his hands, his eyes, and "all" other senses are "assayed." In an instant, Phedon substitutes objectivity for uncertainty, preferring to believe the worst rather than to endure continued doubt.

In construing Claribella as unfaithful, Phedon tries to assert the authorial prerogative of an Ariostan narrator and thereby to forestall his own feminization. The paradox of his predicament is clear when he describes himself, ambiguously, as "the sad spectatour of my Tragedie" (2.4.27.6). Phedon is sad, which could make him either the subject of a tragedy or its theatrical audience, which, in the fears of Renaissance antitheatricalists, becomes like what it views. If "spectatour" seems to settle the question, "my Tragedie" reopens it. In what sense is Phedon the spectator of his own tragedy: as audience or performer, spectacle or spectator?

The dramatic vocabulary is crucial here. Spenser's theatricalization of the scene of misreading prepares the episode for its transition to the stage in Shakespeare's *Much Ado.* At the same time, this crossing of genres situates this instance of gendered misreading in a larger Renaissance context: the institution of the popular theater that provoked myriad concerns about performance, interpretation, and reality—the power of the spectacle to exert influence beyond the bounds of the stage.[24] Phedon imagines his unfolding narrative as a tragic play because even in the age of the expansive Marlovian stage, the play works through synecdoche—a few soldiers for a whole army, three hours for the passage of years. As Katherine Eisaman Maus argues, the metonymic nature of the stage play makes the audience conceptually equivalent to the cuckold: neither can intervene in the spectacle, neither has the "full view" of what it longs to see, but both find the imagined synecdoche more believable than the reality of the absence of "ocular proof."[25] The cuckold never gets the forensic evidence he simultaneously dreads and desires. But for the price of this frustration, the cuckold, like the theatrical audience, earns a measure of interpretive control. Like Rinaldo enjoying the authorial prerogative, the cuckold makes himself into playwright rather than spectator. It is the simultaneous occupation of these roles that produces Phedon's epistemological vertigo ("not descerned . . . / But weend"). As Maus explains, such bids for control are futile: "Once the cuckold's plight becomes public he . . . becomes himself a feminized spectacle at which others point mocking, phallic fingers. *Any* act of sexual assertion or self-justification thus threatens to emasculate him. . . . A gain of power in one direction inevitably entails a loss of power in another."[26] His oscillations between disavowal and knowledge underscore the sexual politics of Phedon's misreading. He gains the masculine privilege of authorship, but gains too the shame of the feminized cuckold. Phedon trades the story of Phedon-as-spectacle ("my Tragedie" as objective genitive) for the story of spectacle-by-Phedon ("my Tragedie" as subjective genitive), but he cannot escape the theatricality, or the tragedy, of his predicament.

Guyon and the Palmer complete the sequence of feminization with a final act of misreading, treating Phedon as a text in need of allegorical exposition. The Palmer calls him a "wretched man/That to affections does the bridle lend" (2.4.38.1-2), and Guyon advises:

> Wrath, gealosie, griefe, loue do thus expell:
> Wrath is a fire, and gealosie a weede,
> Griefe is a flood, and loue a monster fell;
> The fire of sparkes, the weede of little seed,
> The flood of drops, the Monster filth did breede:
> But sparks, seed, drop, and filth do thus delay;
> The drops soon dry vp, and filth wipe cleane away:
> The sparks soone quench, the springing seed outweed,
> So shall wrath, gealosie, griefe, loue dye and decay. (2.4.35)

Guyon and the Palmer seem to have lent only the most cursory attention to Phedon's story; they moralize him with the same vocabulary applied to Furor and Occasion before Phedon arrived. The "flood" of grief recycles the Palmer's claim about Furor's passions ("the tempest of his passion wood; / The bankes are ouerflowen, when stopped is the flood"; 2.4.11.7-9). Similarly, the image of wrath as a fire recalls how Occasion "kindles [Furor's] courage," and "the franticke fit inflamd his spright" (11.5, 7.3). The Palmer invokes the "bridle," recalling the reins of temperance that subtended Guyon's *manège* of Occasion.

With these recycled readings, Guyon and the Palmer reveal themselves as failed readers, heedless of Phedon's parable about the dangers of attempting to assert a masculine authorial prerogative over a feminized spectacle. Moreover, they fail to appreciate the specificity of Phedon's theatrical vocabulary. Phedon's narrative explains how "my Tragedie" as objective genitive—a fictional, scurrilous story *about* him, directed by his treacherous friend—was transformed into "my Tragedie" as subjective genitive—a true story of how Phedon killed his fiancée and best friend. It is a story about the dangers of theatrical performance: a familiar Renaissance antitheatrical complaint about the impact of staged fictions affecting and infecting the real world. Theatrical audiences who lust after female characters in a play might find themselves erotically drawn to the boy players; Faustus's fictional conjuration of devils onstage during a production of Marlowe's play might conjure real devils from hell; lowly actors who dress as noblemen onstage might find themselves inclined to violate early modern sumptuary laws.[27] Guyon and the Palmer fail to appreciate Phedon's lessons about the dangers of gendered misreading and misinterpretation inherent to the theatrical spectacle. Shakespeare, on the other hand, proffered a more appreciative audience.

## Much Ado About Nothing: Reading the Unreadable

In the Claudio-Hero plot, Shakespeare's contribution to this legacy of narration and revision, *Much Ado About Nothing* too turns on by now familiar scenes of gendered misreading. But unlike Phedon's sober "tragedie," *Much Ado* embraces epistemological ambiguity. Its characters remain happily entangled in the oscillations between knowledge and uncertainty, between the visibility and invisibility of both fidelity and betrayal. Is the female body whole or inviolate? Is the male head horned or smooth? In *Much Ado,* these questions are unanswerable. Bodies are phenomenologically unstable, it insists, readable only as fragmentary, "distempered," and violable. The title's pun on the no-thing of the female genitalia is also a pun on know-thing: the impossibility of reading the body as definitive proof of the sexually coherent, stable subject. To the Ariostan scene and Spenserian critique of misogynistic misreading, the play posits a carnivalesque alternative: a joyful relocation of corporeal misreading from Thanatos to Eros and a cheerful abandonment of the fiction that authorial control can guarantee sexual identity.

*Much Ado About Nothing* begins with the transition from the masculine violence of the battlefield to the feminine world of leisure and rejuvenation. The triumphant Aragonese army returns to its peacetime haunt in Messina, and masculinity itself softens; the ideal of the martial "lion" (1.1.14) gives way to the ideal of the old man openly weeping in a "kind overflow of kindness" (1.1.25). And yet Messina is not all sweetness and light. The indomitable Beatrice asks after her rival Benedick: "I pray you, how many hath he killed and eaten in these wars? But how many hath he killed? For indeed I promised to eat all of his killing" (1.1.38–41). This proverbial expression[28] inaugurates a metaphorics of corporeal violence that persists throughout the play. Almost obsessively, characters are catalogued in parts, as if *Much Ado* is a five-act blazon.[29] Take Beatrice's description of her masculine ideal:

BEATRICE: He were an excellent man that were made just in the mid-way between him [Don John] and Benedick: the one is too like an image and says nothing, and the other too like my lady's eldest son, evermore tattling.
LEONATO: Then half Signior Benedick's tongue in Count John's mouth, and half Count John's melancholy in Signior Benedick's face—
BEATRICE: With a good leg and a good foot, uncle, and money enough in his purse, such a man would win any woman in the world—if he could get her good will.
LEONATO: By my troth, niece, thou wilt never get thee a husband, if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.
ANTONIO: In faith, she's too curst.
BEATRICE: Too curst is more than curst: I shall lessen God's sending that way, for it is said, "God sends a curst cow short horns," but to a cow too curst he sends none.
LEONATO: So, by being too curst, God will send you no horns.
BEATRICE: Just, if he send me no husband . . . (2.1.6–24)

The proverb Beatrice cites implies that God limits the capacity of a fierce beast to inflict harm.[30] But in a play obsessed with sexual fidelity, these horns simultaneously evoke the cuckold, as Beatrice's final riposte implies. She feels the want of neither the horns she might lock with her mate, nor the horns she might confer on him through infidelity. These proverbial prostheses, then, transfer across genders and signifying functions. Belying the integrity of a body of either gender, the sign of Beatrice's temperamental "curse" is here appropriated to signify both her mate's sexual inadequacy and their marital union. These horns are the passage's final contribution to its blazon of body parts, one that contravenes the fantasy of the coherent sexual subject. Leonato and Beatrice imaginatively construct a physiological composite: half of Benedick's active tongue to animate Don John's laconic mouth; half of Don John's black bile ("melancholy") to temper Benedick's choler; a shapely leg and foot borrowed from Beatrice's fantasy; and the horns conferred by the would-be *amoreuse* herself. The masculine body whose appearance would please Beatrice is not an integral subject but a composite of temperamentally distinct parts.

The concept of "temperament" adduced here is *Much Ado*'s answer to temperance, the virtue in whose name Guyon critiques Phedon's acts of misreading. Referring both to the humoral composition of the body and the subject's resulting disposition, "temperament" marks the convergence of the body in parts *per se* and the phenomenology of that body, of the physical *corpus* and its readability. Both senses of "temperament" are operative, for example, when Don John declares himself "born under Saturn" (1.3.11), the planet directly associated with melancholic humor, so that his villainous conduct is literally the disposition that "fits [his] blood."[31] Similarly, suspecting that Don Pedro woos Hero for himself, Claudio appears jaundiced, "civil as an orange, and something of that jealous complexion" (2.1.276-77). Claudius's jaundice is the phenomenological counterpart to his sanguinary body: his behavioral temperament derives from his humoral one.

The play's climactic scene, Claudio's public decrial of Hero on their wedding day, demonstrates the interpretive difficulty posed by the temperamental body. Claudio misreads Hero's humoral temperament—and infers her lustful disposition—from the phenomenology of the blush:

> Behold how like a maid she blushes here!
> O, what authority and show of truth
> Can cunning sin cover itself withal!
> Comes not that blood as modest evidence
> To witness simple virtue? Would you not swear,
> All you that see her, that she were a maid,
> By these exterior shows? But she is none:
> She knows the heat of a luxurious bed:
> Her blush is guiltiness, not of modesty . . .
> Out on thee, seeming! I will write against it. (4.1.33-56)

Rather than an "exterior show" of modesty, Claudio insists, Hero's blush signifies a humoral temperament that leads to wantonness. His diagnosis rests on sound sixteenth-century physiology, which identifies "redde coulour" as a chief symptom of "the hot bodye" prone to lechery.[32] Hero's undiluted blood, Claudio imagines, improperly balanced by phlegm, flows through her veins and into her face. The vow to "write against" Hero's apparent chastity echoes the authorial prerogative repeatedly asserted by sexually threatened male figures in Ariosto and Spenser. Claudio also "write[s] against" Hero's "seeming" with his performative interpretation. His misreading of Hero's temperament becomes an article of faith even for Hero's devoted father, who echoes Claudio's accusation in believing he can read Hero's infidelity "printed in her blood" (4.1.122).

Like Phedon, Claudio asserts this authorial prerogative to shore up a threatened sense of masculinity.

> O my lord,
> When you went onward on this ended action,
> I look'd upon her with a soldier's eye,
> That lik'd, but had a rougher task in hand
> Than to drive liking to the name of love:
> But now I am return'd, and that war-thoughts
> Have left their places vacant, in their rooms
> Come thronging soft and delicate desires,
> All prompting me how fair young Hero is,
> Saying I lik'd her ere I went to wars. (1.1.276–85)

By collapsing the past and the present, Claudio here imagines his martial, masculine self dissolving into the feminine leisure of Messina. He refers proleptically to the "ended action" even as he describes Don Pedro setting out at the campaign's onset; at the conclusion of the passage, his newfound desires for Hero claim rights of prior occupation, asserting their importance not just to Claudio-the-lover, but to Claudio-the-soldier. For one whose youth makes his martial prowess surprising—Claudio surprised the Aragonese army by "doing, in the figure of a lamb, the feats of a lion" (1.1.13–14)—this temporal collapse undermines his hard-fought masculinity, ascribing Claudio's prowess to the lucky breaks of a lamb in lion's clothing.

Don Pedro exacerbates the problem by offering, impatiently, to broker Claudio's engagement: "Thou wilt be like a lover presently, / And tire the hearer with a book of words, / . . . / . . . thou shalt have her. Was't not to this end / That thou began'st to twist so fine a story?" (1.1.286–91). If Don Pedro grants Claudio a certain authorial prerogative with "book of words," he emphatically genders this version of authorship feminine. The threads of Claudio's confession, spun into a tale, identify him simultaneously with the loquacious woman gossiping while she spins[33] and with the writer of romance, genre of the disenfranchised, the emasculated, the feminized.[34] Don Pedro thus derides Claudio's manliness while aggrandizing his own epic-appropriate impatience, laying fertile ground for the fantasy of Hero's infidelity:

> I will assume thy part in some disguise,
> And tell fair Hero I am Claudio,
> And in her bosom I'll unclasp my heart,
> And take her hearing prisoner with the force
> And strong encounter of my amorous tale:
> Then after to her father will I break,
> And the conclusion is, she shall be thine. (1.1.301-7)

Don Pedro underscores the martial aggression of his wooing: his "force" and "strong encounter" will claim first Hero's ear and subsequently her affections as his "prisoner." In the only line suggestive of erotic intimacy—"in her bosom I'll unclasp my heart"—it is Don Pedro's heart, not Claudio's, unfolding within Hero's breast. The fragmented body reappears here to impugn Hero's chastity; she has, by the end of Don Pedro's speech, already been debauched, her body penetrated imaginatively by a man other than her betrothed. With Don Pedro having asserted the masculine prerogative of authorship and feminized Claudio, Don John need only capitalize on these anxieties to execute his plot.

Claudio tries to reassert the corporeal integrity that could guarantee either Hero's chastity or his own masculinity—his rejection of that shameful prosthetic, the cuckold's horns. Believing Don Pedro to be courting Hero for himself, he resolves never again to trust a proxy: "all hearts in love use their own tongues; / Let every eye negotiate for itself, / and trust no agent" (2.1.165-67). If the rest of Messina playfully imagines composite lovers ("half Signior Benedick's tongue in Count John's mouth") or vengefully imagines the dismemberment of the unchaste female body (if Hero is guilty, Leonato vows, "these hands shall tear her"; 4.1.191), Claudio hopes to reassert the integrality of his body, which will see and speak on its own behalf. As with Phedon, the prerogatives of authorship and authority wrest control of the male body back from the cuckolding woman, and thus compensate in part for the alleged betrayal.

When Leonato adopts this metaphor of authorship, he unwittingly reveals Hero's impossible predicament, bringing to the fore the tragedies that ended, in Ariosto and Spenser, with the erasure of Ginevra and Claribella from the text. When Hero declines to rebut her accusers, Leonato laments: "Could she here deny / The story that is printed in her blood? / Do not live, Hero, do not ope thine eyes; / For did I think thou wouldst not quickly die, / Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shames, / Myself would on the rearward of reproaches / Strike at thy life" (4.1.121-27).

With "the story that is printed in her blood," Leonato grants Hero a dubious sort of authorship: she has printed, made public for all to see, the blood that accounts for her lustful temperament.[35] But Leonato recants almost immediately. At the friar's suggestion, he determines to "publish" yet a different story, allowing Hero's staged death—metonymic referent of her "blood"—to testify to her virtue (4.1.204). Hero is granted the right to control her bodily signification only in the negative; her "blood" can speak of her innocence only when it has been taken from her by someone else (within the fiction of her death, by her accusers; within the play, by the friar and Leonato who execute this plan). It is Hero's postmortem silence that exonerates her, as in her epitaph:

> CLAUDIO (*Reading from a scroll.*):
> "Done to death by slanderous tongues
> Was the Hero that here lies:
> Death, in guerdon of her wrongs,
> Gives her fame which never dies:
> So the life that died with shame
> Lives in death with glorious fame."
> (*Hangs up the scroll.*)
> Hang thou there upon the tomb,
> Praising her when I am dumb. (5.3.3–10)

The story of Hero's death—what Claudio, were he Phedon, would call "my Tragedie"—speaks loudly enough of Hero's chastity to silence the disembodied "slanderous tongues," rendering her accuser "dumb." For the moment, this seems to be a victory as hard-won as Claribella's: heroism at the cost of perpetual silence, a kind of trial-by-ordeal in which only death, too late, can prove innocence.

Elsewhere in the play, too, silence constitutes female virtue and grants men authorial control. Don John, for instance, feigns punctiliousness about Hero's alleged transgressions: "Fie, fie, they are not to be nam'd, my lord, / Not to be spoke of! / There is not chastity enough in language / Without offense to utter them" (4.1.95–98). Feigning verbal nicety, Don John declares himself loath to detail Hero's affair; the truncated meter of line 94 itself enacts the silence that purports to stand for virtue. With this demurral, Don John invites his audience—both on the stage and in the theater—to make the vertiginous shift into certainty, to author a "story that is printed in [Hero's] blood" (4.1.122). To speak aloud of Hero's transgressions would be to participate in her sins. Silence stands as the guarantor of the accuser's own intact honor and the space in which he and his auditors, like Phedon, can entrench their positions as subjects, not objects, of this tale of unchastity.

Ultimately, though, the play rejects this double bind in which women must choose between disgrace and silence. This transformation is perhaps clearest in the trajectory of Benedick, who begins the play as a fervent believer in the virtue of female reticence. He rails against Beatrice, "my Lady Tongue" (2.1.258), who "speaks poniards, and every word stabs" (2.1.231). Blaming Beatrice's prolixity, Benedick swears off marriage altogether and mocks Claudio's marital ambitions:

> BENEDICK: He is in love. With who? Now that is your Grace's part. Mark how short his answer is: with Hero, Leonato's short daughter.
> CLAUDIO: If this were so, so were it uttered.
> BENEDICK: Like the old tale, my lord: "It is not so, nor 'twas not so: but indeed, God forbid it should be so!" (1.1.195–201)

The "old tale" here is a morbid folktale about a serial killer named Mr. Fox, one which speaks directly to the relationship between female silence and dismemberment. In an analogue to the tale of Bluebeard, Lady Mary visits the home of Mr. Fox, where four written signs hang over four different portals. Three bear the same message—"Be bold, be bold, be not too bold"—while a final sign over the door of a chamber revises, "Be bold, be bold, be not too bold, lest that your heart's blood should run cold." When she opens the door, she finds the dismembered remains of scores of young women, her predecessors who have fallen into Mr. Fox's trap. Seizing a severed hand as evidence, Lady Mary escapes unnoticed. Several days later, at a dinner party with Mr. Fox among the guests, she entertains the company with her story, turning to Mr. Fox three times to insist on its fictionality with this refrain: "It is not so, nor it was not so." When she begins to describe the final bloody chamber, Mr. Fox interjects, "It is not so, nor it was not so, and God forbid it should be so." Lady Mary retaliates, "But it is so, and it was so, and here the hand I have to show," at which point she produces the severed limb. The dinner guests turn on Mr. Fox with their swords and cut him into a thousand pieces.[36]

In mentioning this "old wives' tale," Benedick joins Don Pedro in teasing Claudio about his compromised masculinity. As critics have long attested, fairy tales in the English Renaissance were considered with some disdain as childish relics of a preliterate, feminine sphere. The soft, effeminate boy who would have lapped up these nursery rhymes in his "mother tongue" came into manhood only when humanist pedagogy toughened him into "a 'hard' disciplined youth" trained up in "Roman masculinity."[37] But at the same time, this folkloric citation betrays Benedick's anxiety about the threats of Eros. Like *Much Ado About Nothing* itself, the tale of Mr. Fox represents the dangers of illicit sexuality—implied by Lady Mary's "bold" venture into her neighbor's home—as vivisection. Benedick quotes not the triumphant Lady Mary but the lying Mr. Fox, who tries unsuccessfully to silence a speaking woman, to disavow the inevitable truth, and to evade retaliation. For Benedick, maintaining his bodily integrity, avoiding Mr. Fox's Actaeon-like punishment, requires the continued silence—or, better, the nonexistence, says Benedick—of his imagined erotic partner. To admit a woman into a conversation, much less into his bed, is to risk effeminization, dismemberment, and death. Tellingly, Spenser quotes the same refrain from the Mr. Fox tale at the end of book 3 of *The Faerie Queene,* where the enchanter Busiraine writes "straunge characters of his art,/With liuing bloud . . . /Dreadfully dropping from [the] dying hart" of his chaste captive Amoret (3.12.31.2–4). The stakes are identical in the two texts: the violence of masculine authorship, and the costs it exacts in female silence and dismemberment.

The play ends, famously, with Benedick literally singing another tune (5.2.25–27). But crucially, these specific anxieties—about the fictions of bodily integrity on which authorship is premised—persist. After Borachio's confession, Dogberry makes a plea to Leonato, one based on a misprision about bodily integrity:

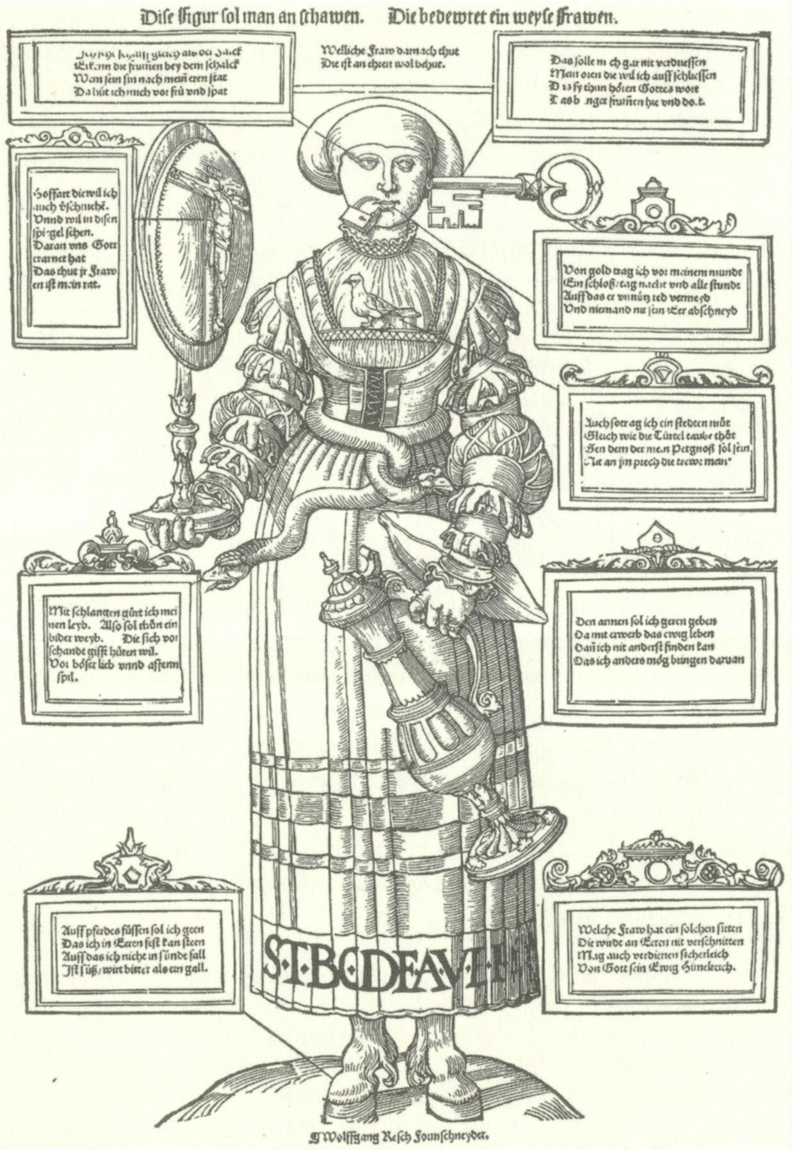
> DOGBERRY: The watch heard [Borachio and Conrad] talk of one Deformed; they say he wears a key in his ear and a lock hanging by it, and borrows money in God's name, the which he hath used so long, and never paid, that now men grow hard-hearted and will lend nothing for God's sake: pray you examine him upon that point. (5.1.301–7)

Dogberry's report bastardizes the conversation between Borachio and Conrad in 3.3, when Borachio boasts about having deceived Claudio and Don Pedro: "Seest thou not, I say, what a deformed thief this fashion is, how giddily a turns about all the hot bloods between fourteen and five-and-thirty . . . ?" (3.3.127–29). The watchmen mistake Borachio's adjective for a proper noun: "I know that Deformed; a has been a vile thief this seven year; a goes up and down like a gentleman: I remember his name. . . . I know him, a wears a lock" (3.3.122–64). The watchman describes "Deformed" as wearing a lock (or "lovelock"), an artificial tress of hair common among Elizabethan courtiers. Just as Borachio tries to reveal the truth, the watchmen "deform" the revelation yet again with their own blunder.

This series of "deformations" continues with Dogberry's final speech. Just after Borachio confesses, a new image of Deformed appears, bearing an additional layer of misconstrual. Deformed's lock of hair has been transformed into a padlock, whose key hangs "nearby" in his ear—a misreading that echoes Guyon's transformation of Occasion's forelock into a lock for her tongue. The additional detail of the key suggests that Dogberry may have added to this palimpsest another image, this one an allegorical icon of feminine virtue.

This midsixteenth-century German broadsheet exemplifies an iconographic tradition that silenced women in the name of virtue.[38] But the virtue it grants with one hand is taken away with the other: the lock itself suggests women's incurable garrulity, a frequent claim from medieval antifeminist literature; the "mirror of Christ" in her right hand implies vanity, another charge familiar from the *querelle des femmes;* the snakes girding her waist, purporting to protect her from "poisonous scandal," associate the woman with Eve's satanic tempter; and her horse's hooves, allegedly representing the ability to "stand firm in honor," simultaneously evoke the cloven-hooved Satan.[39] Whether or not Woensam's image was known to Shakespeare, Deformed and the Wise Woman participate in a broad cultural imaginary of women's silence as the tenuous dividing line between the chaste female body and its lecherous double, between the blushing bride and the shamed adulteress. The interpretive ambiguity of Woensam's image echoes the phenomenological instability of Hero's blush; the temperamental body is too unstable to guarantee the integrity of the female corpus or of the male identity premised on its chastity.

Dogberry's specific misprisions about "Deformed" underscore *Much Ado*'s critique of the fantasy of corporeal integrity. When deformed becomes Deformed, an adjective assumes a body, a local habitation, and a name. Subsequently, when Deformed flirts with transsexuality, Dogberry's varlet converges with the cultural imaginary of the Wise Woman: the female figure whose silence testifies to her virtue. Attributing these transformations to the bumbling Dogberry and identifying them as "deformations," *Much Ado* derogates these fantasies. The assumption of any


Diſe Figur ſol man an ſchawen. Die bedewtet ein weyſe Frawen.
Erkenn die frumen bey dem ſchalck
Wan ſein ſin nach meñ eren ſtat
Da hůt ich mich vor frů vnd ſpat
Welliche Fraw darnach thut
Die iſt an ehren wol behut.
Das ſolle m ch gar nit verdrieſſen
Mein oren die wil ich auff ſchlieſſen
D as ſy thun hören Gottes wort
Hoffart die wil ich
auch verſchmehẽ.
Vnnd wil in diſen
ſpi gel ſehen.
Daran vns Gott
erarnet hat
Das thut jr Fraw
en iſt mein rat.
Von gold trag ich vor meinem munde
Ein ſchloß tag nacht vnd alle ſtunde
Auff das er vnnütz red vermeyd
Vnd niemand nit ſein Eer abſchneyd
Auch ſo trag ich ein ſtedten můt
Gleich wie die Türtel taube thůt
Gen dem der mein Eegnoß ſol ſein
Mit ſchlancken gürt ich mei
nen leyb. Alſo ſol thůn ein
bider weyb. Die ſich vor
ſchande giffi hůten wil.
Vor böſer lieb vnnd affenn
ſpil.
Den armen ſol ich geren geben
Da mit erwerb das ewig leben
Dañ ich nit anderſt finden kan
Das ich anders mög bringen daruan
Auff pferdes füſſen ſol ich geen
Das ich in Eeren feſt kan ſteen
Auff das ich nicht in ſünde fall
Iſt ſüß, wirt bitter als ein gall.
S·T·BCDEAV·E·
Welche Fraw hat ein ſolchen ſitten
Die wirdt an Eeren nit verſchnitten
Mag auch verdienen ſicherleich
Von Gott ſein Ewig Himelreich.
Wolffgang Reſch Formſchneyder.

**Anton Woensam, *Allegory of Virtue*, 1558. *The Illustrated Bartsch*, vol. 13, entry no. 1 (473), reprinted courtesy of Abaris Books, Connecticut**

single, integral body—much less that of the silent, chaste female—is a fiction in this play: the result of a laughable series of misinterpretations by an undeservedly cocky constable.

In its comic conclusion, therefore, *Much Ado* offers a wholehearted embrace of misreading. Benedick joyfully recants his fulminations against love, such as this vow to Don Pedro:

> DON PEDRO: I shall see thee, ere I die, look pale with love.
>
> BENEDICK: With anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord, not with love: prove that ever I lose more blood with love than I will get against with drinking, pick out mine eyes with a ballad-maker's pen, and hang me up at the door of a brothel-house for the sign of blind Cupid.
>
> . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
>
> DON PEDRO: Well, as time shall try. "In time the savage bull doth bear the yoke."
>
> BENEDICK: The savage bull may; but if ever the sensible Benedick bear it, pluck off the bull's horns and set them in my forehead, and let me be vilely painted, and in such great letters as they write, "Here is good horse to hire," let them signify under my sign, "Here you may see Benedick, the married man." (1.1.229–48)

Benedick clings, here, to the fiction of bodily integrity. Falling in love amounts to dismemberment—his eyes picked out, his cuckold's horns plucked—and textualization. He imagines his body as a literal sign: Cupid advertising a brothel, or a warning against marriage. Like Phedon, he fears the loss of bodily integrity and interpretive control. To be enamored, for Benedick, is to be readable and read, a feminized text, powerless over his own signification.

United with Beatrice, Benedick retains these beliefs about the effects of love on his body and its readability. What changes is his attitude toward these transformations:

> BENEDICK: . . . Here's our own hands against our hearts. Come, I will have thee, but by this light I take thee for pity.
>
> BEATRICE: I would not deny you, but by this good day I yield upon great persuasion, and partly to save your life for I was told you were in a consumption.
>
> BENEDICK: Peace! I will stop your mouth.
>
> DON PEDRO: How dost thou, "Benedick, the married man"?
>
> BENEDICK: I'll tell thee what, Prince; a college of wit-crackers cannot flout me out of my humour. Dost thou think I care for a satire or an epigram? No: if a man will be beaten with brains, a shall wear nothing handsome about him. In brief, since I do purpose to marry, I will think nothing to any purpose that the world can say against it; and therefore never flout at me for what I have said against it; for man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion. . . . Let's have a dance

> ere we are married, that we may lighten our own hearts and our wives' heels! (5.4.91–118)

Benedick does assert a kind of constancy here; nothing can unseat his elated "humour," in the sense of "mood." And yet his intractability is marked by fragmentation. Benedick describes himself and Beatrice in parts (hands, hearts, mouth, brains, heels) that vie for sovereignty, the hands betraying the truth of the heart that the mouth would deny. He calls himself a "giddy" thing: he is ecstatic ("elated to thoughtlessness, incapable of serious thought or steady attention," OED 3a), but also physiologically affected ("having a confused sensation of swimming or whirling in the head, with proneness to fall; affected with vertigo, dizzy," OED 2a). What is constant about Benedick, he claims, is his humoral inconstancy. Crucially, he accepts that he will be read, interpreted, feminized as a text: he anticipates "wit-crackers" mocking his love in "a satire or an epigram." But this interpretive impotence is a source of joy, as he reveals when he turns the tables on the matchmaker Don Pedro: "Prince, thou art sad; get thee a wife, get thee a wife! There is no staff more reverend than one tipped with horn" (5.4.120–22). Benedick punningly suggests that Don Pedro should trade in his staff "tipped with horn"—walking sticks of the aged were often horn-tipped[40]—for the horns of the cuckold. Don Pedro's textualization will render him less stately ("sad," OED 2, 4), Benedick admits, but also less sorrowful (OED 5).

The embrace of epistemological chaos at the end of *Much Ado About Nothing* constitutes not so much a solution to, as an appreciation of, the complex problem of gendered misreading. The broad textual genealogy outlined here—spanning most of a century, two linguistic traditions, three literary modes (mythological, allegorical, mimetic), and multiple genres (epic, romance, comedy, drama)—testifies to an early modern preoccupation with the interpretation of the gendered body. Shakespeare's play, in a way we have come to recognize as characteristic, offers an incisive commentary on theatricality, performance, and gender as central categories of self-understanding and social intercourse. At the same time, *Much Ado About Nothing* demands recognition of the performative readings, misreadings, and deformations that are the condition of possibility for the comic ending. Interpretive history is indispensable to the preservation of social and cultural justice, as the antihero Dogberry repeatedly reminds his superiors ("masters, do not forget to specify, when time and place shall serve, that I am an ass"; 5.1. 249–50). *Much Ado About Nothing* gestures not only toward futurity and Benedick's marital emasculation; like Claudio's anxious collapse of his military past to his lovelorn present, it gestures backward toward the literary history that informs its central plot.

In fact, the fragmented body might serve not only intratextually as a paradigm for the lovelorn condition, but metaliterarily as a figure for the play as an intertextual olio, a theatrical assemblage of literary fragments. *Much Ado About Nothing,* like many of Shakespeare's "Italian" plays, borrows from Ariosto, Spenser, and the folkloric tradition, not systematically—for example, according to the moralizing agenda that so many scholars have ascribed to English Protestant allegorization—but through what Louise George Clubb describes as "a common process based on the principle of contamination of sources, genres, and accumulated stage-structures, or theatergrams."[41] Clubb's coinage refers to portable, appropriable units of influence—patterns and conventions, rather than texts considered positivistically as indivisible entities—which circulate within and among generic and national literatures, like the unruly women-qua-texts whom Ariosto's poet-narrator, Spenser's Phedon, and (if only briefly) Shakespeare's Claudio attempt to control with interpretive rigidity. Ariosto's hero *degradato,* as we have seen, succeeds, at least temporarily, in rendering his misreading performative, an executive act of authorial power. But at the same time, he sets the precedent for subsequent, successful, strong misreadings, which generate a kind of double theatergram, both providing the narrative raw materials for Spenser and Shakespeare and implying a methodology of intertextual adaptation.[42] As Clubb and this tripartite study both suggest, neither the female body nor the textual fragment can be padlocked into silent immobility. Whether at the level of the phenomenological body or of the theatergram, deformity and misreading are the foundation of textual continuity, of literary *biasmo e pregio,* of comic and interpretive possibility.

## Notes

For invaluable assistance at various stages, I am grateful to Janet Adelman, Albert Ascoli, Michael Farry, Coleman Hutchison, and Lorna Hutson.

Throughout this article, I refer to the OED online, 2nd ed., 1989. Translations are my own.

1. A. R. Humphreys, ed., *Much Ado About Nothing,* The Arden Shakespeare (London and New York: Routledge, 1981). Subsequent citations appear parenthetically in the text.

2. For widowhood as a state of socially and sexually subversive autonomy, see, e.g., Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, "The 'Cruel Mother': Maternity, Widowhood, and Dowry in Florence in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," in *Feminism and Renaissance Studies,* ed. Lorna Hutson, Oxford Readings in Feminism (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Merry E. Wiesner, "Spinsters and Seamstresses: Women in Cloth and Clothing Production," in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe,* ed. Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers, Women in Culture and Society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).

3. In Reformation England, Anglican critics attacked exorcism and conjuration as the false theatrics of Catholicism; see Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England,* vol. 4 of *The New Historicism: Studies in Cultural Poetics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 94-128. For a discussion of acceptable forms of theatricality in the Reformation context, see Jean E. Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).

4. This genealogy omits several English adaptations, including Peter Beverley's "Ariodanto and Jenevra" (ca. 1566); George Whetstone's 1576 *The Rock of Regard;* and an anonymous 1585 dramatic production called *Fedele and Fortunio.* See Anne Barton's headnote to G. Blakemore Evans and J. J. M. Tobin, eds., *The Riverside Shakespeare,* 2nd ed. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), 361; A.R. Humphreys, ed., *Much Ado About Nothing,* The Arden Shakespeare (London and New York: Routledge, 1981); Charles T. Prouty, *The Sources of "Much Ado About Nothing": A Critical Study, Together with the Text of Peter Beverley's Ariodanto and Ienevra* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950). For an account of the English fascination with this tale, see Katharine Eisaman Maus, "Horns of Dilemma: Jealousy, Gender, and Spectatorship in English Renaissance Drama," *English Literary History* 54, no. 3 (1987): 561-83.

5. Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso,* ed. Marcello Turchi and Eduardo Sanguineti, 2 vols., I grandi libri Garzanti (Milan: Garzanti, 1985), 1.20.5-6. Subsequent citations appear parenthetically in the text.

6. See Robert M. Durling, "The Divine Analogy in Ariosto," *Modern Language Notes* 78, no.1 (1963): 1n1; Robert M. Durling, *The Figure of the Poet in Renaissance Epic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), 112-81.

7. Mario Santoro, cited in Peter De Sa Wiggins, *Figures in Ariosto's Tapestry: Character and Design in the "Orlando Furioso"* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 18. For Rinaldo as a hero less *degradato* than displaced, see Michael Sherberg, *Rinaldo: Character and Intertext in Ariosto and Tasso,* ed. Jean-Marie Apostolidès and Marc Bertrand, Stanford French and Italian Studies 75 (Saratoga, Calif.: ANMA Libri, 1993), 63-64.

8. "Devotion to women was a primary article: protection of the weak was the professional concern of knights errant, only the brave deserved the fair, and the love of a noble woman inspired the perfect practice of chivalry." W. R. J. Barron, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight,* rev. ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 2. See also Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984).

9. On the elusiveness of the idealized woman of courtly love, see Ruth Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956), chapter 6 passim, 206. For the ways in which Renaissance women had less agency in courtly love than did their medieval counterparts, see Joan Kelly, "Did Women Have A Renaissance?" in *Women, History & Theory,* Women in Culture and Society (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 19-50.

10. Ultimately, the best we can say of Rinaldo is that "he comes upon this adventure in Scotland by accident, gets involved in it for the wrong reasons, learns the truth through no mental effort of his own, and brings a resolution to Ginevra's dilemma that would be most unsatisfactory were it not for the extraordinary resolution provided by Ariodante." Wiggins, *Figures,* 22.

11. See Durling, *The Figure of the Poet in Renaissance Epic,* 117-18.

12. It is worth noting that the *Furioso* does not always enact its narrator's misogyny so uncritically. For a reading of the ways in which such narrative manipulations reveal the alleged monstrosity not only of the female body, but of the male imagination, see Albert Russell Ascoli, "Body Politics in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso,*" in *Translating Desire in Medieval and Early Modern Literature,* ed. C. A. Berry and H. Hayton (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2005). In "Like a Virgin: Fantasies of the Male Body in *Orlando furioso*" in *The Body in Early Modern Europe,* ed. Julia Hairston and Walter Stephens (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, forthcoming 2010), Ascoli discusses the ways in which several male knights in the *Furioso* find themselves losing the battle to assert both physiological and interpretive control over the female body. While the specific Ariostan episode I am considering here—the "theatergram" inherited by Spenser and Shakespeare, to borrow Louise George Clubb's designation—allows Rinaldo to realize his ambitions without confronting his misogyny, the poem elsewhere underscores and critiques the misogynistic potential of the masculine privilege of authorship and narration. For more on the "theatergram," see Clubb's *Italian Drama in Shakespeare's Time* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 1-26.

13. Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene,* ed. A.C. Hamilton, Longman Annotated English Poets (London and New York: Longman, 1997). Subsequent citations appear parenthetically in the text.

14. James G. McManaway, "'Occasion,' *Faerie Queene* II.iv.4-5," *Modern Language Notes* 49, no. 6 (1934); David W. Burchmore, "The Medieval Sources of Spenser's Occasion Episode," *Spenser Studies: A Renaissance Poetry Annual* 2 (1981): 93-120.

15. George Whitney, *A choice of emblemes, and other deuises, for the moste parte gathered out of sundrie writers, Englished and moralized* (Leyden: In the house of Christopher Plantyn, by Francis Raphelengius, 1586), 181.

16. Martin Luther, *An Exposition of Salomons Booke, called Ecclesiastes or the Preacher* (London: John Daye, 1573), sig. G4r, cited in Lorna Hutson, "Chivalry for Merchants; or, Knights of Temperance in the Realms of Gold," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 26 (1996): 47.

17. For more on the "reins of temperance," see *The Spenser Encyclopedia, "The Faerie Queene,"* book 2, ed. A.C. Hamilton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990). For the same image in *Orlando furioso,* see A. Bartlett Giamatti, "Sfrenatura: Restraint and Release in the *Orlando Furioso,*" in *Ariosto 1974 in America: Atti del Congresso Ariostesco—Dicembre 1974, Casa Italiana Della Columbia University,* ed. Aldo Scaglione (Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1974), and the later "Headlong Horses, Headless Horsemen: An Essay on the Chivalric Epics of Pulci, Boiardo, and Ariosto," in *Italian Literature: Roots and Branches,* ed. Giose Rimanelli and Kenneth John Atchity (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976). For the Platonic roots of this iconography, see Theresa M. Krier, *Gazing on Secret Sights: Spenser, Classical Imitation, and the Decorums of Vision* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990), 85.

18. This application of *manège* to sexual relations is not original to Spenser. In Sidney's *New Arcadia* (1577-86), horsemanship serves as an ideal model for marital partnership; Musidorus's "spurs and wand . . . seemed rather marks of sovereignty than instruments of

punishment . . . [so] as he borrowed the horse's body, so he lent the horse his mind." But Sidney cautions against excessive misogyny, inveighing against women being "forced" into "thralldom" or treated like "cattle." Sir Philip Sidney, *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia: The New Arcadia,* ed. Victor Skretkowicz (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 153.

19. D. W. Burchmore, "The Medieval Sources of Spenser's Occasion Episode," 95; Frederick Kiefer, "The Conflation of Fortuna and Occasio in Renaissance Thought and Iconography," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 9, no. 1 (1979): 1-27.

20. Translated in Hannah Pitkin, *Fortune Is a Woman: Gender and Politics in the Thought of Niccolò Machiavelli* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 152. See also Juliana Schiesari, "Libidinal Economies: Machiavelli and Fortune's Rape," in *Desire in the Renaissance: Psychoanalysis and Literature,* ed. Valeria Finucci and Regina Schwartz (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 180. Other proponents of physical mastery over Fortune, in more or less violent forms, include Leon Battista Alberti and Pico della Mirandola; see Kiefer, "The Conflation of Fortuna and Occasio," 7-9.

21. Compare this reference in a 1660 sermon by Samuel Rutherford: "indeed GOD has not put an Iron-Lock upon the Well of Life; But Christ by His Word and Sacraments opens the Well in the midest of us, and for Seventy Years and more in this Kingdom the Well has been Open." Here, the iron lock stands for permanence, prohibition, even death; it is antithetical to the living water of spiritual progress. Samuel Rutherford, *Christs napkin: or, A sermon preached in Kirkcubright at the Communion, May 12. 1633* (Scotland [?]: Imprint from the British Library, 1660), 18.

22. For Paul Alpers, such psychologization is characteristic of Spenser's adaptations of Ariosto. Paul J. Alpers, *The Poetry of "The Faerie Queene"* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 1982), 54-69. For a challenge to Alpers's reading, see Peter De Sa Wiggins, "Spenser's Use of Ariosto: Imitation and Allusion in Book I of the *Faerie Queene,*" *Renaissance Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (1991): 257-79.

23. "Embosom" too suggests Phedon's sexual confusion. It can mean both "to take or press to one's bosom; to cherish in one's bosom; to embrace," a clearly maternal image, and "to implant, plunge (a sting, weapon, etc.) in (another's) bosom," an obviously masculine one (OED). When the word appears for a second and final time in *The Faerie Queene,* it conveys a similar ambiguity. Acrasia threatens to "embosome . . . her guilefull bayt . . . deeper in [Guyon's] mind" (2.12.29); the sorceress effeminizes her victims with a kind of penetration.

24. The most comprehensive study of such anxieties is still Jonas A. Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981).

25. Maus, "Horns of Dilemma," 567-68.

26. Humphreys, ed., *Much Ado About Nothing*, 578, 572-73.

27. For transvestite boy players engendering sexual desire, see Stephen Gosson's 1582 *Playes Confuted in Five Actions,* discussed in Jyotsna Singh, "Renaissance Antitheatricality, Antifeminism, and Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra,*" *Renaissance Drama* (1989): 104-5. For the story of the real devil cavorting among the players in the production of *Doctor Faustus,* see William Prynne, *Histrio-mastix: The players scourge, or, actors tragaedie* (London: Printed by E[dward] A[llde, Augustine Mathewes, Thomas Cotes] and W[illiam] I[ones] for Michael Sparke, and are to be sold at the Blue Bible, in Greene Arbour, in little Old Bayly, 1633), 556. For anxieties about theatrical flouting of sumptuary laws, see Phillips Stubbes's 1583 *Anatomy of Abuses,* discussed in Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice,* 166-67.

28. Ibid., 91, n. to 1.1.40-41.

29. "Blazon" itself appears at 2.1.278, where it denotes Beatrice's evaluation of Claudio's "jealous complexion."

30. Humphreys, ed., *Much Ado About Nothing,* 110, n. to 2.1.20-21.

31. See, e.g., Nicholas Batman, *Batman Vppon Bartholome His Booke De Proprietatibus Rerum* (London: Imprinted by Thomas East, dwelling by Paules wharfe, 1582), Liber Octavus, 29-30.

32. Ibid., Liber Quartus, 25.

33. This association between spinning women and "old wives' tales" is perpetuated, e.g., in the 1510 *Gospelles of Dystaves,* Henry Watson's English translation of the anonymous antifeminist French text *Les evangiles de quenouilles.* See Susan E. Phillips, *Transforming Talk: The Problem with Gossip in Late Medieval England* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 176-202.

34. David Quint, *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 9 and passim.

35. Compare the reading of Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece* as a meditation on publication and sexual shame in Wendy Wall, *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Publication in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993), 214-20.

36. While this tale is already "old" by the late sixteenth century, it seems not to have been written down until 1821, when a Mr. Blakeway contributed to the Boswell-Malone Variorum Edition of Shakespeare a tale told to him by a great-aunt in 1715, who, he believed, had heard it from a narrator born during the reign of Charles II. See Appendix V of the Arden edition of *Much Ado* (232-33), and Mary Ellen Lamb, *The Popular Culture of Shakespeare, Spenser, and Jonson* (London: Routledge, 2006), 233n1.

37. Lamb, *Popular Culture,* 53, 45-62 passim.

38. Max Geisberg, *The German Single-Leaf Woodcut, 1500-1550,* ed. Walter L. Strauss (New York: Hacker Art Books, 1974), 4:1,511.

39. See the introduction to Heinrich Institoris, Jakob Sprenger, and Montague Summers, *Malleus maleficarum* (London: J. Rodker, 1928).

40. Humphreys, ed., *Much Ado About Nothing,* 217-18, n. to 122.

41. Clubb, *Italian Drama in Shakespeare's Time,* 5.

42. Clubb's theatergrams refer, of course, to conventions of cinquecento Italian *drama* that contaminate English Renaissance literature, and so I have indulged a certain definitional sloppiness by using the term for an episode in the *Furioso.* But as I have suggested, the theatricality of the Ariodante-Ginevra episode and of its English adaptations invites such semantic latitude.