

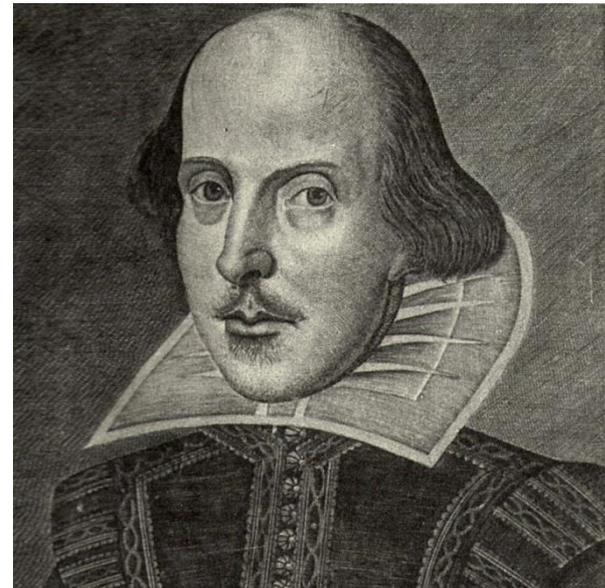
Shakespeare's
Comedies: *The
Taming of the
Shrew and The
Winter's Tale*

Dr. Alan Haffa

- Family
- Education
- Marriage to Anne Hathaway
- Established in London theatre by 1592
- 1594: Lord Chamberlain's Men
- 1597: Purchased New Place in Stratford-upon-Avon
- 1603: King's Men

William Shakespeare

1564-1616



Shakespearean Comedy

- Theme of Love
- Mistaken Identities
 - Helena in *All's Well that Ends Well*
 - Twins: *A Comedy of Errors*
- Gender Play
 - Rosalind in *As You Like It*
- Comic word play

Evolution of Shakespearean Comedy

- Early comedies are more orthodox and influenced by Roman comedy (1592-94):
Comedy of Errors; Taming of the Shrew; Love's Labour's Lost
- Middle Comedies are some of his best from pure entertainment (1595-1600):
A Midsummer Night's Dream; Much Ado About Nothing; As You Like It; Twelfth Night
- Problem Comedies: (1601-1604)
Troilus and Cressida; All's Well that Ends Well; Measure for Measure
- Romance Plays: 1608-11; Pericles; Cymbeline; Winter's Tale; Tempest

“Problem Plays” or Dark Comedies

- *Measure for Measure: Justice as Lord Angelo abuses his power*
- *All's Well That End's Well: Deception as Helena deceives Bertram in order to get him to marry her*
- *Troilus and Cressida, which does not end with marriage; Cressida is ransomed for a hostage warrior and Achilles kills Hector in last act*
- Highlights problems and contradictions in society
- **Romantic resolution is muted in some way**

Romance Plays

- 1608 Shakespeare wrote 4 plays: *Pericles Prince of Tyre*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *The Tempest*
- These plays are more concerned with reconciliation, magic, renewal, forgiveness, providence, music, and community.

Basic Comic Structure

- Lovers face an obstacle
- Lovers overcome obstacle
- Marriage
- Taming of the Shrew is different by focusing on a relationship AFTER marriage

What Is a Shrew?

- Early 17th century treatise “The Cruel Shrew”:
http://www.dartmouth.edu/~engl24/texts/cruell_shrew.html
- Talks too much and too loud: Scolds, snores, curses and insults
- Lazy, vain, and a gossip
- Physically abusive: scratching and tearing
- In a world where divorce was rare: how to manage a bad marriage?
- In a world where women had little power, their tongue was the only expression of power available

Petruchio's Method of Taming

- “A Juniper Lecture”:
<http://the1642goodwyfe.wordpress.com/2013/01/21/a-juniper-lecture/>
- He does not strike Kate; rather, he follows the method laid out in “A Juniper Lecture”
- Ignore a scold
- Or, sing, dance, whistle, clap your hands when she scolds
- As a last resort, play a drum—she will be amazed to hear something louder than her.
- Petruchio does all this in 3.2 and 4.1.
- He tames her by becoming a Shrew and holding a mirror up to her.
- It is argued that this taming by Policy rather than force will be more effective

Kate's Conversion

- 4.5: Petruchio: It shall be moon, or star, or what I list,/ Or ere I journey to your father's house./...Evermore crossed and crossed, nothing, nothing but crossed!"
- Kate accepts Reality as Petruchio sees it: "Forward, I pray, since we have come so far,/And be it moon, or sun, or what you please;/An if you please to call it a rush candle,/Henceforth I vow it shall be so for me."

Resolution?

- Closing scene: The Test
- http://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/views/plays/play_view.php?WorkID=taming_shrew&Act=5&Scene=2&Scope=scene&displaytype=print
- Implies that the female is the violent and unkind partner
- Anger “blots thy beauty”
- Husband as lord, sovereign, and keeper—who is owed obedience;
- Political metaphor: Duty owed a Lord; Treason to question or quarrel
- Women are weak by nature and should accept their part
- She once challenged like them, but it is better to submit: she offers to put her hand beneath his boot if it pleases him.

Tempest

- Prospero is a Magician who has lost the Dukedom of Milan because he didn't pay attention to politics
- Play could be a revenge play; but instead it is a play of forgiveness made possible because of Love and Magic
- He reconciles with his brother and the King of Naples
- Next generation is united through marriage of Miranda and Ferdinand (prince of Naples)

Pericles of Tyre

- Complicated literary history: Shakespeare may have only written the last 3 Acts
- Greek Romance genre: Fortune separates lovers—typically a storm at sea or pirates; Slavery; Reunited in a miraculous manner
- Pericles mistakenly thinks pregnant wife, Thaisa, is dead at sea
- Reunion with grown up daughter, Marina, who is virtuous and good, and then wife, is touching

The Winter's Tale

- King Leontes of Sicilia becomes jealous of his boyhood friend, King Polixenes of Bohemia.
- Leontes accuses Hermione of adultery and questions the paternity of her unborn child; she is arrested. The Delphic oracle confirms that she is honest and the child is Leontes'.
- Leonte's son, Mamillius, and Hermione, "die"
- The abandoned baby is raised by shepherds; sixteen years pass. Polixenes' son, Florizel, falls in love with the girl.
- Perdita and Florizel marry. A "statue" of Hermione comes to life and Hermione and Leontes reunited

Othello Deferred

- Like Othello, a powerful man grows jealous of his innocent wife
- Unlike Othello, her life is preserved by a wise woman, Paulina
- And unlike Othello, there is redemption and restoration—after 16 years—through the return of the lost daughter, Perdita.
- The “magic” of the miracle is really accomplished by design—by the will of Paulina and Hermione
- Leontes is truly repentant—16 years of remorse and he never remarries
- The ending is comic—with the marriage of both old and young couples, and the reunion of Hermione and Leontes

Misogyny

- II.3: Leontes and misogyny: “Give her the bastard, thou dotard; thou art woman-tired, unroosted by thy Dame Partlet here. Take up the bastard, take’t up, I say. Give ‘t to thy crone.”
- Threatens to burn both Hermione and Paulina
- No one can question or stop Leontes.

Misogyny Reformed (V.1)

- LEONTES
Whilst I remember
Her and her virtues, I cannot forget
My blemishes in them, and so still think of
The wrong I did myself; which was so much,
That heirless it hath made my kingdom and
Destroy'd the sweet'st companion that e'er man
Bred his hopes out of.
- PAULINA
True, too true, my lord:
If, one by one, you wedded all the world,
Or from the all that are took something good,
To make a perfect woman, she you kill'd
Would be unparallel'd.

Leontes Obediently agrees not to remarry without Paulina's assent

- PAULINA
I have done.
Yet, if my lord will marry,--if you will, sir,
No remedy, but you will,--give me the office
To choose you a queen: she shall not be so young
As was your former; but she shall be such
As, walk'd your first queen's ghost,
it should take joy
To see her in your arms.
- LEONTES
My true Paulina,
We shall not marry till thou bid'st us.
- PAULINA
That
Shall be when your first queen's again in breath;
Never till then.

Summary

- Comedy ends happily with a marriage
- The end of *The Taming of the Shrew* resolves tension by invoking male superiority
- The end of *The Winter's Tale* resolves tension through love and forgiveness, magic and renewal, as directed by a women
- Compare Petruchio as “director” to Paulina: does it matter that the action is directed and conflict reconciled by women in *The Winter's Tale*?