How to Teach a Moral Lesson: The Function of the Company Clown in *The Tragedy of Doctor Faustus* and *Love's Labour's Lost*

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In Marlowe's and Shakespeare's time, the profession of actor was a problematic one. Being labeled as "vagrant"[1] and having to perform in the liberties,[2] the actor was in a precarious position, and only the patronage of a member of the court and its circle conveyed some legitimacy and respectability on the actor and his company. Having to contend with growing Puritan criticism of, say, immorality, cross-dressing, and misrepresentation of social classes[3] prompted writers such as playwright Thomas Heywood to write such tracts as *An Apology for Actors* (printed 1612), which stressed the importance of stage plays in performance as conveyors of a sound moral message, much needed by the audience. Towards the end of his tract Heywood tells the story of a woman who, during a play that touched her own situation nearly, felt moved to confess to the murder of her husband. Hamlet is aiming for just such moral purging when he plans his "Mousetrap" play to con a confession from Claudius.

One key element to conveying a moral message is to achieve audience distancing. Modern-day movie-goers expect to identify closely with one protagonist, feel his or her pain, and enjoy the process, and this effect is indeed what directors aim for. We have all been moved to compassion by such moments as the young lover's drowning in *Titanic* and wrenched by young Bruce Wayne's traumatic loss of his parents in *Batman Begins*. Renaissance playwrights strove for the opposite effect. Here, the idea was to create a distance between character and spectator, a distance in which analysis—conscious or unconscious—might thrive, criticism would bloom, and "the right conclusion" would be reached. Examples of devices which achieve alienation could be the dumb

show, which "fast forwards" the action through pantomime; the aside, which wreaks havoc with any semblance of verisimilitude; and the myriad allusions to theater, which remind us that we are watching a play and not taking part in something realistic.[4] The ultimate device was the role of the company clown, and while many playwrights explored this possibility, Shakespeare was the one to take the clown as morality-promoting device the furthest.

A clown performer has a curious, in-the-middle position. He is not quite part of the proceedings on stage, as he spends much of his time in close contact with the audience, whom he provokes to react; he is also not "one of us," as he is recognized by his fellow actors as part of their universe. The clown could be defined as a function or a catalyst, rather than a character.[5] He moves comfortably among social classes, and he relates well with the audience; *Measure for Measure*'s Pompey is an instance in point, especially in the opening of act 3, scene 2, where his paying play-going audience becomes his paying customers in Mistress Overdone's brothel. The clown appears at key points when the spectators need direction away from identification with protagonists in order to absorb the moral message; in *A Midsummer Night's Dream,* Bottom, puzzled by Titania's amorous attentions, pronounces, "Reason and love keep little company together nowadays" (3.1.138-39), provoking our laughter and at the same time reminding us how irrational and generic the infatuation of the four Athenian lovers is. We readily accede to the wisdom the clown imparts because he gives us so much of his time and attention, and he likes and celebrates what we appreciate: creature comforts, such as food, money, free time, and sexual pleasure. The clown is the audience's guide and teacher, a perfect vehicle for conveying the moral message, mainly because our insight is gained pleasurably, through laughter.

Doctor Faustus signals immediately through its Prologue that this is a play with a moral message. Faustus is compared to Icarus, who fell to his death "swoll'n with cunning."[6] Faustus, too, is suffering from pride, the worst of the seven deadly sins. Some of his motives for selling his soul to the Devil, such as defending and strengthening his native Germany and clothing poor scholars (1.1.90-95), look noble in the first scene, but it is the glory and power of necromancy that drive him, as those are what drove his studies of medicine. "Be a physician, Faustus. Heap up gold / And be eternized for some wondrous cure" (1.1.14-15), he says of his goals for medicine, though he immediately thereafter mentions how he has been able to avert the plague as well as a "thousand

desp'rate maladies" to boot (1.1.21-22); but still it seems his real goal is to use medicine to raise the dead (23-26), though he has been unable to reach it thus far and never will succeed. As for his study of the law, he claims of reading Justinian, "His study fits a mercenary drudge / Who aims at nothing but external trash, / Too servile and illiberal for me" (1.1.34-36). The study of divinity, or religion, also falls short of his mark and is discarded as well once he sees that "the reward of sin is death"(1.1.41), and that we all, Faustus included, are sinners and subject to God's judgment on an equal footing. Faustus wants to be out of the ordinary, and he aims high; however, once he is in Mephistopheles' company, his lofty goals are turned into frivolous nonsense, sometimes even petty and spiteful acts, such as his memorable cheating of the horse-courser.

Faustus is a man we must admire for his accumulation of knowledge, his greedy curiosity for even more, and the risks he is willing to take to gain his objective. He is also a man to be pitied, mainly because this objective is removed from him by Mephistopheles and turned to frivolity at the high price of Faustus's soul. When Faustus wishes to see and examine the wonders of Rome, he is set to play silly tricks on the Pope; and when he seeks for the comfort of marriage, he is given a devil dressed up as a woman, but not a true wife. Both here and much later, when Faustus desires Helen of Troy as his lover and asks, "Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss," we feel the futility of his endeavor as "her lips sucks forth [his] soul. See where it flies!" (5.1.92-93). Faustus seems to desire the sacrament of marriage, which Mephistopheles, of course, cannot provide, and which he calls "a ceremonial toy" (2.1.152); this stabilizing, anchoring building block of society is denied him. When Faustus questions Mephistopheles about the nature of the universe, he is brushed off, and when he first desires to repent, he is diverted with Lucifer himself serving up a pageant of the Seven Deadly Sins. These can all be poignant appeals to the audience to feel for Faustus, and it can be very easy to identify with this larger-than life—albeit prideful—achiever; after all, his ambitions are so very human.

Enter the clowns! Critics speculate about the 1604 printing—closest, we surmise, to Marlowe's text—that the clown scenes were added by some other author's pen,[7] but a playwright capable of creating the antics of Barabas of *The Jew of Malta* would have no difficulty crafting this group, Our clown group is Robin and Rafe, both stablemen, initially solicited into apprenticeship in the black arts by Wagner, Faustus's servant, in a parallel to scene 1's Valdes

and Cornelius. Faustus's magician friends promise him that their gift of magic books will give him vast power:

> As Indian Moors obey their Spanish lords,
> So shall the subjects of every element
> Be always serviceable to us three…
> Then doubt not, Faustus, but to be renowned
> And more frequented for this mystery
> Than heretofore the Delphian oracle. (1.2.123-145)

Faustus immediately makes use of his books and conjures up his devil. Similarly, Wagner, in a ludicrous parallel, tempts Robin to join him through allusions to food and promises of fine clothes and money. The clown is a more reluctant convert:

> *Wagner*: Bind yourself presently onto me for seven years, or I shall turn all the lice about thee into familiars, and they shall tear thee to pieces.
> *Robin*: Do you hear, sir? You may save that labour. They are too familiar with me already. 'Swounds, they are as bold with my flesh as if they had paid for my meat and drink. (1.4.24-29)

Even the guilders given him are misunderstood; once Robin hears them called "French crowns" (1.4.34), he believes they have no value. Also, the clown could easily be alluding here to other things French, such as the pox, as mercury-treatment for this disease made the hair fall out, creating a bald "crown." The seduction of Faustus is echoed by that of Robin, but the fantastic promises that prompt such eagerness from Faustus and probably strike the audience with awe are immediately put into ludicrous perspective by Robin's lice and diseases.

Where Faustus wants Mephistopheles to "give [him] whatsoever [he] shall ask, / To tell [him] whatsoever [he] demand[s]… / [and to] be great Emperor of the world" (1.3.96-106), Robin ultimately signs on with the would-be magician Wagner once he has seen a spectacular demonstration of a he- and a she-devil and been properly frightened, though he attempts to keep his courage up. Mainly he is persuaded because he is promised that he will be taught how to turn himself into "a dog or a cat, or a mouse or a rat, or anything" (1.4.60-61). If he may be given this gift of transformation, he may be made into "a little, pretty, frisking flea" which will enable him to "tickle the pretty wenches' plackets" (1.4.64-66).[8] Again, Faustus's lofty aims are paralleled on a most earthbound plane; while Faustus longs for power and a wife's companionship in marriage, Robin longs to get his hands, indeed his whole transformed body, under as many skirts as possible, a

goal less lofty than Faustus's, but immediately understandable to a groundling. These two seduction scenes, back to back as they are, give the audience the first opportunity to step back from Faustus and evaluate his bargain. We see that anybody can summon devils, and we see the difference in price and reward for a commitment to the dark side. Robin is not asked to commit his soul to Hell, but he instinctively knows that "all he-devils have horns, and all she-devils have clefts and cloven feet" (1.4.55-56). The allusion to the deception native to all devils is clearly stated, but the sexual context Robin places this in—all he-devils are cuckolds, and all she-devils have vulvas to cuckold them with—makes Faustus's trust in Mephistopheles' promises look increasingly misplaced.

Act 2, scene 1 is the agonizing signing of the document, which Faustus has written up himself in his capacity as lawyer. Significantly, but not surprisingly, as Faustus is already under satanic influence, this contract is unspecific and does not list any concrete goals. Faustus, of course, wants to summon Mephistopheles to do "whatsoever" at any time or place, but Faustus also wishes to be "a spirit in form and substance," and that an unspecified "he"—maybe Mephistopheles, who was too ugly to have around the house before, maybe Faustus himself—"shall be in his chamber or house invisible" (2.1.95-103), for which he offers his body and soul for twenty-four years of the Devil's service. All he gets in compensation at this point are promises of a parade of courtesans and a few books for further study, not the information or the wife he craves. Illiterate Robin, in act 2, scene 2, has stolen one of these dearly bought books and plans to "make all the maidens in our parish dance at [his] pleasure stark naked before [him]" (2.2.3-4), and to "search some circles" (i.e., conjuring circles/vaginas) (2.2.2-3) as well. He then seduces Rafe by first promising to get him drunk for free at any time, which does not impress Rafe at all, and then "Nan Spit, our kitchen maid" for his "own use" (2.2.27-28), which has Rafe immediately committed.

Again, two scenes, back to back, first wring our hearts, then show us the folly of trafficking with the Devil. Faustus has to sell his soul and dramatically sign the contract with his own blood for what he covets but does not truly attain. Rafe is asked for nothing, and does not even see a demonstration of Robin's alleged powers; still, he freely promises to "feed thy devil with horse-bread as long as he lives" (2.2.30-31) at the prospect of dalliance with a kitchen maid. The parallel between the two payments gives us perspective. Faustus is to burn in Hell for eternity in return for conjuring books and promises that turn out to be almost empty, while Rafe rashly

promises to feed an immortal devil with horse fodder forever for the favors of a wench, whose name conjures up images of grease and soot in our minds. Though this clown scene is a mere thirty-four lines in length, it works wonders with audience perception.

In act 3, scene 1 we meet a well-traveled Faustus who, so far, has been granted some of his wishes. He has ridden to Olympus's top in a dragon-drawn chariot to study astronomy and now has cosmography in mind (3. Chorus). Otherwise, he has only a grand tour of Europe and a few books in return for his bargain. Lucifer has given Faustus a book that teaches him to change shape (we are reminded of scene 4); and instead of seeing the longed-for sights in Rome, he is persuaded to make himself invisible to play a prank on the Pope. After Henry VIII's reformation of the English Church, anti-Catholic sentiment was frequently expressed on the stage, and so it is not surprising that the Pope and his entourage are targeted. Here the barb is directed at the sin of gluttony so clearly being committed in the Pope's chambers; the presence of one of Satan's main minions in this place is also delightfully comical. Faustus's activities, however enjoyable they may be to watch, are too close for comfort to what the clowns usually perform. Faustus intended to "see the monuments / And situation of bright splendent Rome" (3.1.47-48), but instead he is persuaded to be made invisible so he can snatch food and drink from the Pope's hand and finally "*hits him a box of the ear*" (3.1.80) and sends him flying from his own chambers. This scene presents activities not vastly different from what the clowns delight us with.

In act 3, scene 2, Rafe and Robin put on a show to best Faustus's. In parallel, they have made a disturbance at an inn, stealing a silver goblet, and are comically searched by the inn-keeper to no avail, because they apparently are accomplished thieves and work well together; they certainly do not need diabolical intervention to pull off this theft.[9] Just for the sheer fun of it, and maybe to create an extra distraction, Robin conjures in atrocious, homemade Latin, and in most productions I have seen is quite surprised by the result. He succeeds in summoning a disgruntled Mephistopheles, who has better things to do, and who "for [Robin's] presumption" (3.2.38) transforms the clowns into an ape and a dog, respectively. In the Great Chain of Being,[10] man is distinguishable from beasts mainly through his faculty of reason, and the references in contemporary drama to man's losing this faculty and becoming animal-like are legion; wrath and heated passion, for example, will have that effect. While dogs are praised for their loyalty in much of Renaissance literature, they are also

often, and especially by Shakespeare, referred to as being cringing, subservient, stinking creatures that are looked down upon;[11] apes and monkeys were notorious for their lecherousness. Mephistopheles chooses his animals well for our two clowns. Typically, the clowns, especially Robin, make the best of an adverse situation:

> *Robin*: How, into an ape? That's brave. I'll have fine sport with the boys; I'll get nuts and apples enough.
> *Rafe*: And I must be a dog.
> *Robin*: I'faith, thy head will never be out of the pottage pot. (3.2.41-44)

Where both were lured with promises of sexual favors, which they will be unable to obtain in their transformed state, there is always food in plenty to look forward to. Besides, neither clown has entered into a formal agreement with the Devil as Faustus has, so presumably their souls are safe.

Mephistopheles' presence in act 3, scene 2 links Faustus even closer with the clowns, who disappear after this scene; but their point has been made: the Devil has no care for humans. Faustus's was the morally wrongful choice, and indeed the rest of the play shows him engaged in futile parlor tricks. Because his folly has been exposed to us through the clowns, we can witness his miserable end and learn from it: the Epilogue further stresses the lesson.

Love's Labour's Lost is, in comparison, a light confection, obsessed with how the use of language defines us and with the foolishness of trying to deny basic human nature. We have two comic groups, one we mostly laugh at and one we laugh with; the one in which Costard moves serves to expose the folly of the King of Navarre's experiment with isolation, especially from womankind, in the name of learning.[12] Costard, along with clowns like Grumio of *The Taming of the Shrew* and Launcelot Gobbo of *The Merchant of Venice*, is a delightful example of Shakespeare's use of a servant-clown to expose the negative and ridiculous aspects of his betters to the edification of the audience.

Costard's delight in new and long words and the way he chooses to use them expose the language of those above him in station, while his infatuation with Jacquenetta mocks the lords' obsession with the French ladies. In act 1, scene 1, he is accused of being "taken with a wench," who, in his attempt to worm his way out of a sticky situation, becomes transformed into "damsel," "virgin," "maid," and finally "Jacquenetta,... a true girl" (1.1.276-306). However, all his synonymic squirming does not save him from

"the sour cup of prosperity"—Costard revels in malapropisms, too. The King's whole establishment, though reluctantly, is to be laboring under the conditions of the oath sworn by the King and his courtiers:

> *King*: Our late edict shall strongly stand in force:
> Navarre shall be the wonder of the world;
> Our court shall be a little academe,
> Still and contemplative in living art.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> *Berowne*: But there are other strict observances;
> As not to see a woman in that term [i.e., three years],
> Which I hope well is not enrolled there:
> And one day in a week to touch no food,
> And but one meal on every day beside;
> The which I hope is not enrolled there:
> And then to sleep but three hours in the night,
> And not be seen to wink of all that day...
> Which I hope well is not enrolled there.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Necessity will make us all forsworn
> Three thousand times within these three years' space;
> For every man with his affects are born.
> Not by mind master'd, but by special grace.
> (1.1.11-14, 36-46, 148-51)

Costard, though formally unsworn, is clearly bound as well by the King's proclamation. But as is apparent from the quotation above, the conditions of the oath are so strict that only the most untempted and devoted can abide by them, and there is already rebellion in the ranks before the oath is firmly sworn; indeed, the lords seem to swear more to please their king and to avoid ridicule than out of desire to abide by the monastic terms put down.

Costard is sent to prison for his dalliance with Jacquenetta,[13] where his jailer is to be the one who exposed him in a letter, Don Adriano di Armado, his Spanish rival in love and lust, and an expert in inflated verbiage. Natives of Catholic countries were often ridiculed on stage, with special attention to the Spanish,[14] and Don Armado is no exception. In his letter of accusation, Jacquenetta is "a child of our grandmother Eve, a female, or, for thy more sweet understanding, a woman" (1.1.257-58). In act 1, scene 2 we meet him, and indeed his spoken language and inflated opinion of himself easily live up to his written communication. He confesses his love to Moth, the page, and so, when Costard is brought in in bonds, the jailor is as guilty as the prisoner, which makes a mockery of rules and regulations, a point driven home both by Moth and Costard, even as it foreshadows the fall of the lords:

Armado: Thou shalt be heavily punished.
Costard: I am more bound to you than your fellows, for they are but lightly rewarded.
Armado: Take away this villain: shut him up.
Moth: Come, you transgressing slave: away!
Costard: Let me not be pent up, sir; I will fast, being loose.
Moth: No, sir, that were fast and loose; thou shalt to prison.
Costard: Well, if ever I see the merry days of desolation that I have seen, some shall see—
Moth: What shall some see?
Costard: Nay, nothing, Master Moth, but what they look upon. (1.2.141-53)

Costard, at least, is made to admit his liaison with Jacquenetta openly, and he submits to punishment relatively readily, where Don Armado keeps secret his infatuation and readiness to launch himself into love's snare, and thus by comparison stands out as the more culpable of the two. Berowne, earlier, at least voiced his doubts about the feasibility of keeping his oath, and thus stands as a sort of parallel to Costard, the other vocal one, which creates a foreshadowing parallel between Don Armado and the King and court.

Don Armado's interchange with Jacquenetta (1.2.124-35) soon is echoed by the interchange between Berowne and Rosaline (2.1.115-127), and these men are indeed the first two to deliver written communications to their lady loves, given to Costard to deliver—and switch. Don Armado consigns his with his customary verbal flourishes, giving Costard his liberty from his none-too-hard durance along with three farthings, which he calls "remuneration," to "bear this significance to the country maid Jacquenetta" (3.1.127-128). Costard is more delighted with his new word, which he analyzes, than with his payment: "Now will I look at his remuneration. Remuneration! O, that's the Latin word for three farthings!" (3.1.131-132),[15] and proceeds to use his new word in mini-conversations with himself and later with Berowne. The reward was negligible, but the word was enormous, just as Don Armado's protestations of love are oversized for the depth of passion they convey.

Berowne's epistle is to be delivered to Rosaline, "to her white hand see thou do commend / This seal'd-up counsel" (3.1.162-163), for which the "guerden" is "a' leven-pence farthing," better than a remuneration; though the word is shorter and less interesting, the reward is infinitely greater.[16] There is no mistaking Costard's ironic exposure of his betters. When the letters are switched, there

is more than a hint in this scene that the lovers' passion, Armado's most of all, may well be an infatuation with the words and trappings of wooing and the buzz of sexual titillation. There is, undeniably, much more to a relationship than the thrill of wooing and sexual passion; especially for society's important and elevated members such as royalty and nobility, marriage is an assurance that lineage will continue so society can remain stable, something far from the minds of these lovesick gentlemen.

Since the unexpected arrival of the French Princess and her ladies, the lords have striven for continence—some more mightily than others—but all join with Don Armado and Berowne and end up breaking their oaths of abstinence. The contents of the letters, as well as the lords' love sonnets, are revealed in act 4, scenes 1 and 3, truly delightful eavesdropping scenes where we sense an echo of how Costard's passion was brought to light in act 1, scene 1. Costard is the only lover who does not consign his feelings to paper, which omission grows ever more prudent as every other effusion of infatuation is either read aloud—the letters—or overheard—the poems. Typically, the ladies are praised and adored in pedestrian Petrarchan fashion and with such exaggeration that this somewhat outmoded medium becomes ludicrous (4.3.24-39, 57-70, 98-117). Jacquenetta, too, is seen as "fair... beauteous... lovely," but her more lowly station is never forgotten; Don Armado is the king, Jacquenetta the beggar, and "the catastrophe is a nuptial... . I am the king, for so stands the comparison; thou the beggar, for so witnesseth thy lowliness... . I profane my lips on thy foot, my eyes on thy picture, and my heart on thine every part" (4.1.61-63, 77-88). What better testament to the irrationality of love could the audience wish for as a moral lesson? At this point in the game, it seems, Costard, supplanted in Jacquenetta's fickle affections, has taken up his much safer love for rewards, language and learning, and he is the better off.

Both the French ladies and, to some degree, Jacquenetta, all seem to be aware of the fact that marriage is the goal of courting, and that a lifetime commitment is not built on Petrarchan poetry, no matter how lofty and passionate;[17] a woman needs assurance and the promise of mutual aid and comfort. The Princess, having learned of her father's death, is still pressed for a spur-of-the-moment commitment by the King "at the latest minute of the hour" (5.1.779) as she is leaving. She answers, "A time, methinks, too short / To make a world-without-end bargain in" (5.1.780-781) and sends him to a hermitage to test his love for a year, after which she will have him if, and only if, he is constant—he has,

after all, broken a solemn oath once before when he courted her. The other ladies follow suit and give fitting, year-long punishments to their suitors, while Jacquenetta, publicly known to be pregnant by now, and just maybe by Costard who was indeed "taken with her," sends Don Armado off to farm for three years "for her sweet love" (5.1.876), truly a humbling experience for the self-important Spanish lord if he, indeed, stays the course. Her pregnancy is flagrant proof of the consequences of infatuation and lust unbridled. The audience's perception of the quality of honor and love, and how socially mandated courting behavior should properly be managed, is deeply influenced by Costard in this play. We learn well from Costard's entertaining teaching.

Costard's skill with verbal acrobatics also stand him in good stead during "The Interlude of the Nine Worthies," where he represents Pompey the Big/Great because of "his great limb or joint" (5.1.119-121), another bawdy allusion. In this interlude he is working alongside two of the three pillars of a contemporary community, Sir Nathanael, the Curate, and Holofernes, the Schoolmaster,[18] who traditionally are looked up to and revered for their learning and high leadership standing. In this situation, too, Costard holds his own well and again exposes learning to ridicule as the entertainment is planned. Moth is the character who interacts with Holofernes, Nathanael, and Don Armado directly in this scene and proves a veritable acrobat with language; Costard is an interested observer and admirer:

> An I had but one penny in the world, thou should'st have it to buy gingerbread. Hold, there is the very remuneration I had of thy master, thou halfpenny purse of wit, thou pigeon-egg of discretion. O, and the heavens were but so pleased that thou wert but my bastard, what a joyful father wouldst thou make me. Go to, thou hast it *ad dunghill*, at the fingers' ends, as they say. (5.1.64-71)

Costard links the love plot to the subplot through the well-remembered remuneration, which, in a way, is returned from whence it came. His recognition and celebration of Moth as a kindred spirit, close enough to be a "bastard" of his, further endears us to our clown. Many audience members, then as well as now, will remember having been talked down to by the learned, and this is sweet revenge.

This downfall of learning persists in act 5, scene 2, when the interlude is performed. Scholarly men such as Holofernes, whose abuse of language makes even Don Armado seem lucid, and Sir Nathaniel, whose admiration for Holofernes is immense, are easily

flustered by the jeering, on-stage audience. Costard, who takes them on in dialog in the style of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*'s Bottom, is able to hold his own. Typical of a Shakespearean stage audience of nobles watching a performance put on by their inferiors, these courtiers seize any and all opportunities to ridicule the well-meaning amateur thespians. Costard invariably gives as good as he gets, and when he seems humble under the onslaught, the behavior of the nobles reveals them as unkind. Costard, assisted by Moth the Page, is instrumental in giving us critical insight into the bombast with which both the socially elevated and the learned mask their lack of substance. Still, Holofernes is the one who most touchingly succeeds in exposing his betters' lack of generosity when he, having been called "Jude-as(s)" in his role as Judas Maccabæus, says, "This is not generous, not gentle, not humble (kind, benevolent)" (5.2.622).

The moral lessons presented to the audience in *Doctor Faustus* and *Love's Labour's Lost* are vastly different, but consistently Christian in value, and in both cases brought home through the use of the clowns. Robin and Rafe tell us to strive for what we can achieve without paying an ultimate price, and that those whose pride drives them to a fatal bargain come to a bad end. Costard teaches us that true nobility lies in restraint, and that nobody human can escape the human condition, however nobly born he or she may be. There are honorable and morally acceptable ways to engage in social interaction, both with inferiors and with the fair sex; and if a gentleman decides to interact with a lady romantically, he should think about mutual aid and comfort and procreation without fornication before lust drives him to places he should not go. Social class is of importance, and nobility and royalty had better not forget the standard they must be held to. A clown is popular with his audience, something like our contemporary comedy "stars," and closer to them in station than kings and learned doctors. His example teaches us, through laughter and guidance, to watch the play, be it comedy or tragedy, with more objectivity and to look for a moral message.

Notes

1. See the *Acte for the Punishement of Vagabondes and for Releif of the Poor and Impotent* of June, 1592, and E. K. Chambers's discussion in his *The Elizabethan Stage*, vol. 4 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), where this act is quoted.

2. For interesting background material on the period in general and the location of the playhouses in particular, see Frank Kermode, *The Age of Shakespeare* (New York: The Modern Library, 2004); Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, 1996); Steven

Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage* (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 1988); and Russ McDonald, *The Bedford Companion to Shakespeare* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2001).

3. Though they were probably never strictly enforced, sumptuary laws existed and clearly stated what class could wear certain materials such as lace or gold embroidery on their clothing; gentlemen only could wear swords on the street. Thus, an actor dressing up as a king, or even carrying a gentleman's sword, could well be seen as offensive.

4. As just a few examples of these alienating devises could be mentioned the banishment dumb show in the beginning of act 3, scene 4 of Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*; Oberon's "I am invisible" aside (*MND* 2.1.185 in the Arden Edition; all subsequent quotes from Shakespeare will be from this edition), so brilliantly rendered in the Utah Shakespearean Festival's production of 2005 by Michael Sharon's Oberon; and Cleopatra's reference to the stage in general and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in particular in *Antony and Cleopatra*, 5.2.207-20. Even the soliloquy can be seen as such a device because it brings us into a thoroughly unrealistic situation, where the stage communicates one-way, but most personally with the house.

5. See Bente Videbæk, *The Stage Clown in Shakespeare's Theatre* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Presses, 1996).

6. Prologue 20; this and all references to "The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus" will be from *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology*, ed. David Bevington (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2002); "cunning" here means 'pride.'

7. A later edition adds so much to the clown scenes that they become somewhat intrusive and detract somewhat from the tightness of the play.

8. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a "placket" means a skirt as well as the one who wears it; a slit in the top of the skirt to facilitate putting it on; a slit to give access to the pocket hanging within from the waist by a thong.

9. Thieves and pickpockets were found in great numbers wherever large crowds were gathered, such as outside, or maybe even inside, a theater. This easily recognizable allusion to the audience's reality adds to the enjoyment of the scene.

10. See Arthur O. Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936, 1964). The mediaeval concept of the Great Chain was still clearly recognized in the Renaissance, and the idea and the images it conjured were often used emblematically on stage.

11. See, for example, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* 2.1.202-210 and *King Lear*, 1.4.109-111.

12. The theme of sacrificing something valuable is pertinent to both plays. The state of Faustus's soul is of utmost importance to Faustus's salvation, but King Ferdinand of Navarre's window of opportunity in which he can woo and marry a suitable mother for his male heir is of importance, not only to him, but to his entire nation.

13. The use of a rope as a prop in this scene in the Utah Shakespearean Festival's 2005 production of the play was especially ingenious as it served to stress Costard's role in exposing the sexuality rampant in the court and the pain that might follow acting upon it.

14. Bloody Mary married King Philip II of Spain, who later pursued her

half-sister Elizabeth as a marriage prospect, a very unpopular match in the eyes of the people. Besides Don Armado, one other notable Spaniard is held up for ridicule in Shakespeare's works: Portia's suitor, the Prince of Arragon, in *The Merchant of Venice.*

15. No matter whether Costard's "O!" is delivered as an expression of extreme disappointment or as if a joyful revelation has been made, the situation is pricelessly funny.

16. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a farthing is "the quarter of a penny"; Berowne gives twelve pence for the same service as elicits three farthings, less than one penny, from Don Armado.

17. Ironically, *Love Labour's Lost* is one comedy that sports somewhat rational, reason-driven ladies, and gentlemen committed to frivolousness. This is an exceptional comedy, as it does not end in marriage and social order happily restored after the irrational "ride" through the safe version of chaos that a comedy normally presents.

18. The third pillar would be the one who administers the law, in this case King Ferdinand.