Ambiguous Alliances: Betrothal Confusion in Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

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Arguably, nothing in the lives of early modern English citizens held more importance than marriage and all its connected issues. The ways in which men and women in England were supposed to behave and the ways in which they actually did behave were often not the same. Even before they were married, women were taught that their place was in the home. The authors of conduct books outlined every aspect of female life, from behavior in public to what to do when ill. For instance, in "The Instruction of a Christian Woman," under the heading, "How the Maid Shall Behave Herself Forth Abroad," Juan Luis Vives describes in detail the consequences of a woman behaving incorrectly:

> If thou talk little in company folks think thou canst but little good: if thou speak much, they reckon thee light: if thou speak uncunningly, they count thee dull-witted; if thou speak cunningly thou shalt be called a shrew; if thou answer not quickly thou shalt be called proud or ill brought up; if thou answer they shall say thou wilt be soon over comen; if thou sit with demure countenance, thou art called a dissembler; if thou make much moving, they will call thee foolish: if thou look on any side, then will they say thy mind is there; if thou laugh when any man laugheth, though thou do it not a purpose, straight they will say thou hast a fantasy unto the man and his saying, and that it were no great mastery to win thee.[1]

Vives writes of so many limitations that one wonders what actions a woman could take without negative consequences. Breaking these rules could bring disaster to the woman who did so; early modern English communities were relatively small and close-knit, and word of even a suspected wanton woman spread quickly.

Women did not want to be called "light," or loose. Chastity was of the utmost importance if a woman wished to marry, and since marriage brought with it a better chance of financial security and a higher social position, it was very desirable. Lisa Jardine writes, "There is something intrinsically indecorous about a woman who . . . transgresses the social code which requires her to observe a modest silence and passivity in public";[2] and breaking any of society's rules could make her appear unseemly not only to her neighbors, but also to any potential suitors, bringing her to permanent ruin. At the same time, men also had to watch themselves and other men closely in order to always have a firm grasp on their reputations. Men were greatly concerned with honor, and engaging in the wrong activities could damage their reputations beyond repair, resulting in being shunned by society. English citizens were expected to behave in the way the conduct literature guided them, but the problems they had within these guidelines caused them, sometimes, to speak out against the moral values they were supposed to follow.

These conflicts can be understood as "social drama," a term coined by Victor Turner. Writing about societal groups in opposition to one another and the tensions that erupt from this opposition, Turner defines social drama as "units of aharmonic or disharmonic process, arising in conflict situations."[3] He describes these dramas as having four main parts. First, comes the breach of a social norm—"an overt breach or deliberate nonfulfillment of some crucial norm regulating the intercourse of the parties."[4] People breaking these norms often believe they are acting on behalf of not only themselves, but a larger party as well.[5] For instance, a woman publicly slandering another woman—an action certainly not condoned by conduct books—normally did so alone, but claimed that the whole neighborhood felt the same way. Additionally, women standing up in court against such slander would fight not only for their own honor, but also for the honor of all other slandered women. The second stage of social drama is a mounting crisis. At this point, unless the problem can be dealt with immediately, it threatens to spread. Here, the problem can no longer be ignored.[6] For example, society must recognize an adulterous man and deal with him in some way or he will continue to break this rule, perhaps influencing others to do so as well.

The need to handle conflict leads into the third stage, that of redressive action. As Turner explains, "It is in the redressive phase that both pragmatic techniques and symbolic action reach their fullest expression."[7] In this phase, people attempt to fix the problem

with "pragmatic techniques," such as lawsuits, and "symbolic action," such as stories, ballads, and jests, that provide an outlet for the conflict. The fourth and final stage of social drama is one of either "reintegration of the disturbed social group or of the social recognition and legitimization of irreparable schism between the contesting parties."[8] The outcome of this stage depends largely on the third stage. Perhaps the lawsuits, for example, have solved the problem and the involved people have returned to the social norm, or perhaps new laws have been enacted, changing the social norm and solving conflict in this way. Either way the conflict is stopped, but the latter effects the community more visibly.

Conflicts surrounding marriage in early modern England can be understood in terms of Turner's social drama schema, with many different texts arising from the third phase. Controversies surrounding sexual behavior appear in everything from court records to songs and are also dramatized in *The Merry Wives of Windsor.* Sexual misconduct is a particularly interesting subject in terms of social drama and conflict because it is so complex. For instance, betrothal laws were so unclear that no one seemed quite sure when a couple was legally married. Sometimes a couple believed they were married, but a third party would disagree and charge them with sexual misconduct if they were sexually active. However, the ambiguity of the laws allowed for personal dislike to enter the situation; as Lisa Jardine explains, "The first thing to notice about the canons concerning unlawful marriage is that the 'unlawfulness' is couched in terms of a complaint—a charge of unlawful marriage arises when someone is offended by the union."[9] Disapproval of a couple by a third party could result not only in charges of breach of promise, but also accusations of sexual misconduct. If the laws were clear, a person could not accuse a couple of an illegitimate marriage simply because of personal animosity, but the fuzziness of what actually constituted a binding marriage opened the door for personal attacks and resulted in many more cases than otherwise might have been.

Because sexual reputations were so important, men and women regularly went to court to complain about sexual misconduct or to clear their names if they had been slandered. Ecclesiastical court records give a unique insight into the reasons for conflict in the society. Thousands and thousands of records were made, but many are incomplete, difficult to read, or otherwise inaccessible. However, the mere fact of so many moral court cases is significant because it reflects the issues that were of the greatest concern in society. Of court records, Bernard Capp writes, "If they seldom

provide the full story, they show us the most popular strategies of attack and defence, offer insights into the complex issue of conflict resolution, and yield clues to the underlying cultural values of the age."[10] If we understand what people argued about, why the disputes arose, and how they were solved, we can gain a greater understanding of how society worked than we can from more general historical reports.

In the third phase of Turner's social drama, the redressive action stage, problems with betrothals, adultery, cuckoldry, and defamation resulted not only in court records, but also in the creation of many popular texts, such as ballads and jokes. Societies laugh at what they fear, and early modern England was no exception. Men and women lived in a patriarchal society, and while men enjoyed their control, they continually worried about losing it. "Satires, sermons, plays, ballads, and jokes reflected the fear that women did not genuinely accept male authority, dreamed of subverting it, and flouted it at every opportunity," Capp observes.[11] Indeed, many popular texts feature a woman outwitting a man and getting away with adultery, or men learning a painful or embarrassing lesson about trusting their wives too much.

However, as many texts that teach men the value of suspecting their wives, many also illustrate to women that they should remain at home and clean or feature a man fooling his wife and getting away with sexual sin. The events and lessons in these texts were probably more influential than court judgments, not only because the punishments were weightier, but also because more people could safely complain about or otherwise explore their situations through popular texts without the inconvenience of having to go to court or the danger of losing a court case. In the world of popular texts, to which people of every social strata had access, there seems to be almost a war of wits, with male-based jests fighting for patriarchal authority and female-based jests just as quickly teaching how to subvert it.

Plays were also immensely popular and their authors, aware of current events, problems, and other popular texts, often similarly reflected the concerns of society in their works. Shakespeare was no exception. As a playwright for one of the most popular acting troupes of the period, Shakespeare had the power to reach a vast audience. While his primary goal was undoubtedly to entertain people and make money doing it, his adaptations of well-known events or stories could also have functioned on a different level. Stephen Greenblatt explains that plays moved all types of "social energy" through society, such as "power, charisma, sexual

excitement, collective dreams, wonder, desire, anxiety, religious awe, free-floating intensities of experience . . . everything produced by the society can circulate."[12] Plays garnered material from society, adapted it, and gave it back to spectators with a new perspective. Suzanne Hull observes, "Successful humor or satire must have a base of truth or understanding for people to relate to it."[13] People viewing a comedy laugh precisely because they understand at least a small part of what they are seeing; perhaps they have experienced a similar situation, or they see characteristics of themselves or someone they know in one of the characters. Shakespeare's comedies played on aspects of society that the vast majority of audience members could relate to. If a person had not been accused of sexual misconduct or accused someone themselves, they may have known someone who had or even served in a court position for a while. Additionally, jests and ballads made their way through communities very quickly, and it is extremely likely that everyone in the audience had heard at least one such story. Referring to these well-known events and stories would have given audience members something to latch onto, laugh at, and understand.

The laws surrounding betrothals in early modern England were complex and unclear, and people often manipulated them for their own uses. For instance, society often looked the other way when a couple engaged in sexual activities if they were planning to marry. While a man might be prosecuted for promising marriage to a woman simply to seduce her,[14] he might claim he was planning to marry her and be excused from the sin. Also, though a pre-contract could become official only through the consent of the bride and groom,[15] parents sometimes still attempted to arrange contracts for their children. In *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Shakespeare draws on these situations and other confusing aspects of betrothal law to provide complications that drive the plot. While in the real world the courts often served as matchmakers, Shakespeare's play provides fantastical resolutions that suggest that love is more important than law in marriage.

One way we can gain access to the inner workings of the conflict caused by betrothals is through court records, since during the period over 15,000 people were brought to court on sexual charges alone.[16] The ambiguous laws concerning betrothals caused many couples to be brought before the courts to settle the question of whether or not they were legally married or if any party was entitled to any material or monetary compensation. In one 1535 case from Northumberland, typical of many, a man named John

Adamson explains how a man named Anthony is caught by the law because of a pre-contract he had made:

> He saith that the same Anthonie being at the est end of Slalie churche, without the churche yard there, in the tyme of Lent last past, about a fortnight afore Ester, saied unto hym in this maner, "Sir John, ye knowe I have made a contract of matrymonye with Marion Martyne. I cannot denie but I have made a precontract with oone Jenat Armestronge, and I knowe well that the 2d contract is of no effect, wherfore I desire you to speke with the same Marion, to know her mynde." And this deponent saieth that after, he went to the same Marion, upon the mocion of the said Anthonie, and shewed to her as is afore rehersid. And she saied that she would not be contented with that mocion, but that she would take the lawe upon the said Anthonie for discharge of her sowle.[17]

In current society, men and women can break off engagements when they please, but in sixteenth-century England, contracts were law-binding statements, even though often nothing was written down. In his book about marriage and law, Martin Ingram explains, "An indissoluble union could be created solely by the consent of the two parties expressed in words of the present tense . . . Neither solemnisation in church, nor the use of specially prescribed phrases, nor even the presence of witnesses, was essential to an act of marriage."[18] However, though some moralists praised the pre-contract, others thought a church ceremony was more important, and informal verbal contracts raised the possibility of fraud;[19] for instance, one person might claim a contract to another where there was none for monetary benefit. In this case, Marion Martin was angry at Anthony because he had contracted to her even though he was pre-contracted to Jenat Armstrong. Anthony most likely hoped that Martin would not care much about the pre-contract, which is why he sent "to know her mynde" concerning the matter; but Martin seems to have known that betrothal law was messy and could potentially result in serious punishment. Lisa Jardine explains, "The offended party made depositions . . . which if substantiated in court led to the offender's doing public penance, paying a fine, or (in extreme cases) being excommunicated."[20] Here, Martin takes the offensive, taking Anthony to court before he can do the same should he decide to marry Armstrong instead, and also protecting herself against any action from Armstrong herself.

Pre-contract issues were familiar to Shakespeare, and the Anne Page subplot in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* centers around these confusions. When Anne's character is initially introduced, it is as a

woman marriageable because of her monetary value. While discussing the possibility of marriage, Slender's interest is piqued when the subject of her inheritance arises:

> *Slender:* Did her grandsire leave her seven hundred pound?
> *Evans:* Ay, and her father is make her a petter penny.
> *Slender:* I know the young gentlewoman, she has good gifts.
> *Evans:* Seven hundred pounds, and possibilities, is goot gifts. (1.1.60-63)[21]

Slender, we are told, is "well landed" (4.4.86) and so is not wholly dependent on Anne's money—in fact, it is quite clear that he does not love Anne. However, he recognizes a good alliance and makes an informal verbal contract with Anne's father. Page gives Slender his consent to marry Anne, then tells Anne to love Slender. When Fenton, the man Anne truly loves, attempts to woo Anne and get the good will of her parents, P age says, "I told you, sir, my daughter is dispos'd of" (3.4.70), implying that the contract negotiated between himself and Slender is solid.

According to law, official betrothal contracts could be made only by the intended couple themselves so that parents could not marry their children simply to amass property; but many citizens felt that this law did not allow parents to protect their own interests.[22] In spite of the law, arranged marriages did happen, however rarely, and conduct books urged children to obey their parents in such matters.[23] For example, Martin Ingram mentions several cases in which girls were led into marriages by their parents. While not forced marriages, "the evidence makes plain that parents or others had at least consulted them and secured their consent,"[24] which is what happens in *Merry Wives.* Page tells Anne to marry Slender, and Anne does not say no. A contract is made for her.

However, the informality of this verbal contract, so prevalent in early modern England, works against Page, as his wife has also made a verbal contract for Anne with Doctor Caius. She says, "I'll to the doctor, he hath my good will, / And none but he, to marry with Nan Page. . . . He, none but he, shall have her" (4.4.84-85, 89). Mistress Page knows that her husband has promised Anne to Slender, but because she disapproves of that match, she uses the confusing betrothal laws to her benefit. Using the fact that the validity of verbal agreements could often come into question, Mistress Page decides to try her luck at making her own contract. Additionally, Mistress Page likes Caius because "he is well money'd, and his friends / Potent at court" (4.4.88-89), which would be advantageous to her own social position. Again, although

parents were not supposed to use the marriages of their children to gain social status, it appears that this is one of Mistress Page's motives in securing a suitor for Anne.

A third problem arises when Fenton reveals that he has also unofficially betrothed himself to Anne. While both Caius and Slender have made informal arrangements with Anne's parents, Fenton's contract was made in secret with Anne herself. After eloping with Anne, Fenton explains their relationship to her parents: "The truth is, she and I (long since contracted) / Are now so sure that nothing can dissolve us" (5.5.223-24). Anne and Fenton's contract seems to be the most viable because it is made by the couple themselves instead of being arranged by a third party, but B. J. and Mary Sokol state that "Anne's parents could have sought legal redress against Fenton,[25] possibly because of his technically unlawful betrothal without their consent. In fact, parents who disliked their child's choice of partner could even refuse financial support.[26] Fenton, for example, would not gain any wealth by marrying Anne, because Page dislikes the match so much. Page says, "If he take her, let him take her simply. The wealth I have waits on my consent, and my consent goes not that way" (3.2.76-78). However, monetary gain is not an issue in Fenton's pre-contract, since Fenton wants to marry Anne not because of her wealth, but because of love.

Though Fenton admits that he first became interested in Anne because of her money, he claims that as he wooed her, he came to love her—an emotion lacking in both of the other arrangements. He says, "You would have married her most shamefully, / Where there was no proportion held in love" (5.5.221-22). He goes on to explain that Anne has not sinned in disobeying her parents, since by doing so "she doth evitate and shun / A thousand irreligious cursed hours / Which forced marriage would have brought upon her" (5.5.228-30). Marriage forced through use of threats was unlawful,[27] and Page effectively threatens to disinherit Anne should she marry Fenton. With his statement at the end of the play, Fenton comments on Page's abuse of authority concerning Anne's betrothal, claiming that a parental arrangement is not favorable in the eyes of the church—it is "irreligious"—and that their love-based marriage is a much better resolution.

Underlying the betrothal issues in this play is a gendered power struggle. As the head of the family, Page feels very secure in his power and thus feels justified in arranging a marriage contract for his daughter. In fact, even Anne knows that she owes this duty to her father, telling Fenton to "seek my father's love, still seek it, sir"

(3.4.19). However, Mistress Page makes her own arrangement, taking away Page's ability to govern both his wife's and his daughter's choices in marriage. Page makes an arrangement with Slender, but Mistress Page makes an arrangement with Caius and goes to great lengths to make sure Anne marries him. According to societal beliefs, a wife should obey her husband. The largely Protestant nation was taught that because Eve was created after Adam and caused his fall, women were subject to men. Churchgoers learned that a woman must "acknowledge her inferiority, [and] carry herself as inferior."[28] In the play, Mistress Page is clearly not inferior; Mistress Quickly describes her as one who can "do what she will, say what she will, take all, pay all, go to bed when she list, rise when she list, all is as she will; and truly she deserves it, for if there be a kind woman in Windsor, she is one" (2.2.117-21). Instead of conforming to the expected inferiority, Mistress Page takes power away from her husband. Her power becomes clear partly through the way she meddles with her daughter's betrothal, even after her husband, whom she should obey, has made a decision. In the real world, this behavior would most likely get her branded a shrew or an uncouth wife, but in Shakespeare's play, she is set up as an honorable, powerful woman.

Anne's actions take this power struggle even further. Arguably the least powerful of the group as an unmarried, female child, Anne owes obeisance to her mother and father. However, she fools both her parents and marries Fenton. Although she has apparently contracted herself to Slender and Caius, she seems to know these are not binding contracts. Anne uses betrothal loopholes to her advantage and gets out of potentially unlawful and unhappy marriages. Her contract with Fenton is informal and maybe not even lawful, but still a touch more formal than the arranged contracts of her parents, since those were more clearly thought of as illegal. Anne uses the intricacies of betrothal law to flout it, governing her marriage choice with love instead of legality.

Near the end of the play, Fenton explains all of Anne's pre-contracts:

> From time to time I have acquainted you
> With the dear love I bear to fair Anne Page,
> Who mutually hath answer'd my affection
> (So far forth as herself might be her chooser)
> Even to my wish. . . .
>
> Her father hath commanded her to slip
> Away with Slender, and with him at Eton
> Immediately to marry. She hath consented.

> Now, sir,
> Her mother (even strong against that match
> And firm for Doctor Caius) hath appointed
> That he shall likewise shuffle her away . . .
>
> To this her mother's plot
> She (seemingly obedient) likewise hath
> Made promise to the doctor. (4.6.8-12, 23-29, 32-34)

It is Anne's apparent consent to the contracts made by her parents that causes the most tension surrounding the betrothal issues in the play. As stated above, marriages arranged by parents were not standard, but could occur when the parents consulted their children about the match. Even though Anne seems to have always been planning to marry Fenton—she is only "seemingly obedient" to her parents' wishes—she still consents to their arrangements. Because she consents to each betrothal, including the one she makes herself, Anne informally contracts herself to three men, even though two of the bargains are not technically pre-contracts. Fenton emerges the victor, but the other two would have every reason to go to court over the issue, as so many people did in early modern English society; Elizabethan audiences would have understood this legal problem and thus felt the dramatic tension. However, seemingly inexplicably, all is forgiven at the end of the play. The Pages willingly accept Fenton as part of the family, claiming that "in love, the heavens themselves do guide the state; /Money buys lands, and wives are sold by fate. / . . . Fenton, heaven give thee joy!" (5.5.232-33, 235-36). This fantastical resolution deftly sidesteps the potentially sticky legal issues that could have played out in real life, suggesting that Anne may still receive her inheritance and allowing love to claim the position of most importance in making alliances.

While there are abundant court records about betrothal conflicts, it is much more difficult to find jests or ballads dealing with the subject. Perhaps this is because gender ideologies governed so much of the everyday life of early modern English people, and gender plays a smaller role in betrothals than it does in something like cuckoldry. In any case, ballads and jests on the topic of betrothals are few and far between, and even those seem to focus on real life incidents as opposed to fictionalized events. For example, in 1573, Walter Smith wrote a book called *XII Mery Jests of the Wyddow Edyth*, which subsequent editors have explained "is not strictly a *jest book*, but rather a relation of the tricks and deceptions practised by the heroine . . . on one Walter Smith, who

published them for the information of his contemporaries and posterity.[29]

One jest recounts how Edith promises to marry the servant of a count and consummates the promise, but runs away before the marriage takes place:

> The Wydow northward tooke her way,
> And came to Rochester the next day,
> And there, within a little space,
> To a yongman that seruant was
> Vnto the Byshop in the Towne,
> She promised him dale and downe,
> On that condition he wolde her wed,
> And keepe her company at boord & in bed. . . .
> Good cheare he made her in her Inne,
> And eke he would not neuer blinne,
> Tyl he had brought her to his Lorde,
> Before whom they were at accorde
> Upon a condition maryed to be . . .
> On the morrow my Lorde for her sent,
> To dyne with him, and to commen further.
> Then was she gone; but when and whether
> No wyght any worde of her could tell . . .[30]

Here, the woman makes a contract with the servant, promising to marry him in exchange for sexual favors. In a section not reprinted here, the servant agrees in part because he knows he can gain money and status from the match. Both parties, then, are at fault—the widow contracts for the sole purpose of seduction, and the man is blinded by greed.

This jest may be read with a tone of warning, in contrast to the court records which simply present the events without any commentary, yet it is called a jest, which implies that it should be laughed at. These two feelings may seem at odds with each other; however, what societies joke about often reveals their insecurities. Keith Thomas states, "When we laugh we betray our innermost assumptions. . . . Jokes are a pointer to joking situations, areas of structural ambiguity in society itself; and their subject-matter can be a revealing guide to past tensions and anxieties."[31] Betrothal laws were nothing if not ambiguous, and much social anxiety was caused by their application. Jests such as these allow people to view societal problems in action from a more detached position. Even though this jest invites people to laugh at a lusty widow, if the author, Walter Smith, is to be believed, another purpose of the piece is to inform and warn men—and, to a lesser extent, women—not to be deceived by such false promises. In this jest, men,

especially, are invited to laugh at the servant the widow deceives, but also learn from his error and be sure, in their own lives, that they are not similarly tricked by women. This text provides a way for men to vent their anxiety about women and betrothals without having to actually speak about it.

Though *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is a comedy, the parts of the plot involving betrothal issues do not include any specific jokes about betrothals. Anne's dancing around three pre-contracts in *Merry Wives* is, in fact, dangerous; however, in the play all the trouble is resolved to everyone's satisfaction, though not without first hinting at or explaining the consequences. Just as the jest about the Widow Edith recounts a story and encourages men to learn from the mistakes of the involved parties, the play allows men and women to see familiar problems and their results. Individual conflicts, such as those in the play, affected communities as a whole because they were public.

Lisa Jardine states, "Some ostensibly verbal incidents between individuals . . . became recognised as events, which generate particular expectations . . . the event in question introduces competing versions of fault and blame, which must now be resolved in order that the individuals concerned may be reintegrated into the community."[32] This is the case in *Merry Wives*, where, in the final act of the play the entire community becomes involved in Falstaff's machinations. By the end of the play, all the issues are resolved—Falstaff is punished, and all competing groups are reintegrated into one community—but important questions have been raised regarding tricky females, unclear laws, and love. Though it is impossible to state conclusively what direct effect these sights may have had on audiences, their familiarity with such episodes most likely connected them more deeply to the characters and possibly helped them identify and work to change similar problems in their own society, bringing the social drama to a close.

Notes

1. Juan Luis Vives, "The Instruction of a Christian Woman," in *Renaissance Woman: A Sourcebook*, ed. Kate Aughterson (London: Routledge, 1995), 71-72.
2. Lisa Jardine, *Reading Shakespeare Historically* (London: Routledge, 1996), 50.
3. Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1974), 37.
4. Turner, 38.
5. Turner, 38.
6. Turner, 38-39.
7. Turner, 41.

8. Turner, 41.
9. Jardine, 39.
10. Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 186.
11. Capp, 21.
12. Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 19.
13. Suzanne Hull, *Chaste, Silent, and Obedient: English Books for Women, 1457-1640* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1982), 135.
14. B. J. and Mary Sokol, *Shakespeare, Law, and Marriage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 21.
15. Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 135.
16. F. G. Emmison, *Elizabethan Life: Morals and the Church Courts* (Essex: Benham and Company Limited, 1973), 1.
17. Paul Hair, ed., *Before the Bawdy Court: Selections from Church Court and Other Records Relating to the Correction of Moral Offences in England, Scotland and New England, 1300-1800* (London: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1972), 35.
18. Ingram, 132.
19. Ingram, 133.
20. Jardine, 26.
21. William Shakespeare, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed, ed. Herschel Baker, et al., (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1997), 324-360. All subsequent line references occur in the text and refer to this edition.
22. Ingram, 135.
23. Sokol and Sokol, 32.
24. Ingram, 201.
25. Sokol and Sokol, 36.
26. Ingram, 139.
27. Sokol and Sokol, 31.
28. William Whately, "A Bride Bush," in *Renaissance Woman: A Sourcebook*, ed. Kate Aughterson (London: Routledge, 1995), 31.
29. Walter Smith, "XII Mery Jests of the Wyddow Edyth," in *The Shakespeare Jest-Books; being reprints of the Early Jest-Books supposed to have been used by Shakespeare*, ed. W. Carew Hazlitt (London: Willis and Sotheran, 1864), 3:28; emphasis in original.
30. Smith, 69-70.
31. Quoted in Pamela Allen Brown, *Better a Shrew than a Sheep* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 10.
32. Jardine, 28.