Shakespeare's Use of Examinations in *Measure for Measure*

by David Crosby

Throughout his career as a playwright, Shakespeare used a particular scene-building device in which a character is called to account before an authority figure and questioned about beliefs or actions that may incur serious sanctions, including a death sentence. I propose calling scenes which employ this device "examinations," a term that Shakespeare used only infrequently, but which was common in the titles of accounts describing the heresy trials of Lollards and other English Protestant martyrs in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. I will try to show that there are conventions and tropes that are common to the scenes in Shakespeare and to the examination accounts of the martyrs, and assay the significance of the similarities and their impact on possible interpretations of Shakespeare's plays.[1] In this essay I will be paying particular attention to *Measure for Measure.*

But first, I will try to define the nature and characteristics of the examination scene by looking at four other plays. In *The Comedy of Errors*[2] the examination begins in the first scene when Egeon, a merchant of Syracuse, stands before the Duke of Ephesus, facing the death penalty for violating a law forbidding traffic between the two "adverse towns" (1.1.15). After the Duke has explained the law and its consequences, he invites Egeon to "say in brief the cause/ Why thou departed'st from thy native home/ And for what cause thou came to Ephesus" (1.1.28-30). Although he initially expresses reluctance to speak, Egeon proceeds with one of the longest pieces of uninterrupted exposition in all of Shakespeare, recounting his life story and setting the scene for all the mistaken identities which follow with such riotously laughable effect.

Several features of this scene will be met again and again. First, there is a significant difference in station and power between the accused and the judge: Egeon is a merchant and a prisoner, Solinus is a Duke and the supreme authority in Ephesus. Second, there is a serious threat to the physical and/or spiritual life of the accused, in this case death. Third, the accused does not want to speak:

Egeon says, "A heavier task could not have been imposed/ Than I to speak my griefs unspeakable" (1.1.31-32), and he breaks off in mid-story with "O let me say no more!/ Gather the sequel by that went before" (1.1.94-95). In spite of his reluctance, he agrees to speak to vindicate himself for the record, "that the world may witness that my end/ Was wrought by nature, not by vile offence" (1.1.33-34). Fourth, the judge, whether eager for prosecution or in sympathy with the accused, claims to have no power to change the law or to pardon the offender: having listened to Egeon, the Duke promises "were it not against our laws/...Against my crown, my oath, my dignity,/ My soul should sue as advocate for thee" (1.1.142-45), but protests that "passed sentence may not be recalled" (1.1.147). What he can do is allow Egeon till the end of the day to raise the 1000-mark fine that would free him, and Egeon disappears from the stage until the final act when his reappearance with the Duke triggers the "new comedy" revelations that resolve the plot and buy him his freedom.

A Midsummer Night's Dream adds a new element to the formula of the examination scene and refines some of the others. The judge is Theseus, Duke and supreme ruler of Athens, and the accused is a young girl, Hermia. But now we have an accuser, Hermia's father Egeus, who brings her to court to force her to marry Demetrius, his choice of suitor, rather than Lysander, her choice. Again the threat is serious; Egeus claims an absolute right to choose a husband for his daughter: "As she is mine, I may dispose of her/ Which shall be either to this gentleman/ Or to her death, according to our law" (1.1.42-45). The weakness of her position is compounded by the fact of her gender, which the Duke reinforces by comparing her to her father "but as a form in wax,/ By him imprinted, and within his power/ To leave the figure or disfigure it" (1.1.49-51). She recognizes that she has no power or authority to plead her case, except that which she herself can summon, or which comes to her out of the extremity of her situation: "I know not by what power I am made bold,/ Nor how it may concern my modesty/ In such a presence here to plead my thoughts" (1.1.59-61). Yet her unfitness to speak does not deter her. When Theseus assures her that Demetrius is a worthy gentleman, she comes back immediately with the pithy rejoinder, "So is Lysander" (1.1.53). When Theseus reproves her for failing to take her father's judgment into consideration, she replies, "I would my father looked but with my eyes" (1.1.56). This accused is anything but submissive—she is willing and able to bandy words with the Duke.

When Theseus offers an alternative to marriage or death, "to abjure forever the society of men" (1.1.65-66) and "to live a barren sister all your life" (1.1.72), he compares the single life to a rose, that "withering on the virgin thorn,/ Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness" (1.1.77-78). Hermia engages him in stichomythia, picking up his words and flinging them back at him: "So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,/ Ere I will yield my virgin patent up" (1.1.79-80) to the government of a man she does not choose. Theseus sets a term by which Hermia must submit "[o]r else the law of Athens yields you up—/ Which by no means we may extenuate—/ To death or to a single life" (1.1.119-21). By the end of the lovers' sojourn in the woods, however, when Demetrius relinquishes his claim to Hermia in exchange for the love of Helena, to whom he was betrothed before, Theseus is only too willing to overrule Egeus and unite the appropriate lovers in marriage at his own delayed nuptials with Hippolyta.

Othello, probably written and first performed in the same year as *Measure for Measure*, is unusual in having two persons accused. First Othello and then Desdemona are summoned before the Duke and the Senate to answer Brabantio's charges that Othello has seduced his daughter through the devices of witchcraft. The Duke, before he knows whom Brabantio is accusing, introduces a new element to the already familiar scene when his immediate response is to place the responsibility for judgment and punishment into the accuser's hands: "The bloody book of law/ You shall yourself read in the bitter letter/ After your own sense; yea, though our proper son/ Stood in your action" (1.3.67-70). This creates a strong element of dramatic irony which is often characteristic of the examination scene: we know that Brabantio is accusing the man standing beside the Duke, the man the Duke has just summoned to lead his troops in battle against the Turkish invasion of Cyprus. Othello is not his "proper son," but he is arguably, in this wartime situation, the second most important man in the city.

Othello, when the Duke asks "[W]hat, in your own part, can you say to this?" (1.3.74), professes his unfitness to defend himself before such an assembly of august citizens: "Rude am I in my speech,/ And little blessed with the soft phrase of peace," and "therefore little shall I grace my cause in speaking for myself" (1.3.81-82, 88). He creates his own dramatic irony when he appears to admit to Brabantio's charges: "That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,/ It is most true." He will describe "what drugs, what charms,/ What conjuration, and what mighty magic" (1.3.78-79, 91-92) he used to win Desdemona. Then, of course, he

proceeds to weave a narrative of his wooing so sophisticated and persuasive that the Duke, when he finishes, can only say, "I think this tale would win my daughter too" (1.3.171). But Brabantio is not ready to yield, and when Desdemona arrives, he attempts to trap her by asking a trick question. He does not ask if what Othello says is true, that she was "half the wooer" (1.3.176). Instead he confronts her with her position as a woman and a daughter: "Do you perceive in all this noble company/ Where most you owe obedience?" (1.3.79-80). Her escape from this trap is so perfectly crafted that it still, after 400 years, can make an audience gasp at its audacity and its perfect pitch: "My noble father/ I do perceive here a divided duty..." (1.3.180-81). Brabantio knows when he is beaten, and ungraciously resigns the fight, but not before issuing a warning: "Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see:/ She has deceived her father, and may thee" (1.3.292-93).

Finally, in the opening scene of *King Lear,* a ritual which demands the expression of filial piety in exchange for rewards turns suddenly into an examination of Cordelia when she cannot answer in the expected mode. Like Desdemona she is confronted with a trick question: in the sight and hearing of her suitors, France and Burgundy, she is asked to outbid her sisters in expressing that all her love and duty belong to her father, and finds that she "cannot heave/ [Her] heart into [her] mouth..." (91-92). But unlike Desdemona, she does not craft a clever and diplomatic answer; instead she blurts out, "Nothing, my Lord" (1.1.87), and when warned that this answer may cost her, she blunders on, "I love your Majesty/ According to my bond; no more nor less" (1.1.92-93). By the time she recovers the usually witty and resourceful voice of the accused, asking, "Why have my sisters husbands, if they say/ They love you all?" (1.1.99-100), and using wordplay against her father by responding to his, "So young and so untender?," with the stichomythic "So young, my lord, and true" (1.1.106,107), it is too late, and Lear has passed sentence. Like Hermia, she is reminded of the weakness of her position and the penalty she can pay, when Lear threatens to take away her marriage prospects: "Let it be so; thy truth then be thy dower" (1.1.101). She will become a fatherless child. When Kent steps in to protest this injustice, badgering Lear with strong rhetorical arguments and demanding that he revoke his threat, he finds himself sharing the role of the accused. Lear asserts the judge's conceit that once a decision is made, he cannot alter it, and he accuses Kent of seeking to "make us break our vows,/ Which we durst never yet," and of coming "betwixt our sentence and our power/ Which nor our nature nor our place can bear" (1.1.168,170-71).

It is tempting to continue looking at these powerfully dramatic scenes and suggesting the elements they share (and many other scenes could be added to the list for reference), but it would be good to summarize in a concise way the characteristic elements of the examination scene as they appear in what we have already seen. In such an examination scene:

1) an accused person stands before a judge and is called to account for his/her actions and beliefs;
2) there is a marked difference in power and status between these characters, a difference which may include and specifically reference gender;
3) the accused stands in danger of a serious penalty, up to and including death;
4) there may be a third person, an accuser who presses the charges against the accused;
5) the accused expresses or displays an initial reluctance to speak, either because of perceived weakness or as a rhetorical strategy;
6) once the accused begins to speak, he/she displays strong rhetorical skills, engaging the judge or accuser with wit and word play, and sometimes moving the judge to expressions of pity;
7) there may be a person who steps forward to intercede on the accused's behalf, who then incurs the same danger as the accused;
8) the judge claims that he is helpless to do anything other than enforce the law; he may not change the law or grant pardon;
9) the judge may offer the accuser the opportunity to pass judgment and sentence on the accused;
10) the judge typically sets a time for the execution of whatever sentence is called for, and this delay may provide opportunities for the accused to find a remedy.

As we have seen, not all of these elements are present in every examination scene, but they occur together often enough to convince me that when he was building these scenes Shakespeare was working from a formula that he knew well and that he could pick and choose among the elements to suit the action of a particular situation.

With these elements of Shakespeare's examination scenes in mind, I would like to offer a possible source for this kind of examination scene in the Protestant polemical literature of the sixteenth century, and then seek to apply the concept of the examination to scenes in *Measure for Measure.*

The first surviving account of an English martyr's examination for heresy is that of William Thorpe, an accused Lollard who

appeared before Archbishop Arundel in August 1407, during the reign of Henry IV. This autobiographical record circulated in manuscript, not reaching print until 1530 in Antwerp. But it was popularized by three of the most important and prolific English Protestant reformers, William Tyndale, John Bale, and John Foxe. Thorpe's *Examination* is prototypical of what Ritchie Kendall has described as "a poetics grounded in ritual patterns of self-dramatization."[3] These examination accounts, he believes, took on a kind of sacramental quality, "a rite of belief whose stichomythic play of question and response, of charge and countercharge, became indelibly printed upon Lollard consciousness...[and] enabled those never examined to partake communally in the experience."[4] Thus while these autobiographical tracts never achieved the full realization as drama, they were, by the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, a "distinctive genre" that, like the chronicle histories, contained dramatic elements preformed for adoption and adaptation by any dramatist who cared to appropriate them.

Of the many examinations published in the reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth, by far the most influential was that of Anne Askew, a young woman who was burned at Smithfield in 1546, the last year of the reign of Henry VIII. Her brief account of her various examinations by ecclesiastical and civil authorities was published, along with extended prefaces, commentary, and epilogues, by John Bale in Wesel, Germany, in two volumes dated 1546 and 1547. The *Examinations* were reprinted in three editions in London during Edward's reign, and two more in Elizabeth's (1560 and 1585). More important, the *Two Examinations of Anne Askew*, without Bale's commentary, were incorporated into John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments,* the huge compilation of English Protestant historiography (1563, 1570, 1583), where it provided "the kind of story that made his 'Book of Martyrs' the dominant popular account of the English Reformation."[5] Askew was interrogated and examined by the Lord Mayor of London, Bishop Bonner of London and his chancellor, the Privy Council, and the Lord Chancellor, and the imbalance of power between her and these judges was not lost on her. According to her modern editor, Elaine Beilin, as she dramatizes her interrogations, "she frequently makes her gender the topic of the dialogue," and she "shapes the interviews with these powerful male officials of church and state so that each concludes with the discomfiture of her interrogators by a 'weak' woman."[6]

A few excerpts from Askew's own account will give a good idea of the kinds of questions that she faced in her examinations and how she either answered or evaded them. One of the greatest differences between Roman Catholics and the English reformers beginning with Wycliffe was their attitude toward the sacraments and those who administered them. To greatly oversimplify, Catholics and, later, conservative Anglicans believed in the intrinsic efficacy of sacraments such as the Eucharist and auricular confession when administered by the duly ordained ministers of the Church. Reformers, by contrast, emphasized the sacrifice of Christ as the unique act of salvation, in which all men participated by hearing the word of God as proclaimed in the holy scriptures and preached by those whose lives and deaths embodied the spirit of God. Askew was asked repeatedly, for example, whether she believed that "the sacrament hanginge over the aultar was the very body of Christ," and was accused of having said that God "was not in temples made with hands." In response, she cited the seventh and seventeenth chapters of the Acts of the Apostles: "Wherupon he asked me, how I tooke those sentences? I aunswered that I would not throwe perles among swine, for accornes were good inough" (165-166). When accused of having said that she would "rather to reade five lines in the bible, than to hear five masses in the temple," she confessed that she had said no less, "because the one did greatly edify me, and the other nothing at all" (166). Two questions aimed directly at the efficacy of the sacraments when administered by priests who were themselves unholy men:

> He laid it unto my charge, that I should say[,] if an il priest ministred, it was the devil and not God. My aunswere was, that I never spake such thinge. But this was my sainge: That what soever he were which ministred unto me, his ill condicions could not hurt my faith but in spirite I received never the lesse, the body and bloude of Christ. He asked me, what I saide concerning confession? I aunwered him my meaning, which was as sainte James saieth, that every man ought to knowledge his fautes to other, and the one to praye for the other.[7]

And when Bishop Bonner's chancellor rebuked her

> for uttring the scripturs[,] for S. Paul (he said) forbode women to speak or to talke of the worde of God, I answered him that I knew Paules meaning as well as he, whiche is... that a woman ought not to speake in the congregation by the way of teaching. And then I asked him, how many women had he sene, go into the pulpit and preach? He

> saide he never saw none. Then I sayde, he ought to finde no faute in poore women, except they had offended the lawe.[8]

Although Askew portrays herself as quick-witted, knowledgeable, and courageous in these encounters, she was always aware that she was in great danger in these proceedings, and she took measures to protect herself, sometimes refusing to be drawn out on doctrinal matters, and repeating the formula, "I beleve as the scriptur doth teach me." When asked why she had so few words, she answered, "God hath geven me the gift of knowledge, but not of utterance. And Salomon sayeth that a woman of few wordes is a gift of God. Pro. xix."[9] She also tried to take care not to be questioned except in the presence of witnesses who could corroborate her account of the examination, and not to be taken in by expressions of benign intention on the part of her examiners. When Bishop Bonner promised her "that neither he nor any man for him, should take me at advantag of any word I should speake[,] and therfore he bad me say my minde without feare[,] I answered him, that I had nought to say. For my conscience (I thanked God) was burdned with nothing."[10]

In the end, nothing would save Askew's life, and she was stretched upon the rack in the tower of London and burned as she hung from a chain between two poles at Smithfield. Her ultimate triumph came in the account she wrote of her examinations, one that she managed to get to her friends and which was published within months of her death. In it she depicts herself as a plain, honest, weak vessel of the Lord who is given the strength to witness to his word in the face of devious, resourceful, and vicious adversaries. In the pages of John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, she prefigured other women who suffered for their faith, a group that included both Lady Jane Grey and the Princess Elizabeth.

As we look at Shakespeare's use of the examination scene in *Measure for Measure,* I would like to leave to one side the questions about Shakespeare's own religious beliefs and/or affiliations, partly because I think they are unknowable in the current state of information we have about the man, and partly because I think the play texts, as they have been handed down, display very little in the way of consistent doctrinal or moral teachings. What they do offer is a remarkable panoply of characters working their way through a series of plot permutations against an extremely complex background of political, religious, and historical culture, and reaching a conclusion that satisfies the demands of dramatic form.

Isabella's first interview with Angelo is not, strictly speaking, an examination in the sense we have defined it. First of all, Isabella is not the accused; instead she has come to plead for the life of her brother, not defend her own life and beliefs. But the scene invokes the conventions and its whole tenor calls up a set of associations that we have noted as typical of the examination. There is the imbalance of power between the two principals: Angelo, the deputy of Duke Vincentio, has been granted authority to interpret the laws and exercise the power of life and death over the citizens of Vienna; Isabella, the sister of the accused, is a novice in an order of nuns, about to retire from the world, so reluctant to press her brother's case that she needs to be prodded by the "fantastic" Lucio and cheered by the sober and reliable Provost. She admits that she "would not plead, but that I must," and "must not plead, that that I am/ At war 'twixt will and will not" (2.2.31-33), and when Angelo rejects her first timid argument that he might condemn the fault but not the man, she backs off and is ready to leave (2.2.42).

Some critics have found fault with Isabella for her coldness and her anemic dedication to saving her brother's life,[11] but as a woman and an appellant, she follows the conventions of the accused, uneager and unwilling to test her weak power against the force of the law. After Lucio has emboldened Isabella to make another attempt, Angelo employs the conventional argument of his own powerlessness to change the sentence or the law: "He's sentenced; 'tis too late," and again, "It is the law, not I, condemn your brother./ Were he my kinsman, brother, or my son,/ It should be thus with him; he must die tomorrow" (81-82). As the interview continues, Isabella gains in eloquence, paraphrasing scripture, pleading for mercy, reaching a poetic pitch in these lines:

> But man, proud man,
> Dressed in a little brief authority,
> Most ignorant of what he's most assur'd
> (His glassy essence), like an angry ape,
> Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
> As makes the angels weep. (117-22)

But when she touches him with the question of whether he is a worthy minister of justice, urging him to "ask your heart what it doth know/ That's like my brother's fault," he is suddenly moved, but not in the way she hopes for. His aside, "She speaks, and 'tis/ Such sense, that my sense breeds with it" (141-42), marks the beginning of his infatuation with her, and causes him to dismiss her and tell her to return the next day. Seeing him moved, she boldly engages in dangerous word play by offering to bribe him,

and when challenged, revealing her innocent meaning: the bribes will be "true prayers/...From fasting maids whose minds are dedicate/ To nothing temporal" (152, 154-55). It was a cardinal tenet of the Protestant reformers that religious authority came not from ordination by the ecclesiastical authorities but from the witness a minister bore to the holy word of God and the way he expressed that word in his own manner of living the gospel. Angelo fails this test, and Isabel rightly rejects his authority over her.

From this point on, Angelo recognizes that he has been corrupted, and that his only reason for compelling Isabella's return is to attempt to seduce her. He loses his sense of himself as an impartial judge, and, like Anne Askew's examiners, begins to create snares to trap her. Isabella's first true examination, which has been prepared for by this interview, begins during their second meeting, when Angelo begins to question her about interpretations of the law and doctrine about sin. "Then shall I pose you quickly," he says, and the choice of word seems significant. In addition to its general sense of "set a question," *pose* can convey the legal sense of "depose," and in the lexicon of the Protestant reformers, the examination process was often referred to as "apposing and answering."[12]

Instead of revealing his true intentions immediately, Angelo asks Isabel how she would choose between two options: to accept her brother's death for violating a just law, or to win his reprieve by her giving up her body to the same "sweet uncleanness" as her brother's lover. She temporizes by offering an equivocating answer: "I had rather give my body than my soul" (2.4.55-56). Angelo swiftly rejects this response and tries an even more hypothetical question: given that he has lawfully condemned her brother to death, he asks, "Might there not be charity in sin/ To save this brother's life?" Isabella, either deliberately or in her innocence, misunderstands the question and immediately urges Angelo, "Please you to do't" (2.4.63-64), that is, to save Claudio's life, presumably by reversing his death sentence. She assures him it would be "no sin at all, but charity," and when further pressed offers to pray, if there is any sin in his granting her suit, that it be added to her faults, not his (2.4.66, 71-73). Angelo finally puts the question to her in a way so blatant that she can no longer hide behind real or feigned ignorance. She is forced to make her much admired and much decried answer: "Better it were a brother died at once/ Than that a sister, by redeeming him/ Should die forever" (2.4.106-108).

Like martyrs, Isabella refuses to capitulate to authority in the face of threats. Modern critics may suggest that she is straining at

a gnat—strict sexual chastity should not weigh heavily in the balance opposite a brother's life. But when we place her words and actions in the context of the protestant martyrs that had so recently suffered in England for their faith, her fidelity to an ideal comes into focus. She is asked by the authority of the state to renounce her belief in the sanctity of her own body, and she declares her willingness to suffer to retain that control. In a much misunderstood passage, she says that she would suffer any physical torture, up to and including death, to save her brother from death:

> ... were I under the terms of death,
> Th'impression of keen whips I'ld wear as rubies,
> And strip myself to death, as to a bed
> That longing have been sick for, ere I'ld yield
> My body up to shame. (2.4.100-104)

Critics often pick up the wearing of rubies, and the image of her stripping herself, as signals that Isabella is suffering from a kind of repressed sexuality, but though the syntax is a bit strained in lines 102-103, I think she expresses the recognition that a believer must have a longing for—and even a kind of pride in accepting—torture and a deathbed (even as the sick might long to lie down in death), rather than compromise her faith.[13] She is certain that her brother would do the same: "... had he twenty heads to tender down/ On twenty bloody blocks, he'ld yield them up,/ Before his sister should her body stoop/ To such abhorr'd pollution" (2.4.180-83). Later, when she explains Angelo's proposition to Claudio, she makes her own acceptance of martyrdom fully explicit: "O were it but my life,/ I'd throw it down for your deliverance/ As frankly as a pin" (3.1.103-105).

There is more to discuss in Isabella's examination scene, especially the dialogue about female weakness, Isabel's desperate expression of hope that Angelo may be merely testing her virtue, and her quickly squashed attempt to threaten him with public exposure. But before I conclude, I want to suggest that Shakespeare builds to yet another examination scene, the climactic trial scene that resolves the plot in Act 5, in which Isabella, Mariana, and finally the Duke himself, in his disguise as Friar Lodowick, are each, in turn, subject to examination.

Because *Measure for Measure* includes strong elements of an intrigue plot, there are many loose ends to be tied up in the final act. Virtually all of Act 4 consists of the activities of the disguised Duke setting up the "bed trick," whereby Mariana is substituted for Isabella in the assignation with Angelo, and the "head trick," in

which the pirate Ragozine's head is sent to Angelo in place of Claudio's. It concludes with preparations for the Duke's return in his own person. He orders Angelo to meet him outside the gates to the city, so they can proceed in together, but he also requires him to publish an order that all persons who have complaints about his stewardship should exhibit their petitions in the street. He then directs Isabella and Mariana to be ready at the gate to confront Angelo.

Following the Friar's instructions, Isabella accuses Angelo of his crimes, concluding with these words: "And I did yield to him; but the next morn betimes,/ His purpose surfeiting, he sends a warrant/ For my brother's head" (5.1.101-103). As Angelo had predicted, the Duke refuses to believe her and has her led away. Mariana is then presented and contradicts one part of Isabella's testimony. She claims that at the time Isabella claims to have been with her husband, "I'll depose I had him in mine arms/ With all th'effect of love" (5.1.198-99). Angelo denies all, and displays a righteous anger, asking the Duke for "the scope of justice" (5.1.234) so that he can discover who has set these women on to make false accusations. The Duke agrees, requires Friar Lodowick to be summoned, and leaves Angelo and Escalus to complete the examination.

When the friar arrives, accompanied by Isabella, Escalus accuses him of suborning the two women to accuse Angelo, of calling Angelo a villain, and of taxing the Duke himself with injustice. He orders him taken away to be tortured on the rack. The dramatic irony is obviously intense here, and Shakespeare tightens it a notch when the supposed friar declares, "The Duke/ Dare no more stretch this finger of mine than he/ Dare rack his own: his subject am I not..." (313-15). Angelo then invites Lucio to give evidence, and he accuses the friar of uttering the very slanders against the Duke that Lucio himself has propagated. The dramatic tension is about to break, and when the provost and Lucio attempt to subdue the friar and carry him off to prison, Lucio pulls off the friar's hood "and discovers the Duke." Now all the twists and turns of the plot can be eventually laid bare and justice can be dispensed, whether it is to the liking of the critics or not. At least the Duke ensures that, in proper comedic fashion, no one is sentenced to death and everyone gets a more or less appropriate husband or wife.

Notes

1. The idea for this paper germinated in a Summer Seminar for College Teachers on John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities and held at The Ohio State University in 2001. The seminar directors were John N. King and James Bracken.

2. All line references to Shakespeare's play are from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. G. Blakemore Evans et al. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974). Line numbers will be referenced in the text of the essay.

3. Ritchie D. Kendall, *The Drama of Dissent: The Radical Poetics of Noncomformity, 1380-1590* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 9.

4. Kendall, 56.

5. Elaine V. Beilin, ed. *The Examinations of Anne Askew* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), xxxiii.

6. Beilin, xxx.

7. Beilin, 166.

8. Beilin, 167.

9. Beilin, 171.

10. Beilin, 171.

11. R.W. Chambers makes reference to some of the critiques of Isabella's character and motives in his essay on *Measure for Measure* reprinted in the Signet Classic edition of the play, edited by S. Nagarajan (New York: New American Library, 1964), 199ff.

12. Kendall, 71.

13. Beilin, 187-188. Anne Askew, after she had fainted from being tortured on the rack, makes reference to lying in bed: "Then was I brought to an house, and laid in a bed with as weary and painfull bones, as ever had pacient Job I thanke my Lord God therof. Then my Lord Chancellor sent me word if I would leave my opinion, I shuld want nothing. If I would not, I shuld forth to Newgate, and so be burned[.] I sent him again word, that I would rather die, than to breake my faith."