A Context-Based Investigation of the 'Jewel' Crux in *The Comedy of Errors*

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Abstract   This paper addresses a frustrating crux found in a passage of the *textus receptus* (the 1623 First Folio, the only substantive text for *Errors*). Editors have tried to make sense of the conundrum of this passage by applying emendations. Attention to the rhetorical strategies employed by the Author and to the surrounding context of discourse can throw some light on the intended meaning: equivocation is one of the most effective rhetorical devices available for comedy and rhetorical figures pertaining to the field of *aequivocatio* are at the grass-roots of this drama. Punning offers a solution to the hermeneutical puzzle of the passage by helping to unravel the crux: it participates in a compositional strategy that encompasses the entire play. Quibbling and double *entendre*, far from being superficial expedients to elicit humour, here must be understood as constituting a fundamental productive means to develop the play's rationale and to flesh-out the personality of its characters.

Keywords   Shakespeare. Errors. Crux. Punning.

1

The unyielding crux that has baffled generations of editors and critics occurs in act two of this play, in the course of Adriana's *doléances* over the presumed philandering of her husband. The difficulties of interpretation extend to a wider section of the text than the one that is normally considered to be corrupt (382-91 instead of 385-89), therefore my intent is to provide a broader explanation in what ensues. In the First Folio we read these lines as reported below (for convenience of reference in what follows I will number consecutively each line in the margin according to Henning's *New Variorum Edition of "The Comedy of Errors"*):

382   Sister, you know he promis'd me a chain,
383   Would that alone, a love he would detain,
384   So he would keepe faire quarter with his bed:
385   I see the Iewel best enameled
386   Will loose his beauty: yet the gold bides still
387   That others touch, and often touching will,

388   Where gold and no man that hath a name,
389   By falsehood and corruption doth it shame:
390   Since that my beautie cannot please his eie,
391   Ile weep (what's left away) and weeping die.

In the Second Folio (1632) the couplet of lines 388-9 was dropped by the compositor and it was also left out in subsequent editions down to the XVIII century. Lewis Theobald was the fist 'scholarly' editor to address the problem of emendation in 1733 and ever since scores of critics have tackled the editorial problem of making sense of this passage.

The principle emendations have focused on the words *where*, *yet*, *and* and *by* and on the punctuation of the paragraph. Theobald changed *where* to *wear*, *a love* to *alone* and modified some connectives and generally the punctuation, as follows:

382   Sister, you know**,** he promis'd me a Chain,
383   Would that alone, **alone** he would detain,
384   So he would keep faire quarter with his bed**.**
385   I see the jewel, best enameled**,**
386   Will lose his beauty; **and** the gold bides still
387   That others touch, **yet** often touching will
388   **Wear** gold: and **so** no Man**,** that hath a Name,
389   **But** Falsehood**,** and Corruption**,** doth it shame.
       [Emphasis added]

The change of *where* to *wear* has been followed by most editors (though scarcely finding this emendation satisfactory).[1] However most subsequent editors have preferred to disregard the emendation in line 383, maintaining *a love* as object of the verb *detain*.

1.1

It must be taken into account that the conversation between Adriana and her sister is all in resonant rhyming couplets rather than in blank verse – as instead is the case when the person addressed is the servant,

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[1] See Charles Whitworth 2002, 16: "Despite the enormous progress made in the eighteenth century in the study of the Shakespeare text, by brilliant and inspired editors from Pope and Theobald to Johnson, Capell, Steevens and Malone their texts were usually based on, and departed from, those of their predecessors. Thus their successive editions of the *Comedy of Errors* moved ever further from the earliest surviving text, that of the 1623 Folio, which while it may have been printed from Shakespeare's own thirty-year-old manuscript, was itself, as we have seen, processed by several anonymous typesetters each of whom brought to his work his own habits and quirks".

Dromio – and, of course, rhyming puts an additional constraint on the inventiveness of the playwright, limiting his choice of words. It is likely for this reason that the idea of 'keeping in custody' (or 'cherishing') both love and marital fidelity gets expressed by two partly synonymous verbs, 'keep' and 'detain': the latter chosen to rhyme with 'chain', which ends the previous line. It is important to recognise the equation between the taking care of one's love-relationship and the taking care of one's marital vows in these lines, 383-4. The simile that follows elaborates on this idea, establishing a rhetorical comparison that looks at constancy in love from two opposite view-points: that of deep affection and that of superficial caring.

1.2

Therefore, here I give the following conjectural reading that differs from that of extant interpretations.[2] Adriana is hysterically anxious about her husband's (mis)behaviour when out of her sight, as she suspects him of philandering. Her sister – presented as a sceptical spinster, one of many 'unfeeling fools' it seems – instead of reassuring her about her husband's loyalty, tries to persuade her to leave him alone and overlook any presumed escapades, thus putting up with his hypothetical double standard. Adriana's reaction to this advice is to protest that she cannot be unaffected by his extramarital dalliances because her love for him is true, like solid gold. If it were superficial like a gold-plate on a cheap ornament, it might wear off, being so misused (i.e. threatened by other women's interfering in his affections). No matter how much he may deceive her and misbehave, she will notwithstanding continue to love him, though she feels she is losing all her allure for him. And, therefore, she is ready to die of a broken heart, as she does mournfully declare.

Three key words in the First Folio passage above and their position should be noted (love, enameled, name):

383   Would that alone a **love** he would detain
384   So he would keep fair quarter with his bed.
385   I see the Iewell best **enameled**
386   Will lose his beauty. Yet the gold bides still
387   That others touch, and often touching will,
388   Where gold || and no man that hath a **name**,
389   By falsehood and corruption doth it shame.
        [Emphasis and caesura added]

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2   It is to be noted that the exchange between Adriana and Luciana first has to be construed in relation to its psychological context and then analysed in its structure.

Starting with line 388, one observes that there is a syllable missing (an up-beat, since otherwise the rhythm falters):

/ whĕre góld / x / ánd nŏ mán thăt háth ă náme /

This gap has repeatedly provoked editorial corrective interventions, as seen.[3] Various expressions need clarification:[4]

- *would… detain* = he would keep in custody/care for/cherish their bond of love;
- *keep fair quarter… bed* = be true to his marital obligations;
- *enameled* = plated, gilded, embellished (possibly pronounced / Inέ:məlɪd /);
- [*a*]*bides* = remains unscathed, intact;
- *his* = its;
- *will… [a]bide* = remain unscathed, intact;
- *touching* = mishandling, perverting, seducing (bawdy innuendo);
- *where gold* = provided it be gold;
- *man that hath a name* = distinguished by his name (was pronounced / nέ:m /; see Kökeritz 1953, 165);
- *shame* = blight, deface, efface.

The phonemic sequence present in the word *name* is encapsulated in the preceding verb *enameled* (a portmanteau word), with an instance of strong *paronomasia*. The name of a person or of a family can be construed as a kind of outward varnish, a superficial coating of personal identity, which is one of the principle concerns of the play: the essence of one's individuality and the reputation that reveals/conceals it.

The ambiguous phrase "and often touching will, where gold" may be deciphered in this way: "and, by the frequent touching, will remain unscathed, provided it be real gold", that is, "despite often being touched,

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3 Baldwin 1965, 171: "A modern reader needs only suitable punctuation between 'gold' and 'and' ([388]) to set off the two halves of the simile".

4 See D. Crystal and B. Crystal 2002, 123, for 'to detain' (keep back, withhold, retain), *Richard II*, I, 1, 90, Bolingbroke to King Richard, of money given to Mowbray: "The which he hath detained for lewd emploiments". And for 'enamelled' (brightly coloured, multi-coloured, kaleidoscopic), *Two Noble Kinsmen*, III, 1, 7, [Arcite alone of Emilia]: "sweeter than…Th'enamelled knacks o' th'mead or garden"; *Comedy of Errors*, II, 1, 109; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, II, 1, 255; *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, II, 7, 28. See also the OED [1933] (1978): "'enamel' + to adorn magnificently; to impart an additional spendour to what is already beautiful; to embellish superficially: 1593 Thomas Nashe, *Christ's Tears* 63 'You [preachers] count it prophane to art-enamel your speech'. Th. Nashe, 1599, *Lenten Stuff* 35: 'I might enamel and hatch over this device more artificially'".

the gold (which now becomes the grammatical subject) will abide, if it is genuine". The simile at the core of the conceit expressed by Adriana hinges on the likeness between love (383) and gold (386, 388): two jewels are compared, one fake and gold plated, and the other solid gold; the latter is able to withstand wear and tear.

The interpretative difficulty of the passage does not lie in the simile itself (usually well explicated by commentators) but in the application of the images (the metaphoric vehicles) to the situation of the speaker. Editors have referred the jewel/gold image in turn: to the reputation of the husband (Theobald 1733; Wells 1972; Greenblatt 1997; Whitworth 2002; Cartwright 2016), to the speaker herself or her beauty (Foakes 1962; Wright, LaMar 1963; Bevington 1988), to women in general (Taylor 1988), to marital fidelity (Baldwin 1962).

2

It is worth noting that one finds in this passage an instance of *comparatio amplificans*,[5] a rhetorical figure of amplification, as listed by Lausberg (1949, 37). The two terms of the comparison are separated by the modifying connective 'yet'. There is a referential shift after the first disjoined foot of the quotation, in line 388, from the vehicle of the metaphor to the tenor, namely Adriana's state of mind, in correspondence with the emotional climax attained by her impassioned speech. The attention to the manner of delivery required of an actor helps to make sense of the gap left by the missing syllable in the metre of this line: it is the pause required to catch one's breath or perhaps the space to let out a sob in the midst of irrepressible tears (the weeping referred to in the end line).

A further hypothesis may be advanced concerning the typesetter's possible intervention in the arrangement of the text on the page. If in need of space to fit the words into the frame (or simply by mistake), he may have brought together two segments, two hemistichs, one line apart on the printer's manuscript. That would not have involved any addition or subtraction of elements, only an economy of space – notoriously a frequent concern in EM printing.

Paraphrase

383 If only he would cherish the **Love** that we shared
     and remain truly faithful to me.

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[5] Another instance of Shakespeare's use of this figure, by which Juliet intensifies her declaration of love, is to be found in *Romeo and Juliet*, II, 6, 32-4.

I know that any superbly gilded ornament
can become ugly. However the gold of a solid-gold jewel,
even if it gets frequently touched and (mis)handled by
⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀strangers,
will always remain unscathed,
⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀and no man whatever [*or* 'man of distinction'],
though deceitful and debauched, would be able to sully my
⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀sentiment [of **love**]
by his disgraceful behaviour.
But if my beauty is no longer capable of capturing his eyes,

391⠀⠀my tears will efface the little that still I have, and I will die [for
⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀⠀**love**] weeping.

Therefore, the love invoked in line 383 is the grammatical object and theme of the following discourse, to its very end. Adriana embodies the stereotype figure of the anxious, fretful woman in love. Appropriate acting can make her agitation mirth-provoking and moving at the same time. In addition, dramatic irony lies within the fact that the audience guess that Adriana will be unable to distinguish her husband from his twin, by using his (identical) name.

2.1

It seems unlikely that Shakespeare should have chosen the verb 'to enamel' in the place of 'to gild', or 'to plate in gold', without a purpose beyond its rhyme. The *paronomasia* upon 'name' would explain this significant choice, in view of its importance as a motif throughout. Furthermore, the ambiguous expression "no man that hath a name" may assume three referential meanings: 'no man whatever', 'no man distinguished by an important family name', 'no man identifiable by his name': the latter is the ironical case of the double pair of twins in the play.

This amphibology, however, leaves an opening for several destabilizing interpretations: the audience alone would be aware of the latter two, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive; a major theme in the play, as a matter of fact, concerns reputation associated with one's name. Shakespeare implicitly raises the question of whether we can find our bearings in a world that does not recognise us for who we are and mistakes us for somebody else. In the play the effective use of a distinguishing name, for the twins, ceases to obtain. The calculated ambiguity of the statement about name foretells to the audience the dramatic irony of the ensuing situation through a veiled proleptic clue: Adriana will use the name of her husband to unwittingly address her brother-in-law when he is brought to her house; and both sisters will be shocked at the latter's apparently

disgraceful courting of his sister-in-law, Luciana – a shameful behaviour in a married man heedful of his name and reputation.

In this passage what Adriana is referring to is her own genuine love untainted by her husband's unfaithfulness (dreaded, though actually unproven); this interpretation of the crux seems to afford the missing piece in the puzzle of Adriana's emotional state of mind. It links back to the opening lines of her complaint where she expresses all her frustration at feeling overlooked by her husband's dwindling attention (363-377) and 'roving eye' (380). And prepares us for the anguished self-denial of her conclusion.

Failure to take notice of the paronomasia on 'name', in my opinion, reduces significantly the efficacy of the passage by curtailing its resonance in the economy of the comedy. Unwittingly Adriana raises the question of the link between reputation and expected behaviour. The errant brother from Siracusa is granted not only the reputation, but also the name of his brother, thus experiencing complete estrangement. Ephesian Antipholus, in turn, finds that his name and reputation are no longer a warrant for trust and respect among his people, and ends up by being taken for a madman, in a condition of total mystification.

3

The question of what a name entails is a recurrent theme in Shakespeare's speculation about social issues and ethics; in this self-same play the word gets repeatedly punned upon. As a matter of fact it is by far the most significant among the key words in the comedy. The confusion between the twins arises equally from likeness of appearance and likeness of name, and therefore the question of identifying a person by the name – a necessity for the law, as the fellows of the Inns of Court well knew – is of primary importance. The play demonstrates the devastating effects of both mistaken identities and loss of personal identity.[6]

An instance of the investigation of the value of 'name' can be found in Egeon's recounting at vv. 54-6 and 131:

... two goodly sons;
And which was strange, the one so like the other,
As could not be distinguish'd but by names.

Reft of his brother, but retain'd his name.

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6   An in-depth discussion of identity and reputation in the play is to be found in the Introduction to *The Comedy of Errors*, edited by Kent Cartwright (2016, 14-23). See also Cartwright 2007, 332.

In the sense of reputation 'name' appears in 529-30:

> ADRIANA   Wouldst thou not spit at me and spurn at me
>   And hurl the name of husband in my face.

And again in 671-8, (an extended instance of quibbling):

> S. DROMIO   The porter for this time, sir, and my name is Dromio
> E. DROMIO   O villain! Thou hast stolen both mine office and my name.
>   The one ne'er got me credit, the other mickle blame.
>   If thou hadst been Dromio to-day in my place,
>   Thou wouldst have changed thy face for a name or thy name for an ass.

There is also the joking on a name, that of Nell, the kitchen maid, "an ell and three quarters... from hip to hip". Furthermore, in the acceptation of 'by the authority of': "*Officer*, I do, and charge you in the duke's name to obey me".

We may also recall a passage where Shakespeare famously meditates on the significance of a name through the words of *Juliet* in the so called 'balcony scene'; this topic may have become a popular set-piece, an actual *topos*, by the time he had Cassius reflect on the weight of Brutus's name next to that of Julius Caesar, in the eponymous tragedy.

It appears, then, that the cryptic punning on the key-word 'name' in the crux (centred on the portmanteau word 'enameled') is not simply an isolated case of *paronomasia*, but rather part of a wide-ranging strategy underlying the thematic conception of the entire play: its concern with the question of mistaken identity, the primary comic error, involved.

4

The noun in the title of the play, *Errors*, patently constitutes the other basic key-word of the drama: in choosing this title for his adaptation of the source material Shakespeare must have speculated at length on the semantic pregnancy of the term (which finds no equivalent in Plautus' play-title). The fundamental initial 'error' that drives the action of the play and provides that undercurrent of pathos – which is a foil to the prevailing comical ethos – is the unlawful entrance of Egeon into Ephesian territories (those of Epidamnus in Plautus' model text). The opening scene, by revealing that the duke of Ephesus is moved to compassion by the pitiful account of this traveller's plight, poses the fundamental ethical-juridical

question of the choice between Mercy and what the Law prescribes.**7** The exchange between Egeon and the Duke is staged as a veritable case in Court, with all the trappings of forensic rhetoric, in which the offender pleads his case (though half-heartedly) and the judge (equally half- heartedly) passes sentence (Skinner 2014, 204-5):

DUKE   Hapless Egeon, whom the fates have marked
To bear the extremity of dire mishap:
Now, trust me, were it not against our laws,
Against my crown, my oath, my dignity,
Which princes, would they, may not disannul
My soul should sue as advocate for thee. (143-8)

The accused had declared having broken the law by accident, not intentionally – i.e. committed an innocent mistake. The judge nevertheless has to abide by the letter of the law even if it is made clear that the error stems from ignorance, not malice:

EGEON   Yet, that the world may witness that my end
Was wrought by nature, not by vile offence,
I'll utter what my sorrow gives me leave. (37-9)

4.1

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1978, 3: 277) the entry for 'error' gives the following set of meanings, mostly current in Early Modern England:

1. The action of roaming or wandering; hence a devious or winding course – poetic use (this is attested in Samuel Daniel, *Complaint of Rosemond*, 1594).

2. The condition of erring in opinion; the holding of mistaken notions or beliefs. Cf. Book of Common Prayer, 1548/9: "We are brought out of darkness and error"; Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*, 1596, (3.2.77-9): "In Religion, what damned error but some sober brow Will bless it".

3. Something incorrectly done through ignorance or inadvertence; a mistake, e.g. in calculation, judgement, speech, writing, action, etc.

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7   This was going to be the guiding theme of the later comedy of *The Merchant of Venice*, endowed with still stronger overtones of tragedy.

Cf. Shakespeare, *A midsummer Night's Dream*, 1590 (5.1.250): "This is the greatest error of all the rest".

4. A mistake in the making of a thing, a miscarriage, mishap; a flaw, malformation. Cf. Lydgate, 1413; Dryden, 1657: "He looked like Nature's errour, as the mind And body were not of a piece design'd".

5. A mistake in matter of law appearing on the proceedings of a court of record, as also reflected in the locution 'writ of error' – a writ brought to procure the reversal of a judgement on the ground of error: *Act II Henry VII*, 1495, 'The seid utlagaries... were reversed by meane of errour'; *Termes de la Ley 142*, 1641, '*Errour is a fault in a judgement, or in process, or proceeding to judgement, or in the execution upon the same in Court of Record'*.

6. In mathematics, the difference between an approximate result and the true determination.

7. A departure from moral rectitude; a transgression, wrong-doing. [In modern use conveying the notion either of something not wholly voluntary, and so excusable, or something imprudent as well as blameable. Cf. Coverdale, *Wisd. 1.12*, 1535: "O seke not youre owne death in the erroure of youre life"; Bible, *Hebr. 9.7*, 1611: "Blood which He offered for Himself and for the errors of the people".

Indications of the extensive consideration Shakespeare was to give to the term 'error' can also be found in some of his sonnets, produced over a lifetime and eventually published in Quarto in 1609, by Thomas Thorpe.

The scope of contextual meanings assumed is considerable:[8]

a. in the sense of transgressions, faults and flaws (see above, items 4,7). E.g. sonnet 96, vv. 5-8:

> As on the finger of a throned queen
> The basest jewel will be well esteem'd
> So are those errors that in thee are seen
> To truths translated and for true things deem'd.

Interestingly, here high reputation is capable of concealing error; and so in sonnet 141, vv. 1-4:

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8 Excerpts from *Sonnets* quoted from Helen Vendler (1997).

> In faith I do not love thee with mine eyes,
> For they in thee a thousand errors note;
> But 'tis my heart that loves what they despise,
> Who, in despite of view, is pleased to dote.

b. in the sense of innocent mistakes out of self-deception (item 3). E.g. sonnet 119, vv. 5-6:

> What wretched errors hath my heart committed
> While it hath thought itself so blessed never!

c. in the sense of mistaken opinion and/or belief (item 2). E.g. sonnet 116, vv. 13-4.

> If this be error and upon me prov'd
> I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.

Widely diverging interpretations can be given to this crucial word, suggestively capable of either indicting or justifying, as the case may be.

4.2

Interconnectedness is pervasive across the text. The disparate strains that run through this play intersect in the widely encompassing concept of error, as seen. This element functions as a catalyst for the provisional merging of heterogeneous perspectives, and several polysemic key words cluster around the term 'error': its range of meanings allows for a mingling of viewpoints.[9] All the main issues highlighted in the comedy are thus brought evocatively together: the question of mis-identification, mystification and loss of one's bearings, delusion of the senses and hallucination, loss of reason, misjudgement of people and their behaviour, suspicion of trickery and fraud, groundless jealousy, disregard for laws and for decorum. The play in its strains addresses some very serious ethical concerns familiar to the legal profession largely present in Shakespeare's audience.

On the whole, the message that is jovially put across is one of attention to the pursuit of truth (the major issue of the Age), as Francis Bacon was to recommend in a chapter of his *Essays* ("On Truth"): "no pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of Truth: (a hill not

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9   Etymologically this term derives from the Latin *errare*, which means to wander and can be taken both in a literal sense and in a figurative one

to be commanded, and where the Ayre is always cleare and serene); And to see the Errours, and Wandrings, and Mists, and Tempests, in the vale below" (Bacon 1625).

4.3

Other polysemic words that have also to do with a legal register of language, and are involved in punning are 'cause' (as in 32-4, an *antanaclasis*) and 'bond' (which together with its cognates, 'bound' and 'bondman', occurs no less than 15 times). Together with the key words 'name' and 'error' seen above, they all partake of the same semantic dynamic, generally involving concerns of the Law Courts, and so raise questions of demystification and dilemma-solving.

Needless to recall that the type of analysis applied to certain words and cognate expressions stems from the rhetorical training received in those days at Grammar school. The 'dialectical reading' taught there was a widespread method of interpreting texts; it led both readers and writers to address and exploit ambivalence in written communication.[10]

5

Ambivalence is sewn into the very fabric of this comedy. It is present in the evocative key words of the text, with their destabilizing polysemy, it is found in the wide-ranging equivocation, amphibologies, and misunderstandings; it is found in the duplication of the twins, and in the contamination of ethos, partly pertaining to Roman comedy, partly pertaining to Romance. And, above all, it is present in the cognitive scenarios that overlap: the one, empiric, based on fortuitous incidents and factual happenings; the other, imaginative, based on mental projections, supposed perceptual delusions and suspicions of magic.

But what counts most for the spectator is the ambivalence of the play's intent: on the one hand, *Errors* is meant to be a jocular entertainment that wishes to delight with its farcical action and slap-stick fun, but on the other, the comedy conveys a serious, at times poignant and destabilizing, ethical message: it problematizes issues such as intra-marital relationships of duty and respect, women's role in society, loss of identity and misplace-

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10   Dialectical reading is an off-shoot of *copia*, or 'the amplitude of discourse' recommended by Erasmus. *Copia* can be obtained not only by addition and variation on a theme, but also, as Erasmus shows, by the application of place logic – in an analytic sense – which encourages readers and writers to consider matters or concepts from multiple perspectives, investigating and expanding their ambivalence; for dialectical reading see Mack 2002, 73-5.

ment, familial love between couples and their children, the place of mercy in the framework of the law, the need for reconciliation, the (miss)identification of madness, the dubious practice of quack medicine and, finally and foremost, the hazards of putting trust in appearances.

The exploitation of ambivalence, through oblique allusions and disputable statements, in this early comedy, foreshadows a conceptual method that is to be found in the entire work of the Dramatist, which Germaine Greer synthesises as follows: "[Shakespeare] developed a theatre of dialectical conflict, in which idea is pitted against idea and from their friction a deeper understanding of the issues emerges" (Greer 1986, 23).

5.1

The passage of the crux we have examined acquires a core significance if seen against the ambivalent background of the comedy's governing motifs. It obliquely winks at the audience – possibly those more knowledgeable about the law – to elicit reflection and consideration. It hints at a prominent issue addressed by this destabilizing comedy: those errors in judgement affected by assumptions based on renown and on the attributes of identity. The passage also cautions against exploiting an untarnished repute to cover up marital unfaithfulness. Here Adriana, carried away by her jealousy, has drawn precipitous, faulty conclusions about the lack of punctuality of her unruly husband, an error that could lead to pernicious consequences. Her unbridled suspicions are potentially infectious and apt to spawn slander and damage reputation. If any admonition to the audience was intended, through this incident, that was against the mistake of hasty judgement – whether in Court or elsewhere – based on hearsay and unverified erroneous impression.

Once you accept such a reading of the passage – based on the First Folio version – no emendations or any other editorial intervention are required, save for the distancing on the page of the two independent segments of line 388, the real stumbling block at the origin of the crux.

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