

THE ARDEN SHAKESPEAR

MUCH ADO
ABOUT NOTHING

Edited by A. R. Humphreys



THE ARDEN EDITION OF THE
WORKS OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

MUCH ADO ABOUT
NOTHING

METHUEN
LONDON AND NEW YORK

The general editors of the Arden Shakespeare have been
W. J. Craig (1899-1906), R. H. Case (1904-1944) and
Una Ellis-Fermor (1946-1958)

Present general editors: Harold F. Brooks, Harold Jenkins and
Brian Morris

This edition of *Much Ado About Nothing*, by A. R. Humphreys,
first published in 1981 by
Methuen & Co. Ltd
11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4P 4EE

Published in the USA by
Methuen & Co.
in association with Methuen, Inc.
733 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Editorial matter © 1981 Methuen & Co. Ltd

Typeset by Western Printing Services Ltd, Bristol
Printed in Great Britain by
Western Printing Services Ltd, Bristol (hardbound)
and Richard Clay (The Chaucer Press) Ltd
Bungay, Suffolk (paperback)
Cased edition bound by
Hunter & Foulis Ltd

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced
or utilized in any form or by any electronic, mechanical or other means,
now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording,
or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission
in writing from the publishers.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Shakespeare, William
Much ado about nothing.—(Arden Shakespeare).

I. Title II. Humphreys, Arthur Raleigh
III. Series

822.3'3 PR2828.A2H/

ISBN 0-416-17990-8

ISBN 0-416-19430-3 Pbk

PREFACE

It is with a sense of honour and nostalgic affection that, though my introduction and text are not derived from hers, in much of this edition's illustrative material I follow Grace Trenergy, the play's original Arden editor, in whom I, a very junior tutor in Liverpool University's Department of English Literature just before the war, found a warmhearted and encouraging friend. Working on the play I have been much reminded of her, as of other Liverpool colleagues and friends distinguished in Elizabethan and seventeenth-century fields—Leonard Martin, Archibald McIlwraith, and Arnold Davenport—now, alas, no more.

Grace Trenergy's edition was richly annotated. To find room also for new material I have left out much that she included, yet the commentary still exceeds what normal annotation would require. A good many items I have kept, even if not strictly necessary, as good reading in themselves, and as reflecting Miss Trenergy's enthusiasm for Elizabethan matters, to which her colleague Professor R. H. Case amply contributed.

I have often saved space by excising the commentator to whom a note was attributed; in any case, to ascertain the actual originator is often impossible. The lack of such attribution does not mean that I claim the credit myself; my debts to earlier editions, particularly—after the original Arden—to Furness's *New Variorum*, are very great. Wherever attribution would help further enquiry I have tried to give it.

Most of the work was done on a tenure of a Fellowship at the Huntington Library, San Marino, California, my wife valuably assisting. To Dr James Thorpe and his staff she and I are indebted beyond measure for unforgettable benefits at an institution which offered us resources, amenities, and the friendliness of scholarly society beyond all that might be hoped for.

The General Editors, Professors Harold Brooks, Harold Jenkins and Brian Morris, have been extraordinarily prompt, thorough and generous with bibliographical and many other kinds of guidance; to their very detailed advice I owe more than I can possibly say. My long absences from Britain while this edition was being prepared threw unusual burdens of checking

on to them and the publisher's editorial staff. For help willingly rendered I should like, too, to thank the Shakespeare Centre and Shakespeare Institute, Stratford-upon-Avon, Professor Tony Fitton-Brown of the University of Leicester, and Dr Pamela Mason, whose MA thesis of the University of Birmingham, '*Much Ado*' at Stratford, 1949-1976, furnished valuable information on which I have drawn in the section on stage history. My cordial thanks are due to two friends and colleagues at the University of Leicester, both enviably expert in the field of drama, Dr Lois Potter and Mr Roger Warren, for helpful and comprehensive criticism and illumination; from their much-appreciated promptings this edition has greatly benefited, and Mr Warren has been unstinting in his help with the proof-checking when I was far from my sources. The work, finally, has been harmoniously and felicitously furthered by my wife's investigatory diligence and the stimulus of discussion with her. For the faults that remain, the responsibility is mine.

University of the Bosphorus, 1981

A. R. HUMPHREYS

ABBREVIATIONS AND REFERENCES

The titles of Shakespeare's works are abbreviated as in C. T. Onions, *A Shakespeare Glossary*. Line-numberings and texts from other Shakespeare plays are normally from Peter Alexander's edition of the *Complete Works*. Q means the 1600 Quarto edition of the play, F the First Folio of 1623 (F1 when it needs distinguishing from F2, F3 or F4, the Folios of 1632, 1663, and 1685 respectively). S.D. means stage-direction. In the collations numerals are added after the names of editors only when an edition later than the first is intended; unnumbered references are to the first edition. Except where otherwise indicated the place of publication is London.

I. EDITIONS OF THE PLAY

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| Alexander | <i>William Shakespeare, The Complete Works</i> , ed. Peter Alexander, London and Glasgow, 1951. |
| Bennett | <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> , ed. Josephine Waters Bennett, in <i>The Complete Works</i> , gen. ed. A. Harbage, revised Complete Pelican Shakespeare, Baltimore, Maryland, 1969. |
| Boas | <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> , ed. F. S. Boas, Clarendon Select Plays of Shakespeare, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1916. |
| Brooke | <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> , ed. C. F. Tucker Brooke, in <i>The Works of William Shakespeare</i> , Yale edn, New Haven and London, 1917. |
| Camb. | <i>The Works of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. W. G. Clark and W. A. Wright, vol. II, Cambridge, England, 1863. |
| Capell | <i>Mr William Shakespeare His Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies</i> , ed. Edward Capell, vol. II, 1767. |
| Collier, 1, 2, 3 | <i>The Works of Shakespeare</i> , ed. J. P. Collier, 1st edn, vol. II, 1842; 2nd edn, vol. II, 1858; 3rd edn, vol. I, 1876. |
| Deighton | <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> , ed. K. Deighton, 1888. |
| Dyce | <i>The Works of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. A. Dyce, vol. II, 1857. |
| Evans | <i>The Riverside Shakespeare</i> , textual ed. G. Blakemore Evans, Boston, Mass., 1974. |
| Foakes | <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> , ed. R. A. Foakes, New Penguin edn, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1968. |
| Furness | <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> , ed. H. H. Furness, New Variorum edn, Philadelphia and London, 1899. |
| Globe | <i>The Works of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. W. G. Clark and W. A. Wright, Globe edn, 1864. |
| Halliwel | <i>The Works of William Shakespeare</i> , ed. J. O. Halliwel [-Phillipps], vol. IV, 1855. |

- Hanmer *The Works of Shakespear*, ed. Sir Thomas Hanmer, vol. 1, 1743.
- Hudson (Harvard) *The Harvard Shakespeare*, ed. H. N. Hudson, Boston, Mass., vol. iv, 1881.
- Johnson *The Plays of William Shakespear*, ed. Samuel Johnson, vol. iii, 1765.
- Kittredge *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. G. L. Kittredge, Boston, Mass., 1936.
- Knight *The Works of William Shakspeare*, ed. Charles Knight, Pictorial edn, vol. ii [1839].
- Malone *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare*, ed. Edmond Malone, vol. ii, 1790.
- NCS *Much Adu About Nothing*, ed. Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch and J. Dover Wilson, New Cambridge Shakespeare, Cambridge, England, 1923.
- Pope, 1, 2 *The Works of Shakespear*, ed. Alexander Pope, 1st edn, vol. 1, 1725; 2nd edn, vol. ii, 1728.
- Riverside *The Riverside Shakespeare*, textual ed. G. Blakemore Evans, Boston, Mass., 1974.
- Rowe, 1, 3 *The Works of Mr William Shakespear*, ed. Nicholas Rowe, 1st edn, vol. 1, 1709; 3rd edn, vol. 1, 1714.
- Staunton *The Plays of Shakespear*, ed. Howard Staunton, vol. 1, 1858.
- Steevens '93 *The Plays of William Shakspeare*, with notes by Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, ed. Isaac Reed, vol. iv, 1793.
- Theobald, 1, 2 *The Works of Shakespeare*, ed. Lewis Theobald, 1st edn, vol. 1, 1733; 2nd edn, vol. ii, 1740.
- Var. '78 *The Plays of William Shakespeare*, with notes by Samuel Johnson and George Steevens, vol. ii, 1778.
- Warburton *The Works of Shakespear*, ed. William Warburton, vol. ii, 1747.
- Warwick *Much Adu About Nothing*, ed. J. C. Smith, Warwick edn, 1902.
- White, 2 *Mr William Shakespeare's Comedies, Histories, Tragedies, and Poems*, ed. R. G. White, 2nd edn, vol. 1, Boston, Mass., 1883.
- Wright *Much Adu About Nothing*, ed. W. A. Wright, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1905.
- Yale *The Works of William Shakespeare: Much Adu About Nothing*, ed. C. F. Tucker Brooke, Yale edn, New Haven and London, 1917.

2. OTHER WORKS

- Abbott E. A. Abbott, *A Shakespearian Grammar*, 3rd edn, 1870.
- Bang's *Materialen* W. Bang (gen. ed.), *Materialen zur Kunde des älteren Englischen Dramas*, 44 vols, Louvain, 1902-14.
- Barton Anne Barton, Introduction to *Much Adu About Nothing*, in *The Riverside Shakespeare*, textual ed. G. Blakemore Evans, Boston, Mass., 1974.
- Brae A. E. Brae, *Collier, Coleridge, and Shakespeare*, 1860.

- Bullough Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, vol. II, 1958.
- Capell (*Notes*) Edward Capell, *Notes and Various Readings to Shakespeare*, vol. II, 1780.
- Cotgrave Randall Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues*, 1611.
- Craik T. W. Craik, 'Much Ado About Nothing', in *Scrutiny*, ed. F. R. Leavis, vol. XIX, Cambridge, England, 1952-3.
- Davies (Grosart) Sir John Davies, *Works*, ed. A. B. Grosart, 3 vols, Blackburn, 1869-76.
- Douce (*Illustrations*) F. Douce, *Illustrations of Shakespeare*, 1807.
- Hazlitt William Hazlitt, 'Much Ado About Nothing', in *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, 1817.
- Hazlitt's *Dodsley* *A Select Collection of Old English Plays, originally published by Robert Dodsley*, revised by W. Carew Hazlitt, 15 vols, 1874-6.
- Heath Benjamin Heath, *A Revisal of Shakespeare's Text*, 1765.
- Holinshed Raphael Holinshed, *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*, 6 vols, ed. Henry Ellis, 1807-8.
- Hudson (*Life*) H. N. Hudson, *Shakespeare, his Life, Art, and Characters*, 2 vols, Boston, Mass., 1894.
- Jonson (H. & S.) Ben Jonson, *Works*, ed. C. H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson, 11 vols, Oxford, 1925-52.
- Kinnear Benjamin Gott Kinnear, *Cruces Shakespearianae*, 1883.
- Linthicum M. C. Linthicum, *Costume in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*, Oxford, 1936.
- Lloyd W. W. Lloyd, *Critical Essays*, 1856.
- Mackenzie A. M. Mackenzie, *The Women in Shakespeare's Plays*, 1929.
- Madden D. H. Madden, *The Diary of Master William Silence*, 1897.
- Mason Pamela Mason, 'Much Ado' at Stratford-upon-Avon, 1949-76, M.A. thesis, University of Birmingham, England, 1976.
- Nashe (McKerrow) Thomas Nashe, *Works*, ed. R. B. McKerrow, 5 vols, 1904-10.
- Noble Richmond Noble, *Shakespeare's Biblical Knowledge*, 1935.
- Onions C. T. Onions, *A Shakespeare Glossary*, 2nd edn, revised, Oxford, 1919.
- Rossiter A. P. Rossiter, *Angel with Horns*, 1961.
- Seymour E. H. Seymour, *Remarks, Critical, Conjectural, and Explanatory*, 1805.
- Spedding James Spedding, 'On the Division of the Acts in . . . *Much Ado About Nothing*', in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, June 1850, and *New Shakspeare Society's Transactions*, 1877-9.
- Spurgeon Caroline Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery, and What It Tells Us*, Cambridge, England, 1935.
- Theobald 1726 Lewis Theobald, *Shakespeare Restored*, 1726.
- Thirlby Styan Thirlby, contributions in Theobald's edns.
- Tilley M. P. Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1950.
- Vickers Brian Vickers, *The Artistry of Shakespeare's Prose*, 1968.

Walker

W. S. Walker, *A Critical Examination of the Text of Shakespeare*, 3 vols, 1860.

3. PERIODICALS, DICTIONARIES, SERIES

EETS	Early English Text Society.
ELH	<i>ELH, a Journal of English Literary History</i> , Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland.
NSS	New Shakspeare Society.
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> , Oxford, 1884-1928.
PMLA	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association of America</i> , Menasha, Wisconsin.
RES (N.S.)	<i>Review of English Studies</i> (New Series).
SAB	<i>The Shakespeare Association Bulletin</i> , New York.
ShQ	<i>The Shakespeare Quarterly</i> , New York.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	ix
ABBREVIATIONS AND REFERENCES	xi
INTRODUCTION	I
1. Publication	I
2. The play's date	2
3. The title	4
4. Sources	5
(i) Claudio and Hero	5
General survey	5
Ariosto: <i>Orlando Furioso</i> , Canto v (1516)	6
Bandello: <i>La Prima Parte de le Novelle, Novella</i> 22 (1554)	8
The interlinking	13
Belleforest: <i>Le Troisiesme Tome des Histoires</i> <i>Tragiques Extraictes des oeuvres Italiennes de</i> <i>Bandel, Histoire xviii</i> (1569)	13
(ii) Beatrice and Benedick	14
<u>The scorner of love</u>	15
Patterns of courtesy and wit	16
Lyly	19
Shakespearean precedents	19
(iii) Dogberry	21
(iv) Old play?	24
5. Style	25
(i) Precedents	25
(ii) Shakespeare's evolution in comedy	26
(iii) The play's style	26
6. Stage history	33

7.	The world of Messina	50
	(i) The prevalent spirit	50
	(ii) The impact of Don John	51
	(iii) Don Pedro's error	53
	(iv) The problem of Claudio	54
	(v) The redemptive process	57
	(vi) The tomb scene	57
	(vii) The final phase	58
8.	Form and structure	59
9.	Critical résumé	68
10.	The text	75
	(i) The Quarto	75
	(ii) The Folio	80
	(iii) Editorial procedures	84
	<i>MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING</i>	85

APPENDICES

I	Source analogues	219
	(i) Peter Beverley: <i>Ariodanto and Ieneura</i>	219
	(ii) George Whetstone: <i>The Rocke of Regard</i>	220
	(iii) Edmund Spenser: <i>The Faerie Queene</i>	220
II	The evolution of wit style	222
III	<i>The Law Against Lovers</i>	229
IV	The proxy wooing	230
V	Old tales	232
VI	The songs	236

INTRODUCTION

This edition follows the Quarto text of 1600 (on which see pp. 75–80), with minor modifications from the First Folio of 1623 and later editions.

I. PUBLICATION

Publication of the Quarto followed soon after two entries in the *Registers of the Stationers' Company*. The first runs as follows:

4. Augusti

As you like yt/a booke
HENRY the FFIFT/a booke
Euery man in his humour/a booke
The Commedie of much A doo about nothing/a booke } to be staid¹

No year is given but the immediately preceding entries relate to plays registered in 1600 by the Lord Chamberlain's Men, the leading actors' company and Shakespeare's own. Why these four were 'to be staid' is not known: this may have been the company's attempt to forestall piratical publication of its property.² The same year, however, *Henry V* was piratically and faultily published by Thomas Millington and John Busby, and the players may have tried specifically to safeguard their rights. They kept *As You Like It* unpublished until the 1623 Folio, and the remaining pair they sold to authorized booksellers. *Every Man In His Humour*, registered for publication on 14 August 1600, was soon published in a good text by Walter Burre. Shortly after the quoted entry the *Register* carried the following notice:

23 Augusti

Andrewe Wyse Entred for their copies vnder the handes of
William Aspley the wardens Two bookes. the one called

1. *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers*, ed. E. A. Arber (1876), Lib. C, occasional notes preceding the Register, vol. III, p. 37.

2. A. W. Pollard, *Shakespeare's Fight with the Pirates* (1920), p. 49.

Muche a Doo about nothings. Thother the
second parte of the history of kinge HENRY the
iiiith with the humours of Sir IOHN
FFALLSTAFF: Wrytten by master
Shakespeare. xij^d¹

Since Puritan opponents of the drama had prompted the Privy Council on 22 June 1600 to limit the number of London's theatres to two, and the number of weekly performances to two at each,² the players might well need to supplement their income by selling play texts. Whatever the reason, that year Valentine Sims printed for Wise and Aspley the first and only Quarto of *Much Ado About Nothing*. The title-page read:

Much adoe about / Nothing. / *As it hath been sundrie times
publikely* / acted by the right honourable, the Lord /
Chamberlaine his seruants. / *Written by William Shakespeare.* /
[Ornament] / LONDON / Printed by V[alentine]. S[immes]. for
Andrew Wise, and / William Aspley. / 1600.

It seems strange that until 1623 no reprintings were called for of these plays with such features as, on the one hand, 'the humours of Sir Iohn Ffallstaff' and, on the other, the wits of Beatrice and Benedick, but Elizabethan publication abounds in odd features. Eighteen of Shakespeare's plays remained unprinted until the 1623 Folio, including *Much Ado's* companion comedies *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, and some of the finest tragedies, among them *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar*, *Coriolanus*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*. Of *Othello* there is one Quarto only, as late as 1622. So *Much Ado* is far from unique.

2. THE PLAY'S DATE

The play is not named in *Palladis Tamia*, the survey of notable works compiled by Francis Meres and entered in the *Stationers' Register* on 7 September 1598. Meres was in London in 1597 and 1598, seemingly mixing with literary men: his list is up to date enough to include Everard Guilpin's *Skialethia*, registered eight days after his own work. *Palladis Tamia* offers 'A comparatiue discourse of our English Poets with the Greek, Latine, and Italian Poets', and it rates Shakespeare 'the most excellent in both kinds for the stage' (i.e. comedy and tragedy). Of the comedies, it names

1. E. A. Arber, op. cit., vol. III, p. 170.

2. *Acts of the Privy Council, A.D. 1599-1600*, New Series, xxx, 1905, pp. 395-8.

'his *Gentlemen of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Loue labors lost*, his *Loue labours wonne*, his *Midsummers night dreame*, & his *Merchant of Venice*'.

That '*Loue labours wonne*' was in fact the present play has been maintained¹ but is untenable: in August 1603 a London bookseller, Christopher Hunt, listed among his stock '*marchant of vennis, taming of a shrew, loves labor lost, loves labor won*',² and this rules out the idea that this last-named play was either *The Taming of the Shrew* or *Much Ado About Nothing*: any stock which Hunt had of the latter could only have been of the 1600 Quarto, the title-page of which bears its accepted name and no other. Meres, it must be concluded, did not mention *Much Ado*. The omission might be accidental, but it creates a strong supposition that the play was not known when he compiled his list, and so suggests the middle or latter part of 1598 as the earliest likely date of composition. A terminal date is fixed by the fact that Will Kemp the comic actor, whose name (variously rendered) appears in Dogberry's speech-headings in the 1600 Quarto (see the collation notes for iv. ii), left the Lord Chamberlain's Men early in 1599.

Stylistic evidence, though more subjective, supports such a date. The controlled energy of style, the integrity of thought and expression, and the masterly interrelating of diverse materials ally it with Shakespeare's full and confident maturity around 1598-9. As the original Arden edition noted, 'all the different

1. Originally by A. E. Brae, *Collier, Coleridge, and Shakespeare* (1860): he argued that the '*sundrie times publikely acted*' of Q's title-page might mean performances over some years, that Benedick and Beatrice look like 'COMPANION PICTURES' (Brae's capitals) to Berowne and Rosaline of *Love's Labour's Lost* (the '*finished portrait*' after the '*first sketch*'), that *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Much Ado* are contrasted in handling (the one 'obscure and euphuistic' in prevalent rhyme, the other 'plain and colloquial' in prevalent prose), and that 'Love's Labour' refers not to lovers' labour but labour of 'the deity Love . . . overcoming the apparently insuperable difficulties opposed to him' (pp. 138-9)—love's labour being *Lost* in the earlier play because Death finally frustrates Cupid, and *Won* in the later because Don Pedro succeeds in 'one of Hercules' labours', 'an achievement of great and supernatural difficulty, to be undertaken only by Gods and heroes'. These are mere surmises, not strengthened by alleged parallel phrases which prove equally insubstantial. Robert F. Fleissner, in '*Love's Labour's Won* and the occasion of *Much Ado*' (*Shakespeare Survey* 27, 1974), largely accepts the arguments of Brae and of A. H. Tolman (in *The Original Version of 'Love's Labour's Lost' with a Conjecture as to 'Love's Labour's Won'*, 1918), for identifying the two plays and argues for a double title (*Love's Labour's Won; or, Much Ado About Nothing*) involving not only a pun on '*Nothing*' (see p. 4, below) but one also on '*Won*' (One) and '*Nothing*'. But the case is surely negated by the fact that had Hunt had *Much Ado* in stock that is what he would have called it.

2. See T. W. Baldwin, *Shakespeare's 'Love's Labor's Won'* (1957), p. 31.

elements of style and language, as of emotional interest, are reconciled . . . so harmonious[ly] as to render almost untenable the hypothesis of two different periods of craftsmanship' (as had been argued in the New Cambridge edition, 1923). *A Midsummer Night's Dream* seems likely to belong to 1595-6 (with, probably, a first performance on 19 February 1596; see the New Arden edition, p. lvi); *The Merchant of Venice* to 1596, the *Henry IV* pair and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* to 1596-7, *As You Like It* to early 1599, and *Julius Caesar* and *Henry V* to later that year. The latter part of 1598 offers a likely space for *Much Ado*, and to that period both factual and stylistic evidence rather decidedly points.

3. THE TITLE

Much Ado About Nothing sounds a title apt for some ephemeral diversion but hardly for a play whose comic and tragicomic power makes so momentous an impact. The reason for it may be Shakespeare's frequent nonchalance about his comedies' names.¹ But there may in fact be more to the matter. As Richard Grant White observed in his edition of 1858, in Elizabethan speech 'nothing' and 'noting' sounded much the same;² the play's plot, White argued, depends on 'noting'—watching, observing. Overhearings are central to it, along with the consequent (and often erroneous) reportings or concludings, and certainly the main comic 'ado'—the gullings of Benedick and Beatrice—and the main serious one—the accusation of Hero—though resulting from 'noting' rest upon 'nothing'.

That 'nothing', colloquially spoken, was close to or identical with 'noting' is the basis of Shakespearean puns, especially in a context of musical 'noting'.³ A similar pun, though non-musical, is conceivable here. Even this reinforcement of significance hardly produces a masterpiece of nomenclature; still, it fits the thematic awareness of dramatic crises prompted by rumours, misapprehensions, suspicions forming themselves into certitudes, molehills taken for mountains. Not that a sole 'noting/nothing' is the whole reason why Benedick and Beatrice are gulled so readily;

1. Titles with a take-it-or-leave-it air like *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*; or, *What You Will* suggest a dramatist 'very sure of his public' (J. Dover Wilson, *Shakespeare's Happy Comedies*, 1962, p. 121).

2. Presumably *noht'n*. 'Nothing' can still colloquially sound like *nul'n*.

3. Equivalence of sound is evident in this play at II.iii.57—'Note notes, forsooth, and *nothing*'—and in *Wint.* IV.iv.603—'my sir's song, and admiring the *nothing* of it'. Similarly 'moth' and 'mote' in *MND*; see New Arden edn, *Dramatis Personae* n. 8, p. [3].

the attraction they refuse to admit is already powerfully there, is very clearly 'something'. But the ploys which dislodge it from its hiding place are ingenious fictions ('nothings'); so, even there, the 'ado' of the result springs from 'noting', however contrived the fabrication. The play's title is, in fact, teasingly full of meaning.

4. SOURCES

(i) *Claudio and Hero*

General survey

Stories of the lover deceived by a rival or enemy into believing his beloved false are widespread and of great antiquity. An analogue of the Claudio-Hero plot has been traced back to a fifth-century Greek romance by Chariton, *Chaereas and Kallirrhoe*. Seventeen Renaissance versions, narrative or dramatic, are recorded before Shakespeare's, in Spanish, Italian, French, German, and English. They include the fifteenth-century Spanish *Tirant lo Blanch* (*Tirant the White*) by Juan Martorell, which probably lies behind Ariosto's version in the fifth canto of *Orlando Furioso* (1516).¹ Ariosto's lovers are named Ariodante and Genevra. His story, first translated into English and much elaborated in Peter Beverley's poem, *The Historie of Ariodante and Ieneura* (c. 1566) (see Appendix I.i),² was further translated by Sir John Harington as *Orlando Furioso in English Heroical Verse* (1591). From Ariosto, Spenser derived his own very different version, which ends in disaster instead of the lovers' reunion; it tells how Squire Phedon, deceived by his supposed friend Philemon into thinking his adored Claribell disloyal, falls into the intemperance of killing her (*The Faerie Queene*, 1590, II. 4. xvi-xxxviii; see Appendix I.iii.)

Meanwhile Matteo Bandello, the Italian ecclesiastic, diplomat, and man of letters, treated the subject in his own way in the twenty-second story of *La Prima Parte de le Novelle* (1554), naming his lovers Sir Timbreo and Fenicia. A French translation, morally and rhetorically elaborated, appeared as the eighteenth tale of the third volume of François de Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques* (1569).

Versions in English other than those mentioned comprise, possibly, a 'matter of Panecia' (i.e. Fenicia?) play performed by

1. G. Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, vol. II (1958), p. 62.

2. C. T. Prouty discusses and reprints this work, from the sole surviving copy in the Huntington Library, in *The Sources of 'Much Ado About Nothing'* (1950).

the Earl of Leicester's Men at Court on New Year's Day 1575 but no longer extant,¹ and, more evidently, an *Ariodante and Genevra* (also not extant), done likewise at Court, on 12 February 1583, by Merchant Taylors' schoolboys under their humanist headmaster Richard Mulcaster.² Other analogues or sources comprise George Whetstone's story of Rinaldo and Giletta, incorporating elements of Ariosto and Bandello in *The Rocke of Regard* (1576: see Appendix 1.ii), and two plays, one—*Victoria*—in Latin (c. 1580–3) by Abraham Fraunce, the other—*Fedele and Fortunio, The Two Italian Gentlemen*—in English (1585) by one M. A. (Anthony Munday?).³ Both are versions of a highly reputed comedy, *Il Fedele*, by Luigi Pasaquaglio (1579). In this, the would-be seducer Fedele, unable to win his desired Vittoria (who, though married, is enamoured of his rival, Fortunio), traduces her to her husband Cornelio and arranges that Cornelio shall see a servant (in love with her maid, like Borachio with Margaret in *Much Ado*) enter the house and court a supposed Vittoria. Cornelio, gulled, plans to poison his wife, but by a trick she mollifies Fedele and escapes her fate. With many variations as to its intrigues the story was widely popular, varying in tone from farce or Plautine comedy to tragedy.

Ariosto: 'Orlando Furioso', Canto V (1516)

Ariosto, translated by Harington in 1591, tells how the brave Renaldo, 'Of noble chivalrie the verie flowre' (v. 82), arrives in Scotland and learns that the Scottish princess Genevra must die accused of unchastity unless a champion comes forward to defend her. Resolving to do so he makes for the court at St Andrews and on the way saves a woman from murderous assailants. She is Genevra's maid Dalinda and she tells him that the princess is innocent.

Dalinda has been in love with Polynesso, Duke of Albany, and he has often met her secretly in Genevra's room, ascending by a rope ladder; Polynesso, nevertheless, has aspired to marry Genevra herself. But she loved the noble Ariodante, and was equally loved. Polynesso's desire for Genevra turning to hatred, he plotted to destroy the lovers' hopes. Though posing as

1. A. Feuillerat, *Documents Relating to the Office of the Revels in Time of Queen Elizabeth*, in Bang's *Materialen*, xxi. 238. 'Panecia' may be an error for 'Fenicia', the guiltless heroine of Bandello's version.

2. *Ibid.*, xxi. 350.

3. Bullough, II. 66, 68.