

The first theatre at the Blackfriars monastery opened in 1577, and the Chapel Children performed there until 1584, when disputes over the lease brought about its demise. In 1596 Richard Burbage, always in search of an indoor venue to expand his operations, bought most of upper frater (refectory) block, and all the Duchy chamber building, for £600.¹³ After having spent nearly as much on renovations, Burbage found that influential citizens of the area, who may have tolerated the boy companies with their one or two performances per week, did not want a commercial adult company in their neighbourhood. Desperate to get some return for his investment in order to finance construction of the Globe, Burbage leased out the premises on 2 September 1600 to Henry Evans, a scrivener and entrepreneur. Evans then engaged Nathaniel Giles, Master of the Chapel at Windsor, to assemble a new company of boy players, and, by the end of the year, the Children of the Chapel, or the 'little eyases', as Hamlet calls them, were back in business.¹⁴

Exactly why Henslowe and the Admiral's Men would have sold *All Fools* to the Blackfriars is impossible to determine. They certainly needed the money; in December of 1599 Henslowe signed a lease for the Shoreditch property where he would build the Fortune. This would require an enormous amount of capital, especially since his lease on the land where the Rose stood had another six years to run.¹⁵

The title page of the 1605 quarto reads '*All Fools*, A Comedy, Presented at the Black Friars, and lately before His Majesty'. The Court performance took place on 1 January 1605, the Revels accounts noting that the 'Boys of the Chapel' presented 'on newers night a play called *All Fools*'. The first Blackfriars performance cannot be dated with any certainty. All London theatres were closed in March 1603, when the Queen died, and did not reopen until April 1604,¹⁶ eliminating one year, but we have no other external evidence except for an interesting entry in the *Diary* of law student John Manningham, who lived at the Middle Temple during the first few years of the seventeenth century.

The surviving manuscript of Manningham's *Diary* covers only sixteen months, from January 1602 to April 1603, but it is a rich source of information about life in Elizabethan London, especially at the Inns of Court. He describes the sermons he heard each Sunday (usually one in the morning followed by another in the afternoon), along with gossip and poems. There is a fascinating account of Queen Elizabeth's last days, and, in a passage well known to students of Shakespeare, an entry in February of 1602 records his attendance at the Middle Temple's Candlemas Feast, where he saw 'a play called "Twelve night, or what you will"'.¹⁷

Manningham also enjoyed writing down the witticisms he heard, sometimes mentioning the source, but often not doing so; in November of 1602, he noted the aphorism, 'Women, because they cannot have their wills when they die, they will have their will while they live',¹⁸ a close paraphrase of Curio's question to Cornelio: 'Why, then, sir, should you husbands cross your wives' wills thus, considering the law allows them no wills at all at their deaths, because it intended they should have their wills while they lived?' (3.1.222–5).

Throughout his *Diary*, Manningham shows enthusiasm for legal quibbles and proverbs about women. This one about women and wills is similar in both length and wit to 'one fee is too good for a bad lawyer, and two fees too little for a good one', and one he heard from his cousin's wife:

To furnish a ship requireth much trouble
But to furnish a woman the charges are double.¹⁹

Blackfriars was a short distance from the Inns of Court, and performances by the Chapel Children were very popular with the lawyers, law students, and other residents.²⁰ There is no way to tell for certain if Manningham heard the expression himself at a performance, from a friend who passed it on, or by some other, unrelated means, but the note in his *Diary* does at least suggest that *All Fools* was presented at Blackfriars, some time between late 1600, when the theatre opened, and November, 1602.

Previous editors have speculated how much of *All Fools* Chapman may have revised for the Blackfriars. The Prologue and Epilogue, directed to the fashionable wits who liked to sit on the Blackfriars stage, are definitely new, but the text of the play itself has no reference to events outside the theatre that were not current in 1599. In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, the safest assumption is that, Prologue and Epilogue excepted, the quarto text represents *All Fools* as it was performed at the Rose in 1599.

TERENCE GOES TO LONDON: THE SOURCES OF *ALL FOOLS*

There's nothing said today that has not been said before. (Terence, Prologue to *The Eunuch*)

In an address to the 'noble minds, flower of Spain' of the Academy of Madrid, the great playwright Lope de Vega spoke of his wish to create a new, contemporary style of comedy, unconstrained by classical precepts. He said, 'when I have to write a comedy ... I eject Plautus and Terence from my study, to prevent them from howling at me'.²¹ Lope gave his lecture in about 1608; were there a British Academy at that time, one could easily imagine the Spaniard's contemporaries, Shakespeare, Jonson,

and Chapman, saying precisely the same thing. They had, by then, created a type of comedy as uniquely English as Lope's is uniquely Spanish, yet they too owed a huge debt to Plautus and Terence, as did every comic dramatist of their era.

Many plays have been proposed as Shakespeare's first: even if *The Comedy of Errors* cannot claim that distinction, it is beyond doubt one of the earliest. As everyone knows, Plautus's *The Two Menaechmuses* provides the plot, except for the brilliant sequence of Antipholus of Ephesus being locked out of his own house, which comes from *Amphitryon*.²² In 1597, Jonson did his version of Plautus with what is thought to be his very first play, *The Case Is Altered*. Like *The Comedy of Errors*, its plot combines two of Plautus's works, *The Captives* and *The Pot of Gold*, but the setting is updated to contemporary Milan.

Jonson's play seems to have been well received. In *Lenten Stuff* (1599), Thomas Nashe mentions 'the merry cobbler's cut, in the witty play of *The Case Is Altered*',²³ and in 1601, the poet and clergyman Charles Fitzgeoffrey published a book of Latin epigrams and epitaphs, including a clever poem addressed to Jonson. As we read in A. B. Grosart's translation, Fitzgeoffrey accuses him 'of stealing and of wicked thieving' from 'Plautus, most merry of the choir of poets', but then acquits him, saying it was actually Mercury who stole Jonson's play and gave it to Plautus, who then read it to the gods on Olympus,

drawing smiles from Jupiter's grim visage,
Each pole of heaven thundering with applauses.²⁴

Jonson was working with the Earl of Pembroke's Men in 1597, and so *The Case Is Altered* was probably performed at the Swan.²⁵ At approximately the same time, Chapman's *An Humorous Day's Mirth*, the first-ever comedy of humours, was doing great business nearby at the Rose, prompting Jonson to try his hand at this new style of comedy for his next play, *Every Man In His Humour*, presented by the Lord Chamberlain's Men in 1598. Whether or not Chapman was somehow inspired to do some imitating in return is impossible to say, but it is oddly coincidental that the following year Chapman tried his hand at adapting Roman comedy, turning two of Terence's plays, *The Self-Tormenter* and *The Brothers*, into *All Fools*.

In basing *All Fools* on Roman comedy, Chapman was only following the example set by Plautus and Terence, who took most of their plots and characters from Menander, Apollodorus, and other masters of the New Comedy that flourished in Greece during the fourth century BC. Terence does not merely admit this, he virtually boasts of it. Although we think of him as a supremely Roman dramatist, his plays were known

as *fabulae palliate* ('Greek cloak plays'), since they retained their Greek setting and Greek dress. In each of his prologues, Terence names the plays he has used, saying, in a sense, that the best playwright is not the most original one but the one most skilled at using Menander. The prologue to *The Eunuch* is a particularly interesting example, since Terence is responding to his rival Lucius's charge of plagiarism—not from Menander, which was expected, but from another Roman comedy. The speaker expresses contempt for those who turn 'good Greek plays into bad Latin ones' (9), and assures the audience that his author worked directly from Menander's *The Toady*, with no knowledge of some other Latin version. He then asks how one can write a comedy at all 'if he's not allowed to use the same characters as someone else has used' (33–4), naming running slaves, good wives, bad prostitutes, and boastful soldiers.²⁶ To this far from complete list we might add the miserly father, nagging wife, lovesick youth, kindly nurse, baby lost at birth whose real identity is discovered at just the right time, and a host of other 'stock characters' who made their way from New Comedy to Roman comedy, and from there to the Elizabethan stage, either directly, or via Italian Renaissance comedy.

Chapman and the other Elizabethan dramatists also drew ideas about how a comedy is to be structured from Terence. Giambattista Giraldi, always known by his pen name of Cinthio, is familiar to many as author of the principal source of *Othello*. In his critical study *On the Composition of Comedies and Tragedies* (1543), Cinthio praises Terence's invention of the double plot,

which make his plays succeed wonderfully. I call that plot double which has in its action diverse kinds of persons in the same station of life, as two lovers of different character, two old men of varied nature, two servants of opposite morals, and other such things.²⁷

Dryden makes a similar observation in the Preface to his version of *Troilus and Cressida* (1679):

Terence made an innovation in the Roman [comedy]: all his plays have double actions; for it was his custom to translate two Greek comedies, and to weave them into one of his, yet so that both their actions were comical, and one was principal, the other but secondary or subservient. And this has obtained on the English stage, to give us the pleasure of variety.²⁸

The boy actor in Jonson's *Magnetic Lady* who says 'I learned Terence i'the third form at Westminster' (Ind.33–4) speaks for his author, who did indeed attend Westminster, and his experience was not unique. Chapman would have begun his study of Terence when he was about nine years old.

School, be it Jonson's Westminster, Shakespeare's New King's School, or the Hertfordshire grammar school Chapman attended, was for learning Latin—not just any Latin, but an elegant Latin that was, as William Tydeman notes, 'felt to be the basis of a good education and the passport to a successful and effective life thereafter'. For this purpose, Terence was *sine qua non*, largely due to the influence of Erasmus, who knew all the plays by heart, and believed that 'of all authors, Terence is the best, as well as the most enjoyable, for learning clear and correct Latin style'.²⁹

In *On the Method of Study (De rationi studii)*, the brief treatise wherein he lays out his educational principles, Erasmus asks, 'among Latin writers who is more valuable as a standard of language than Terence? He is pure, concise, and close to everyday speech, and then, by the very nature of the subject-matter, is also congenial to the young'. This congeniality could have been largely due to Terence's racy language and uninhibited attitude toward sex. Augustine of Hippo, who studied Terence at his north African school in the fourth century, quotes Chaerea's triumphant account of his sexual conquest from *The Eunuch* verbatim, but then asks, 'could we not have learned those useful words elsewhere?'. Some early modern educators demanded that Terence be expurgated or banned from the classroom entirely; fortunately, most schoolmasters agreed with Erasmus, who once wrote to a friend, advising him to ignore 'these fools, these goats, who grasp only at wickedness'.³⁰

Erasmus develops his ideas on the value of studying Terence in *Foundations of Abundant Style (Copia)*, the textbook used for teaching rhetoric throughout England. *Foundations* is full of phrases from and about Terence for young scholars to copy; they also learned something about creating a character. The chapter on *evidentia* (enrichment, vividness) advises that, in describing people, one should strive to imitate Plautus and Terence. These playwrights did not simply produce types, such as 'an old man, a slave, the head of a house, or a pimp ... the comic poets aimed at variety in characters belonging to the same general type'. Terence comes in for special praise, with his two sets of dissimilar siblings in *The Brothers*; Erasmus also notes that 'Plautus's courtesans are very different from Terence's, who for the most part depicts good courtesans'.³¹

The boys did more than read and memorise Terence; they also translated him, and got valuable theatre training by performing Terence and Plautus for their school plays.³² Given all this, we might expect Elizabethan dramatists to have borrowed Terence's plots frequently, but *All Fools* is the sole surviving example, perhaps owing to Terence having written only six plays before his death at the age of just thirty-five, a circumstance that the Puritan pamphleteer William Prynne credits to divine retribution for choosing the theatre as a career.³³ Even so, unless they are among the

many lost plays of the age, surprisingly, no one adapted *The Mother-in-Law*, *The Girl from Andros*, or *The Eunuch*, and the world had to wait for Molière to turn *Phormio* into his glorious *Scapin*.

The main plot of *All Fools* comes from *The Self-Tormenter*, which is itself based on a lost Menander play of the same title. The Prologue announces, ‘today I am going to perform a fresh comedy taken from a fresh Greek play’ (3–4). Menedemus, the ‘self-tormenter’, is an Athenian nobleman, recently moved to the country. His torment arises from the way he had spoken to his son, Clinia, about the affair Clinia was having with Antiphila, a young girl of unknown parentage. As he tells his neighbour Chremes,

I got all worked up, the way fathers usually do ... ‘What! Do you hope to be allowed to carry on behaving like this while I’m alive—me, your father!—giving your girlfriend very nearly the status of a wife? ... When I was your age, I didn’t devote myself to love affairs, but I went off to Asia because I was so poor, and there I found both wealth and glory by fighting in wars’. (99–112)

Unfortunately, Clinia, rather than displease his father, followed his father’s example and went to Asia with the king’s army. Menedemus, filled with remorse, bought a farm and now spends his days at hard labour.

Chremes is well-meaning but an incorrigible busybody. His famous line, *mihī sic est usus, tibi ut opus facto est face*, ‘I’m a man, I don’t regard any man’s affairs as not concerning me’ (80), crops up constantly in Renaissance texts as synonymous with Donne’s ‘no man is an island’, but, in context, Chremes is simply describing his complete inability to mind his own business. He is especially free with advice on child-rearing, believing that his relationship with his son, Clitipho, could hardly be improved upon, when in fact Clitipho is nothing like the person his father thinks him to be. He is in love with Bacchis, a *meretrix* (usually translated as ‘courtesan’ or ‘prostitute’), but can only enjoy her favours as long as he showers her with lavish gifts. He knows that, if he asks his father for money, he will get only a lecture in return.

It falls to Chremes’s slave, Syrus, to devise a trick so that Clinia, who has just returned from Asia, is able to resume his relationship with Antiphila, and Clitipho can get the money to finance his affair with Bacchis. Syrus’s plan is to have both women be guests at Chremes’s house; Bacchis will pretend to be Clinia’s, not Clitipho’s, *meretrix*, and enjoy her host’s sumptuous hospitality, while Antiphila will pretend to be Bacchis’s maid. This way, both young men will have free access to their women, although they must not be seen with their true partners lest the stratagem fall apart.

Sostrata, Chremes's wife, solves Clinia's problems when she notices Antiphila's ring, and realises that she is their daughter who was supposed to have been exposed at birth, but was secretly sent away. Menedemus would be happy to have his son marry her, now that she is known to be from a good family, but the discovery makes Clitipho's dilemma even worse, especially after Chremes sees him paying more attention to Bacchis than Clinia does. He scolds his son: 'That's outrageous behaviour on your part, to take a friend into your house and feel up his girlfriend' (565).

Syrus's means of sorting everything out are too complicated to recount here, but one of his strategies is particularly relevant to *All Fools*. He tells Chremes the truth—that Bacchis is actually the mistress of his, not his neighbour's, son—knowing that the old man will not believe it. When Chremes finally realises he has been duped, he furiously threatens to disinherit Clitipho, and relents only if Clitipho promises to marry. Menedemus assures Clitipho that marriage is all right 'once you've got used to it' (1058), and, after rejecting his mother's suggestion of 'that red-haired girl with grey eyes, a spotty face, and a hooked nose' (1061), Clitipho declares himself 'happy enough' with a neighbour's daughter (1065). What the unnamed girl might have to say about the idea is not mentioned, nor do we hear what happens to Bacchis; presumably she is paid off and contentedly moves on to her next client.

Chapman also draws extensively on Terence's *The Brothers*, which provides a rich source of characterisation. Like *The Self-Tormenter*, it comes from a lost Menander play with the same title, although one scene is taken from Menander's contemporary, Diphilus.³⁴ Micio, a city-dwelling bachelor, begins by telling the audience about the contrasting lives he and his brother Demea lead:

I have pursued the gentle life of leisure, and as for what some people think a blessing—a wife—I've never had one. *He* [Demea] has been the opposite in all the following respects: he's spent his life on the farm, he's always lived a frugal and hard existence. (42–4)

Micio explains that Demea has two sons, Ctesipho and Aeschinus. Unable or unwilling to look after them both, Demea gave Aeschinus to him to raise: 'I've brought him up from childhood; I've regarded him as my own, and loved him accordingly'. Micio believes that one should take a liberal and lenient approach to child-rearing: 'it's better to keep a hold on your children by inspiring respect and showing generosity than by means of fear' (54–7).

Demea is quite the opposite of his brother. He is tight-fisted with his money, and believes that children need a disciplined upbringing. The brothers' conflicting ideas of how strict or permissive a parent should be

form the central question of the play. Demea thinks that his son Ctesipho ‘devotes himself to work and stays on the farm, frugal and sober’ (95), when of course the young man spends all his time trying to work out how to find the money in order to buy a *meretrix* from the pimp Sannio. Like her counterpart in *The Self-Tormenter*, she is named Bacchis, but here is called a ‘lyre-girl’, for such young ladies were expected to perform musically as well as sexually.³⁵ Aeschinus agrees to help his brother by pretending that he is Bacchis’s suitor and breaking into the pimp’s house to carry her off. Some very amusing bargaining follows, featuring Sannio’s indignation over Aeschinus’s expectation that he is to sell Bacchis at cost price (191–9). In the meantime, she is to be installed, in high style, in Micio’s house, which bothers Micio not at all but has Demea apoplectic with rage.

In helping his brother, Aeschinus creates a major problem for himself. He is in love with Pamphila, daughter of a neighbour, the widow Sostrata. Indeed, Pamphila is about to give birth to his child, he having raped her nine months ago. In three of the four Terentian comedies taken directly from Menander, such rapes occur, and are seen as acceptable provided the young man marries the girl in the end—one of the few aspects of Terence that make him unpalatable to the modern reader.³⁶

As usual, the person to solve the problem is Micio’s slave. Like his counterpart in *The Self-Tormenter*, his name is Syrus, and his job is to trick Demea into providing the money for Ctesipho to purchase Bacchis, while making sure that Aeschinus’s marriage to Pamphila goes ahead. Naturally, Demea ends up paying for everything, but Terence adds a real twist. In a long (by the standards of Latin comedy) soliloquy, Demea regrets having worked hard all his life for the benefit of his family, while his spendthrift brother is more popular with everyone (855–81). He decides to out-Micio Micio: first by demolishing the wall between his and Micio’s garden so that they can dispense with the ceremonial passage of the bride, accompanied by musicians, from her old to her new house. He then bullies Micio into marrying the ‘decrepit old woman’ Sostrata (939); furthermore, Micio must give Sostrata’s friend Hegio a valuable plot of land. Micio even has to reward Syrus by freeing both him and his wife. As for Ctesipho and Bacchis, Demea will ‘let him keep her—but she’d better be the last!’ (997).

THE PRIMARY PLOT: TERENCE TRANSMOGRIFIED

All Fools is set in contemporary Florence, although one hardly knows it, since the city is not named until we are well into the fourth act (4.1.297), and only once thereafter (5.2.186). A few other details have a Florentine,

or at least Italian, flavour: we hear of a lawyer who ‘crowds the senate’, not the court, with his clients (2.1.344); the Notary’s bill of divorce refers to the ‘Duke’ as head of state (4.1.294), and we hear the formal legal phrase ‘courtesy of the city’ rather than ‘courtesy of England’ (5.2.310). The characters may have Italian names, but in other respects this Florence, like the Florence of *Every Man In His Humour* (quarto version), and indeed the Paris of *An Humorous Day’s Mirth*, is located in or near London, where English manners, customs, laws, and social institutions are the subject of some trenchant satire.

While the period is distinctly contemporary, Chapman makes good use of Roman comedy’s physical setting, where everything occurs outdoors, during the day. Until he takes *All Fools* to the Half Moon tavern for the final scene, Chapman, like Terence, keeps the action outside, near the houses of Gostanzo, Marc Antonio, and Cornelio, with the exception of a brief sequence at the start of Act 3. In *All Fools*, as in Terence, life is lived in public, everyone knows everyone else’s business, and sticking one’s nose in it seems almost obligatory.

Chapman also exploits Roman comedy’s social milieu, although how ‘Roman’ this milieu really is remains open to doubt. Terence is notably consistent in recreating Menander’s Athenian world, and any local colour specific to Rome is difficult to find.³⁷ Plautus employs a different technique, John Barsby noting that ‘the setting of a Plautine play is formally Greek, but the stage is peopled by characters who, though they wear Greek clothes and are careful to refer to the Romans as ‘foreigners’ (*barbari*), tend to lapse into Roman jokes or allude to Roman topography and laws and customs’. Nevertheless, Terence was often attacked by his contemporaries for not being faithful enough to his Greek originals, and, as Peter Brown writes, ‘he does not remind his audience explicitly (as Plautus sometimes does) that they are Romans watching the antics of an alien world’.³⁸

The families in *All Fools* are of the equivalent social and economic class to their counterparts in Terence. Chapman gives emphasis to this idea by having Marc Antonio and Gostanzo spoken of, and addressed, as ‘knights’, the most common translation of *equites* [equestrians]. Originally, *equites* were the elite cavalry, whose horses were paid for and maintained by the government; during the time of Plautus and Terence, they were evolving into a wealthy, land-owning aristocracy. Having little to do with the administration of government, a role reserved for members of the Senate, the *equites* concentrated mostly on accumulating wealth.³⁹ Terence, with his greater fidelity to the original Greek setting, never uses the word, but we do see it in Plautus: the prologue to *The Captives* tells us, *summo loco summoque genere captum esse equitem Aleum* (‘an Elean

knight of the highest rank and the highest family connections had been taken prisoner').⁴⁰

Gostanzo and Marc Antonio are not your typical English knights, although the means of obtaining a knighthood in England are the subject of satire in the play (cf. below, pp. 33–4). Indeed, the only time either is addressed as 'Sir' occurs when Rinaldo indulges in some mock servility:

What, Sir Gostanzo?
How fares your knighthood, sir?

(1.1.168–9)

Interestingly, *Signor*, the standard form of address for Italian gentlemen in early modern plays, is never used for the two knights; Chapman reserves it for the young courtiers, Dariotto and Cornelio, who inhabit the subplot.

Marc Antonio's and Gostanzo's different ideas about the proper way to raise a son come from Terence. Marc Antonio is even more lenient than his counterparts, Menedemus of *The Self-Tormenter* and Micio of *The Brothers*. As Gostanzo says, he is

An honest knight, but much too much indulgent
To his presuming children.

(1.1.212–13)

Informed that Fortunio has married, Marc Antonio's initial reaction is only 'I love my son' (1.1.258), and he never offers so much as a mild rebuke, either for marrying Gratiana secretly, something Fortunio did not do, or for marrying Bellanora secretly, which Fortunio did do.

Along with his 'gentle nature' (1.1.208), or perhaps because of it, Marc Antonio is easily gulled, something he admits:

I, alas,
Am no good politician. Plain believing,
Simple honesty, is my policy still.

(4.1.182–4)

The gullibility does not come from Terence, where Menedemus and Micio are often left in the dark or misinformed, but no one tries to trick them; all of the slave's machinations are directed at Gostanzo's counterparts, the nosy Chremes and the disciplinarian Demea. Similarly, all of Rinaldo's attentions lie with Gostanzo; he is the one to be gulled into blessing, and financing, his two children's marriages.

This 'old, politic, dissembling knight' Gostanzo (1.1.401), whose confidence that his son is 'a perfect pattern of sobriety' who 'dares not look a woman in the face' (1.1.221, 227) comes from Chremes of *The*

Self-Tormentor. To that we might add what Thomas Marc Parrott calls an ‘overweening self-conceit’,⁴¹ taken mostly from Demea of *The Brothers*. A self-proclaimed expert on everything from parenting to poetry to the courtly art of kissing, Gostanzo promises Rinaldo that he will keep Fortunio’s supposed marriage a secret, but immediately proceeds to tell Marc Antonio all about it, with advice on how to handle the situation. Openly scornful of his friend’s trusting nature—

You have a heart too open to embrace
All that your ear receives,

(4.I.33–4)

—Gostanzo has the self-satisfied attitude of the con-man or master salesman, who believes himself to be so good at manipulating others that he would instantly know if someone were trying to do the same to him.

Gostanzo remains clueless about Valerio’s real life because his son behaves exactly as the old man tells him he should. Hounded for a gambling debt, Valerio says he needs money because he promised to help a friend in distress. Gostanzo replies:

Promises are no fetters. With that tongue
Thy promise passed, unpromise it again.

(2.I.69–70)

Furthermore, Valerio should reject friendship, kindness, or honesty whenever it interferes with self-interest:

Tush, friendship’s but a term, boy. The fond world
Like to a doting mother glazes over
Her children’s imperfections with fine terms.
What she calls friendship and true humane kindness
Is only want of true experience.

(2.I.79–83)

It never occurs to Gostanzo that Valerio might act towards him as he has been instructed to act towards others; hence he repeatedly refuses to believe the truth no matter how forcefully it is presented. In 3.I, after he sees Valerio and Gratiana together and observes how he

kissed her,
Embraced and courted with as good a grace.
As any courtier could,

(3.I.55–7)

he cannot accept that Valerio may not be the shy husbandman he raised.

The younger generation, Fortunio, Valerio, and Rinaldo, offer no initial hint of their origins in Roman comedy. The play begins with their

debate on the nature of beauty and love, a strange but effective mixture of neo-Platonic imagery and Juvenalian diatribe. Fortunio laments that he ‘never can enjoy the sight’ of Bellanora (1.1.19), leading Rinaldo to launch into a bitter account of his one love affair, denouncing all women and vowing ‘eternal wars against their whole sex’ (1.1.65). He draws on, and sometimes directly quotes, Juvenal’s notoriously misogynistic sixth *Satire*.

Valerio responds with a neo-Platonic tribute to love’s power, singled out for praise by some critics of the early twentieth century: A. H. Bullen calls it ‘beautiful poetry’, while William Archer, who finds little to admire in the play, sees this speech as ‘a noble anticipation of Coleridge’s “All thoughts, all passions, all delights”’,⁴² It begins,

I tell thee love is nature’s second sun,
Causing a spring of virtues where he shines,

(1.1.97–8)

and goes on to honour love as the source of

All virtues born in men ...
... valour, wit, virtue, and haughty thoughts,
Brave resolution, and divine discourse.

(1.1.103, 109–10)

Those in the original audience who had read Chapman’s witty but famously obscure *Ovid’s Banquet of Sense* (1595), or his continuation of Marlowe’s *Hero and Leander* (1598), would have been familiar with their author’s devotion to the neo-Platonist philosophy of Marsilio Ficino (1433–99), and so would not have been at all surprised to hear Valerio’s discourse on love. The surprising thing is that, after little more than one hundred lines, matters of love disappear from the play, never to return. When Gostanzo enters and asks about the ‘young gentlewoman’ (1.1.181) he saw with Fortunio and Valerio, the tone of *All Fools* changes completely, and for the remainder Valerio bears no resemblance to the lovesick poet of the opening, neither is he the typical *adulescens* from Terence. In terms of plot structure, he is obviously based on Ctesipho of *The Brothers* and Clitipho of *The Self-Tormenter*, but in personality is quite different, an excellent demonstration of how Chapman transforms and transcends the Terentian model to create active, complex, and interesting characters.

Desperate for money to finance affairs with their mistresses, Terence’s two young men leave nearly everything to their slaves, and lose their nerve at the first sign that something might go wrong.⁴³ Valerio, however,

exudes total confidence that he can continue to lead a double life as a hard-working husbandman who studies

how many loads of hay
A meadow of so many acres yielded,

(1.1.128–9)

and a city gallant,

known in ordinaries and tobacco-shops,
Trusted in taverns and in vaulting-houses.

(1.1.156–7)

He eagerly goes along with Rinaldo's scheme so that he can be with Gratiana, never doubting its success. Such self-confidence is not always an asset: Valerio, as Parrott notes, is

instinct with the Elizabethan charm of youth, high spirits, and poetry. Like his father, however, he is dominated by a master passion, that of parade. He is as vain of his accomplishments and gentlemanly vices as his father is of his worldly wisdom.⁴⁴

A good example of what Parrott calls 'parade' is Valerio's extravagant account of how he avoided paying a debt and made a shambles of the senate's legal proceedings (2.1.310–35); we get the impression that he is embellishing the story to make sure others appreciate his cleverness. This desire to be centre of attention allows Cornelio and Dariotto to lead him into making himself look foolish rather easily (2.1.369–417), the first of the play's reversals, when someone who prides himself on gulling others is gulled himself.

Fortunio is rather bland when compared with his Terentian models, especially Aeschinus of *The Brothers*, who shows admirable spark and initiative in the way he abducts Bacchis on his brother's behalf, and carries off the confrontation with her pimp. Chapman does not give Fortunio much to do; he plays the penitent son very well when presenting his 'wife' Gratiana to Gostanzo (2.1.89–117), but, after a brief appearance in 3.1, he is not seen until he joins the drinking party at the Half Moon (5.2), wherein he has only a few lines. Overall, the main difference between him and Valerio is in their fathers, not their own personalities; as Marc Antonio's son, Fortunio never really risks anything. Knowing of his father's non-reaction to a fake secret wedding, Fortunio has no hesitation in carrying off a real one.

The cunning servant, ubiquitous in Italian Renaissance comedy and *Commedia dell'Arte*, rarely appears in English comedy, Musco (*Q*) / Brainworm (*F*) of *Every Man in His Humour* and Mosca of *Volpone* being

notable exceptions. As the Elizabethan embodiment of Terence's clever slave, the young gallant Rinaldo of *All Fools* is cited by Madeleine Doran as a fine example of 'the typical English intriguer [who] is more apt to be a healthful exposé of men's follies than a malicious instigator of them ... a disinterested person merely exposing gullery for the fun of it'.⁴⁵ Despite the change from slave to member of the upper classes, one important element of the slave's *modus operandi* is taken up by Rinaldo wholeheartedly. In his short book *On Friendship*, Cicero observes how easy it is to dupe a 'comic geezer' through flattery, adding, 'even onstage the most ridiculous character is that of the witless and gullible old man'.⁴⁶ Syrus, in *The Brothers*, would agree, for flattery is the most potent weapon in his arsenal. When Demea says that his son Ctesipho could not possibly get up to any mischief secretly—'Wouldn't I have got a sniff of it six months before he began to do anything?'—Syrus immediately chimes in with 'You don't need to tell me how alert you are' (396–7). Similarly, Rinaldo is quick to tell Gostanzo that Valerio's fine character is due to the 'wisdom' he learned from his 'experient father' (I.I.205–6).

For all his cleverness, however, Rinaldo, like Syrus, depends on good fortune as much as his own wits. As noted by Doran, luck plays a key role in Roman comedy:

In Plautus often, and in Terence always, solution is only possible with a recognition by tokens of one of the characters: the girl the young man wants to marry is happily discovered to be of free Athenian birth, usually the lost daughter of one of the older men in the play; she may be revealed as the hero's sister in time to prevent his union with her; or she may turn out to be the woman he himself has unwittingly wronged and her child to be his own.⁴⁷

Chapman explicitly emphasises Dame Fortune's part in the proceedings, but handles it differently from Terence, where the chance discovery, for example that Antiphila is actually Chremes's daughter, occurs relatively late in the play. In *All Fools*, Fortune's task is to set the plot in motion, not to sort everything out at the last minute. Rinaldo's original lie to Gostanzo, that Fortunio is secretly married (I.I.182–3), seems a spur of the moment idea; he can hardly believe his luck when Gostanzo, with no prompting from anyone, suggests that the newlyweds live for a time at his house. When telling the young lovers about the stratagem they are to undertake, Rinaldo promises that they

shall see to what a perfect shape
I'll bring this rude plot, which blind chance—the ape
Of counsel and advice—hath brought forth blind.

(I.2.122–4)

Rinaldo's ingenuity is put to its greatest test when Gostanzo sees Gratiana and Valerio embracing (3.1.18), and decides that she must leave his house. Improvising brilliantly, Rinaldo suggests that he and Gostanzo could have some 'princely sport' (3.1.98), Rinaldo will tell Marc Antonio that Valerio, not Fortunio, is the husband—the original story was only a practical joke—and ask that Gratiana stay with Marc Antonio in order to escape the ire of Gostanzo, who has just found out the 'truth'. At this point there is no suggestion that Gostanzo will somehow be tricked into publicly blessing Valerio's marriage, but once again luck takes over.

Gostanzo is primed to play the angry father when Valerio and Gratiana make their 'kind submission' (3.1.425), but, being Gostanzo, he enjoys his own chicanery too much, and overdoes it:

No, no, live still, my son. Thou well shalt know
I have a father's heart. Come, join your hands.
Still keep thy vows, and live together still,
Till cruel death set foot betwixt you both.

(4.1.168–71)

Later, Rinaldo realises what has happened, and tells Valerio,

Thou hast good plea against him to confess
The honoured action, and to claim his pardon.

(4.1.213–14)

To Rinaldo, the trickster's job is not one of planning and executing elaborate schemes, but waiting to see what Fortune gives him to work with, and then making the most of it. In a soliloquy at the start of Act 5, he gives her due credit:

Fortune, the great commandress of the world,
Hath divers ways to advance her followers.
To some she gives honour without deserving.
To other some, deserving without honour,
Some wit, some wealth, and some wit without wealth,
Some wealth without wit, some nor wit nor wealth.

(5.1.1–6)

Yet his weakness is similar to Valerio's—it is one thing to be brilliant, another to want everyone to know it. Rinaldo reveals this himself in the same Act 5 soliloquy, boasting, 'My fortune is to win renown by gulling' (5.1.11). Gostanzo and Cornelio are such easy targets that he assumes they could not possibly turn the tables on him, and, when Cornelio does exactly that in Act 5, both his self-esteem and his ingenuity are put to the test.

LOVE AND MARRIAGE IN TERENCE AND CHAPMAN

Maybe money does not mean so much alongside of love at that, although personally I will take a chance on the money. (Damon Runyon, 'Princess O'Hara')

So far, we have seen how Chapman departs from Terence in some respects, while following him closely in others. Where he remains closest of all is in his exclusion of love and romance from *All Fools*.

Many readers will be familiar with Northrop Frye's profoundly influential analysis of comedy in his *Anatomy of Criticism*:

The plot structure of Greek New Comedy, as transmitted by Plautus and Terence, in itself less a form than a formula, has become the basis for most comedy, especially in its more highly conventionalized dramatic form, down to our own day ... What normally happens is that a young man wants a young woman, that his desire is resisted by some opposition, usually paternal, and that near the end of the play some twist in the plot enables the hero to have his will.⁴⁸

A delightful alternative version of Frye's clear and elegant 'formula' is offered by a couple of Hollywood screenwriters in Bella and Samuel Spewack's hilarious Broadway comedy of 1935, *Boy Meets Girl*:

Listen, I've been writing stories for eleven years. Boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy gets girl ... Or—girl meets boy, girl loses boy, girl gets boy. Love will find a way. Love never loses. Put your money on love.⁴⁹

By including 'girl meets boy' and the word 'love', the Hollywood formula is closer to the great comedies of Shakespeare, with their female protagonists whose ultimate success is a wedding at the end of the play. Frye, in saying that 'a young man *wants* a young woman', is precisely correct about Terence, and also brings us closer to the structure of *All Fools*.

In an intriguing essay, Susanna Morton Braund notes that Frye's scheme contains a paradox when applied to Roman comedy, where marriage may be the objective, but 'already-established marriage is portrayed as a negative experience about which husbands and wives complain and from which husbands fantasize their escape'.⁵⁰ Ctesipho of *The Brothers* and Clitipho of *The Self-Tormenter* would agree—both 'want' their Bacchises, but neither has the slightest interest in marriage. Ctesipho never expresses any romantic feelings about Bacchis; with his brother's help, he has already stolen her, and now needs the money to keep her. Neither does Clitipho ever say a single word of love about, or to, his Bacchis. Instead, he informs the audience that she is 'overbearing, shameless, gives herself airs, extravagant, high and mighty' (226). She is completely forgotten when Clitipho is railroaded into getting married.

Obviously, Valerio does not have to keep a *meretrix* happy with lavish gifts, but his situation is similar to that of his Roman counterparts. He has married Gratiana—boy already ‘has’ girl—his fear is of being disinherited. As Fortunio says, the marriage ‘would quite undo him, did his father know it’ (1.1.162). Gostanzo, in advising Marc Antonio how to deal with Fortunio, shows what this undoing would mean:

Cast him off,
Receive him not. Let him endure the use
Of their enforced kindness that must trust him
For meat and money, for apparel, house,
And everything ...

(1.1.296–300)

Valerio may pay tribute to love in 1.1, but words of endearment to or about Gratiana are absent from his vocabulary. The first time they are together onstage (1.1.141–67), he does not say a word to her. In 1.2, Valerio merely jokes about their resemblance to a game of barley-break (1.2.65–7n.), and thinks about how wonderful everything would be if his father only had the good grace to drop dead (1.2.70–85). Indeed, the only times Valerio expresses his feelings are a six-line speech at the start of Act 3 (3.1.13–18), and when hamming it up in his pretended submission to Gostanzo (4.1.128–46).

If ‘the course of true love’ is of concern to anyone, it would be to Fortunio and Bellanora, and here the course runs so smoothly that it hardly merits consideration. Having exchanged vows, they are legally married before the play begins (3.1.7n.), and, since Fortunio knows that his always amenable father will approve the match, they have no hesitation in formalising the marriage secretly, an offstage event, some time before the start of Act 5.

All Fools ends with Gostanzo giving his blessing to his children’s marriages, with the hope that all will ‘live merrily together’ (5.2.317). What married life will actually be like for the couples is, of course, unknown. It may be the ‘joy and fresh days of love’ Theseus promises the newlyweds of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (5.1.29), or the ‘many, many merry days’ Mistress Page wishes upon her daughter and Master Fenton at the close of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (5.5.240). On the other hand, marriage might be more like what Menedemus predicts for his son Clitiphon in *The Self-Tormenter*: ‘It’s difficult to start with, when you’re not familiar with it; once you’ve got used to it, it’s easy’ (1058). For a view of married life as one husband and wife experience it, we turn to the subplot.

THE SECONDARY PLOT: ADULTERY FOR FUN AND PROFIT

'Greater love than this', he said, 'no man hath, that a man lay down his wife for his friend. Go thou and do likewise'. (James Joyce, *Ulysses*)

In making the would-be courtier Cornelio's obsessive fear that his wife Gazetta is cuckolding him the driving action of the subplot, Chapman returns to a style of comedy that was successful for him in the past. He announces this, none too subtly, as Gazetta tells Bellanora and Gratiana,

Ye see, gentlewomen, what my happiness is.

These humours reign in marriage. Humours, humours.

(1.2.52-3)

Apart from Cornelio, Chapman introduces other characters, each with his individual humour: Curio, the precocious page who torments Cornelio with an elaborate speech in Gazetta's defence, Dariotto, the young courtier who wants everyone to think he is a great seducer, Pock, the surgeon who 'treats' the wound Cornelio gives him, and the loquacious Notary who prepares Cornelio's bill of divorce. As in *An Humorous Day's Mirth* and *Every Man In His Humour*, these 'humorous' characters provide both literary parody and social satire while displaying their eccentricities.

One only has to place *Othello* alongside *The Merry Wives of Windsor* to show that adultery can be the subject of both the darkest tragedy and the brightest comedy. As Martin Wiggins observes, during the Elizabethan theatre's earlier years, adultery, be it suspected or actual, was usually a serious matter: it 'is at the root of *Arden of Faversham* (1590), for example, in which the wife seeks to end her superseded marriage through murder; the play demonizes her not only as a response to her criminality but to her sexual infidelity too'.⁵¹ To *Arden* we might add Shakespeare's *Henry VI* plays, with its doomed affair between Queen Margaret and the Duke of Suffolk.

A wealth of literature approaching adultery from a comic viewpoint was available to English playwrights, had they chosen to use it. The popular medieval tales known as *fabliaux* are, as Colin Wilcockson notes, preoccupied 'with comic, usually bawdy, situations, often involving old husband/young wife tensions, or the encounters of lascivious women with equally lascivious men, who were frequently priests or students'.⁵² Boccaccio appropriated a number of them in writing the *Decameron*; more than twenty of its hundred stories are about adultery. A century and a half later, Italy's playwrights used the *Decameron* in creating such brilliant comedies as Machiavelli's *The Mandrake Root* (*Mandragola*), based on Boccaccio's tale of Ricciardo Mutolo, who has an extremely

clever plan to seduce the young, beautiful, and married Catella (Day 3, Story 6).⁵³

Plays such as Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* and Chapman's *May Day* show that Italian comedies were partly or completely adapted into English versions, but those featuring a cuckold do not appear to have made the transition, with the possible exception of a lost Rose play, *The Dead Man's Fortune* (ca. 1590), which seems to come from a *Commedia dell'Arte* scenario. The surviving stage plot has exits and entrances for 'Panteloun', 'Aspida', who must be his wife, and 'Validore', who is disguised and is probably her lover.⁵⁴

Chaucer's four comic tales of cuckoldry, told by the Miller, Reeve, Shipman, and Merchant, were also drawn from the *fabliaux*, and were widely known. They would make excellent plays, especially the Miller's and Reeve's tales, with all their local colour of Oxford and Cambridge. As far as we know from the extant corpus, however, no English dramatist took up the challenge.

While Chapman did not take the Cornelio–Gazetta plot from Boccaccio, Italian Renaissance comedy, or Chaucer, the earlier literature has some underlying patterns relevant to *All Fools*. First, little thought is given to whether or not the protagonists find true love—all interest is on the brilliant schemes they concoct in a never ending quest for sex. The most common word for such schemes in medieval and Renaissance Italian, ubiquitous in Boccaccio, is *beffa*, which Richard Andrews explains as

an Italian term for 'mockery'. In literature and drama it refers to any narrative plot in which one character gets the upper hand over another—usually in the form of a practical joke, and almost always involving some kind of deception. There may be a practical advantage to be achieved (financial, or sexual), or the trick may be motivated by sheer love of the game.⁵⁵

The plot of *All's Well that Ends Well*, with its 'bed trick', comes directly from Boccaccio's story of Giletta, the physician's daughter of Narbonne (Day 3, Story 9), and Giorgio Melchiori argues persuasively that *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, that most English of English comedies, is 'built on the basic scheme of the multiple *beffa* ... an Italian comedy in English dress'.⁵⁶

Secondly, in considering English texts—*The Canterbury Tales* and *Merry Wives* are perfect examples—we find that cuckoldry, rather than adultery in general, is the focus, with an emphasis on the 'mockery' that is implicit in the *beffa*—*OED* defines 'cuckold' as 'a *derisive* name for the husband of an unfaithful wife' (n.¹ 1a). The standard view, that 'cuckold'

derives from the European cuckoo being a brood parasite that lays its (usually one) egg in another bird's nest, is undoubtedly correct, although it is not a perfect fit—the male cuckoo, to the extent that it is involved at all, is the co-offender, not the victim. French historical dictionaries show that *cocu* or *coucou* was sometimes applied to the wife's lover, although the usual definition was, and is, *celui dont la femme est infidèle*.⁵⁷ For a husband to be a cuckold, or simply to show his fear of cuckoldry, automatically invites mockery, as it implies that he is sexually inadequate or unable to control his wife for some other reason. Just to say the word, regardless of the context, is a jibe, since 'cuckoo' is an onomatopoeic term in imitation of its familiar two-note song, traditionally the sound husbands most fear, as we hear at the end of *Love's Labour's Lost*:

The cuckoo then on every tree
 Mocks married men, for thus sings he:
 'Cuckoo,
 Cuckoo, cuckoo'—O word of fear,
 Unpleasing to a married ear.

(5.2.907-11)

The third underlying pattern, whether dealing with unfaithful wives or philandering husbands, is that no moral opprobrium whatsoever is attached to adultery. As Joan Acocella notes, in the *Decameron* we see 'unfraught sex, of a kind that has probably not been wholly comprehensible to Western people since the Reformation'.⁵⁸ Similarly, no one could disapprove of the brazenness with which Alison of *The Miller's Tale* and May of *The Merchant's Tale* cuckold their husbands.

Chapman adopted these attitudes when he half-brought adultery into English comedy in 1596 with *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria*—'half' because there are two adulterous wives, but no deceived husband. Duke Cleanthes, the protagonist, has three other assumed identities: Irus the blind beggar, the 'mad-brain' Count Hermes, and 'Leon, the rich usurer'. As Hermes, he marries the 'bright nymph' Elimene, and, as Leon, he weds her sister Samathis. He then cuckolds Leon in the guise of Count Hermes, and vice versa, before having both husbands 'killed'. The outcome is satisfactory for the widows: they go on to marry kings.

An Humorous Day's Mirth has two ridiculously jealous wives, the Queen of France, married to a philandering King, and Countess Moren, whose husband is much younger than she, but the main interest is with Florilla, young wife of the old and impotent Count Labervele. Her air of holy Puritanism is either the cause of, or a reaction to, his debility—either way, it has nothing to do with her religious principles. The young gallant Lemot, purely for his own amusement and that of his friends, embarks on

a scheme to approach Florilla, not secretly, but in Labervele's presence, 'which shall so heat his jealous humour till he be start mad' (2.94-5).⁵⁹ With Florilla's enthusiastic assistance, Lemot convinces Labervele that he should test her constancy by making advances to her, and, as a final proof, she 'must put on rich apparel, fare daintily, hear music, read sonnets, be continually courted, kiss, dance, feast, revel all night amongst gallants' (4.231-4). Florilla's response, 'O husband, this is perfect trial indeed!' (4.240), precedes her secret agreement to meet Lemot at a tavern where a private room has been reserved for an afternoon's pleasure.

For all her show of piety, Florilla appears not to have heard of the seventh commandment. She actively seeks every opportunity to cuckold her husband, but she fails, since her choice of lover, Lemot, has no real interest in having sex with her. He only wants to enjoy a 'humorous day' engaged in stripping away her veneer of purity. The brilliance of the comedy lies in Florilla's open defiance, denying everything and graciously forgiving her husband for suspecting her of doing what she actually did, 'For as men should ever love their wives, so should they ever trust them' (13.112-13), and in Lemot's refusal to expose her, leaving her free to try again.

In March of 1598, the Admiral's Men paid Thomas Dekker £5 for a play called *The Triplicity of Cuckolds*,⁶⁰ unfortunately lost; in September of the same year Jonson's *Every Man In His Humour* (quarto version) was acted at the Curtain.⁶¹ The jealous husband Thorello, a rich merchant 'but lately married' (1.4.89) to Bianca, has both his sister Hesperida and Bianca's brother Prospero as house-guests.⁶² His disquiet stems from Prospero's presumption in using his house to entertain friends, who 'swear, leap, and dance, and revel night by night' (1.4.54), but he cannot throw the unwanted visitors out:

They would give out, because my wife is fair,
Myself but lately married, and my sister
Here sojourning a virgin in my house,
That I were jealous.

(1.4.88-91)

Determined to keep his fears to himself, Thorello saves his thoughts about Bianca for soliloquies. In a serious speech that could be delivered by Othello, Thorello reflects on his 'new disease': jealousy is a 'pestilence' (1.4.191) that infects the brain and then spreads through the body

Till not a thought or motion in the mind
Be free from the black poison of suspect.

(1.4.202-3)

Thorello's jealous humour is never seen in public until the end, when there is a very funny confrontation with Bianca, each making wild accusations about the other (5.1.28–54). No one talks about his jealousy behind his back or teases him about it.

Things could not be more different in *All Fools*, where Cornelio's jealousy is no secret from anyone. Gazetta tells Gratiana and Bellanora all about it in their first scene (1.2.20–41), and soon afterwards we see that everyone else knows: having placed Gratiana in Gostanzo's house, Rinaldo needs a new source of amusement, so he proposes to Valerio that they visit

the new-turned gentleman's fair wife,
That keeps thy wife and sister company;
With whom the amorous courtier Dariotto
Is far in love, and of whom her sour husband
Is passing jealous, puts on eagle's eyes
To pry into her carriage.

(2.1.215–20)

Chapman could not draw on Terence while thinking up the situations that follow. The woes of married life find their way into Roman comedy, but the plays of Plautus and Terence are without a deceived husband. The one exception, Plautus's *Amphitryon*, is a special case, since Jupiter takes on Amphitruo's form when seducing Alcumena (their child will be Hercules), and she is unaware that she is being unfaithful. The comic performances of the Roman mimes were different. These players worked without written scripts, so what we know about them is very limited, but judging by the number of times Roman poets describe it, the 'adultery mime', with husband at the door, wife in the bed, and wife's lover in the cupboard, was their most popular routine.⁶³ In any event, Chapman had no need of Plautus, Terence, or the mimes, for Rome's greatest poet was waiting in the wings, ready to take over.

OVID AND THE ART OF ADULTERY

Virility feeds on sex, is boosted by practice. No girl's ever complained about *my* technique. (Ovid, *Amores*)

If we accept that a fundamental quality of the Renaissance is that its poets, painters, and other artists looked to antiquity in creating their own modes of expression, then no single work has had greater influence than the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid. One can hardly read a page of Shakespeare without finding an allusion to it, nor can anyone walk through the Uffizi or the Louvre without Ovid as a guide—the noted classical scholar Mary