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The Framing Device in English Renaissance Drama with Special Reference to Shakespeare's Early Comedies

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English dramatists of the Renaissance, it is widely believed, had a good sense of dramatic manipulation. They enlarged their own plot,[1] gave it shape and complicated its action. In so doing, they resorted to several dramatic devices, one of them being the enveloping or framing action. This element of structure is described by Richard G. Moulton as 'the fringe, or border ... of a dramatic pattern.' 'It appears,' he remarks, 'when the personages and incidents which make up the essential interest of a play are more or less loosely involved with some interest more wide-reaching than their own ... '[2]

In developing such a 'framework,' the English Renaissance dramatists were undoubtedly following a national and well-established theatrical convention of placing action within action. The 'Medieval dream allegory,' Janet Spens reminds us, 'had used the same ... machinery when introducing its audience to the magic world of abstractions.'[3] The device of framing was to take several forms as the dramatists kept experimenting with different planes of dramatic illusion.'[4]

The process of experimentation goes as far back as the

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earliest known English secular drama, i.e. the Tudorescue *Fulgens and Lucrece* (1497) of Henry Medwall. Offered to the public as 'A goodly interlude of Nature,' this play begins much in the manner of the David Lyndsay interludes a half-century later, by pretending not to be a play at all. In other words, Medwall starts off by probing the efficiency of a framing action to introduce, comment on and conclude his main concern in the play. This is clear from the way he makes a pair of comic serving-men, A and B, discuss the plot of the play that is to be shown (the marriage of Fulgentius's virtuous daughter, Lucretia), take part in it, and then close it.[5]

The same process of experimentation continues through Elizabethan drama. A remarkable play which employs an interesting framework is the anonymous courtly drama of *The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune* (1582).[6] This play's highly romantic tale of true love is set within a disputation between Venus, Goddess of Love and the Goddess Fortune. When their rivalry mounts to a peak, Jupiter holds a council of the Olympic divinities to compose the strife. Thus after various spectacles of lovers and heroes cast down by Love or Fortune, the supreme arbiter orders the goddesses to try their powers upon mortals. They select, as victims, a pair of lovers - Hermione, a gentleman, and a princess,

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Fidelia. The Rare Triumphs, thus, makes use of a mythological framework, clearly showing how the goddesses of the title manipulate the actions of the mortals in the main play each in turn from above. [7]

With the appearance, however, of the anonymous revenge tragedy of Jeronimo (1587), the device of framing takes a leap forward. The author of this play whether Kyd (as is commonly conjectured on technical or stylistic grounds) or some one else, exhibits dissatisfaction with the simple, general framing action. He proceeds to enclose one level of action within another - the play-within-a play in other words - which Kyd uses in a masterful fashion.

In The Spanish Tragedy (1592) Kyd makes the same use of internal staging devices. He employs the characters of Andrea's Ghost and Revenge in prologuing and framing the plot(s) of his play. These characters sit at the side of the stage throughout the play with the Ghost keenly interested in the main stage action though unable to influence it, and Revenge consoling and assuring him that his desire for vengeance will be sated. But in addition to the framing dialogues provided by the two characters, there are in the play a few 'spectacles' or tableaux - tableau-like scenes in which characters spy, observe and comment on each other's strange behaviour.

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In A Looking Glass for London and England (1590) and James IV (1592?), Robert Greene expresses the same interest in experimenting with different planes of illusion on stage, surrounding them all by a wider frame. Written in collaboration with Thomas Lodge, the first play dramatises the history of Jonah at Nineveh, using prophet Oseas as chorus or rather the medieval play-presenter. The play's moral 'is pressed home in a series of extravagant spectacles requiring elaborate stage machinery.' [8]

There is neater workmanship in the romance of James IV, whose plot is set in an ingeniously devised framework. This, in a sense, is a play-within-a play, except that here, unlike Kyd's device, the inserted play is the main action. A framing dialogue between Oberon, the fairy king, and Bohan, a misanthropic Scot, opens the action. Bohan reveals his hatred for the world, and decides to demonstrate the motives. The two characters then retire until the end to 'the gallery,' and the play proper commences. Bohan's two sons, Slipper, the clown, and Nano, the dwarf, take part in the play, the former becoming the merry servant of Ateukin and the latter the devoted page to the queen. And as in Fulgens and Lucrece, they furnish a low comedy in contrast to the romantic action on which they sarcastically comment.

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The same devised framework became the stock-in-trade of other Elizabethan and a good number of Jacobean playwrights: John Lyly, Shakespeare, Robert Peele, Thomas Marston, Ben Jonson and Francis Beaumont, to mention but a few. These use their enveloping actions more brilliantly and with a great deal of diversification than their anonymous or known predecessors. They may still look back on the Middle ages, when the use of dream as a framework was a fashion; but they do so only to combine older experience with their own, with a view to making the shifting planes of illusion on the stage correspond to a quality of illusion in life.

The anonymous Taming of a Shrew (1594?), before Shakespeare touches it, is already provided with a framing prologue or rather 'induction.' This envelops the action from start to finish, concluding it with Slie's return from the fairyland of dreams to his own harsh reality. The audience is likely to be asked, through this end, to take what has been going on, on stage, as a passing dream and transient vision which reflect a sector of reality. This point is made clear by Lyly in at least three of his plays.[9] In the courtly comedies of Sapho and Phao (1584) and The Woman in the Moon (1597), and particularly in the prologue to Endimion (1591), the author begs his audience to regard his pieces as passing dreams -

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> whatsoeuer we presēt, whether it be tedious (which we feare) or toyishe (which we doubt) sweete or sowre, absolute or imperfect, or whatsoeuer, in all humblenesse we all, & I on knee for all, entreate, that your Highness imagine your self to be in a deepe dreame, that staying the conclusiō, in your rising your Maiestie uouchsafe but to saye, And so you awakte. [10]

Peele causes the action of The Old Wives Tale (1595) to grow from a merry story narrated by a Mrs. Madge Clunch to three clowns, Antic, Frolic and Fantastic, upon being lost in a forest. The story passes from narration to action when the narrator falls asleep, and the characters referred to appear.

In his Masque of Love's Mistress (1630) Heywood employs a similar technique, by bringing two characters, Midas and Apuleius while disputing about poetry. As a result, a play concerned with their very argument ensues which they now and again discuss. Marston and Jonson utilised similar artifices but only to blend criticism with drama. [11] In Antonio and Mellida (1602) Marston brings boy actors who discuss the nature of their parts in the moment before the play gets underway. And Jonson in his amusing induction to Bartholomeo Fair (1614), brings a Stage-keeper, a Book-holder (prompter) and

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a Scrivener (possibly Jonson himself) who disput some critical issues.[12]

The same type of artifice is employed in Beaumont's The Knight of the Burning Pestle (1600). The play of the 'Knight' is enclosed by the wider action of a grocer, his wife, Nell, and their apprentice, Ralph, who come to the theatre to see a play. Nell insists that Ralph should take a part in the performance which is to begin. The apprentice crosses over, thus, like his ancestors in Fulgens and Lucrece, from the audience into the world of the play.

It is clear, from this quick survey, that English dramatists of the Renaissance were fond of experimenting with dramatic patterns. It is even clearer that the process of experimentation with action and enveloping action, particularly, takes different forms and different technicalities. But there are generally five main lines along which both anonymous and known dramatists developed their frameworks. These are : a) a framing action of professional servants, or a group of playgoers, who discuss the prospects of a play that is due to start, in which these servants and members of the audience take part, as in Fulgens and Lucrece and Knight of the Burning Pestle; b) an enveloping action of mythological or human figures in dispute over some problem whose solution is provided by a subsequent play, as in The Rare Triumphs and Love's Mistress; c) an enveloping 'induction' of boy-actors, or stage attendants

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voicing the playwright's views on the subject of drama, as in Antonio and Mellida and Bartholomeo Fair; d) an 'induction' introducing the main action of a play then shortly dropped completely, as in James IV; and e) an 'induction' enveloping the action from the beginning to the end, with a view to creating an impression of a dream, as in The Taming of a Shrew and The Old Wives Tale.

This briefly is the atmosphere in which Shakespeare breathed, 'inhaling' the diversified structural experiments so far provided. Like his contemporaries, he was probably inclined to 'exhale' at least the same common structural evices of the Elizabethan stage, one of which being the enveloping action, better known at the time as the 'induction'. (The Latin inductio was also known and used as in Jonson's Every Man Out of his Humour.) But this Shakespeare used only twice in his whole theatrical career: once in The Taming of the Shrew (1594?) and again in 2 Henry IV (1597?).

In the first case, the interrelation between The Shrew and A Shrew has made it almost impossible to tell which writer follows the structure scheme of the other, although it is obvious that Shakespeare's version is substantially different from the old one. A Shrew employs the 'induction' in its very Elizabethan sense, of not only introducing a full-length play (creating, however, a fictional situation different from that of the play itself), but also commenting on it with

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bits of dialogue during its action, and then ending it with the conventional Elizabethan (dramatic) epilogue. The Shrew, on the other hand, divorces the conventionality of this formula, using its 'induction' as a frame with a fictional situation charged with undertones and not without reference to the main situation of the play proper. In the case of 2 Henry IV, the induction is reduced from the two somewhat lengthy scenes of 277 lines of The Shrew to a short prologue-like address (40 lines) from Rumour to the audience.

The fact that Shakespeare should resort to the conventional 'induction' only twice, using it differently and reducing it to the level of prologue (which was normally used after the 'induction'), at the time when a bulk of Elizabethan plays (almost one and half or slightly less the number of his plays [13]) used the 'induction' as a constant device of structure, proves one of two things: either that Shakespeare was only showing his fellow-dramatists that he could, after all, use the same popular devices as them, or that he was not thoroughly convinced with the whole tradition as a significant vehicle of dramatic expression.

However, the fact that Shakespeare so deliberately neglected the most traditional framing device of his age, the 'induction' which was more or less the culmination of the structural experimentation with enveloping action since the Middle Ages, does not designate the dramatist's lack of interest in using a framework in his plays. He does indeed use one pattern of framing or another, especially in his early comedies. English dramatists, as

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already pointed out, were fond of experimenting with dramatic patterns, and Shakespeare was no exception. He was an exception, however, in so far as the application of his framing devices is affected by three considerations. Firstly, there is no pretence of his plays not being plays at all, as in Medwall and Lyndsay much later on. Secondly, there is no intention of reserving parts for members of an audience - who may appear to frame his plays - to play in his plays' plays proper, as the audience of Beaumont's Knight of the Burning Pestle is licensed to do. And finally, there is no appeal to the audience to take his play only as a passing dream, as Lyly was accustomed to do.

An illustrative example is found in the play of The Taming of the Shrew. Although this play's doubled plot is only claimed at the beginning to be one of the Lord's 'pastimes', it is still described as a 'very excellent piece of work' (II.i.246), [14] and even played by a group of professional players. In A Shrew, the actors blunder and are spotted by Slie who had, apparently, been familiar with plays, as is clear from his cry of joy and knowledgeable inquiry: 'Is there a fool in the plaie' (ii.50).[15] The players in The Shrew are superior; they improve on the Lord's improvised, witty but amateur play with a more sustained performance. And this performance is left entirely to the players with none of its spectators whether Sly or his 'Madam wife' (Induc.ii. 110) or the Lord or his attendants, permitted or invited to take part. From the beginning of this performance, Sly, who had been presumed to undergo a 'flatt'ring dream' (i.42), mistakes the

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illusion for a reality and sighs wearily 'would 'twere done!' (I.i.247). When it is done, the professional play, though farcical, turns out to be a picture of reality (by comparison with what happens to Sly). The world of The Shrew, therefore, moves from the dream to the reality, a pattern very much emphasised by the undertones of reality. But let me turn now to the whole group of the early comedies to examine what form or pattern of framing they reveal.

Consistently, Shakespeare surrounds the main body of each of his early comedies by a wider enveloping action. In Love's Labour's Lost, 'the comic interchange of personal perplexities and reconciliations is framed in a sober interest of high politics' [16] the decrepitude and decease of the French King, father of the visiting Princess. In The Two Gentlemen of Verona, the dramatist uses another framing action twice in the course of his comedy: firstly in a parent's solicitude for his son's character-refinement through travel and study, and secondly through a father's obstructive attitude towards his daughter's 'gentleman of choice'. In The Taming of the Shrew, the Induction clearly furnishes a general enveloping action for the shrew story, upon which are patched the strands of the low-comic action represented by the sub-comedy of intrigue. However, it can still be argued that this low comedy has an independent enveloping action, represented again, as in the case of The Two Gentlemen, by Lucentio's *mission arranged* and instigated by his father. In The Comedy of Errors, it is obvious again that Shakespeare employs the tragic

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story of aged Aegeon, father of the twin Antipholi, as an over-all action.

There is, therefore, a 'parent' in each of the early comedies, presiding over an outer broader action provided by him whether deliberately or unintentionally. But whereas the only father in Love's Labour's Lost is not brought on the stage at all, since there is obviously no room for him in such a cosmos of youthful blades and bright sparks as the lords of Navarre and the coquettishly merry girls of France, the two fathers in The Two Gentlemen, Antonio of Verona and the Duke of Milan, are brought to the forefront of the stage. Antonio appears at the beginning while discussing the details of his son's career with an elderly servant-confidante. He is then dropped towards the middle and replaced by the Duke, who appears to reassure Proteus that he would willingly marry his daughter to Sir Thurio. And whereas the father of Lucentio in The Shrew is only slightly introduced before the closing moments of the play proper (though referred to every now and again), the father in The Errors appears twice: at the beginning of the play and at the end.

It is in accordance with his usual handling of plot in his plays that Shakespeare encloses, thus, even in his earliest comedies, action within action. This is analogous to the sphaera within sphaera in the Ptolemaic astronomia. It is, again, in accordance with his distinctive dramatic 'Muse' that Shakespeare uses the outer enveloping action, as the primum mobile

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that imparts motion to all the interior actions.

In Love's Labour's Lost, for instance, 'it is the embassy necessitated by the King's failing health which brings the French ladies into the play', and sets up its debate-form. When this debate of love versus study is finally settled, news of the death of the royal monarch are suddenly revealed. The whole atmosphere changes anew, from being one of jubilation into one of mourning. The young gentry have but to part with their sweethearts, the French noblewomen, in the hope of getting together in a year's time. In this way, the dramatist shows that even in the sober political world, there can be a foundation for his drama's structure. [17]

The framing action of Antonio, the caring father, in The Two Gentlemen, as well as that of the hard-hearted Duke, the durus pater of New Comedy, brings about separations of lovers, variety of locales and rapidity of tempo, which renders the lovers' plot closer to New Comedy. [18] The same framework of Vincentio in The Shrew leads initially to an interesting inversion of roles in the play's minor plot, when master and servant exchange positions. This is, however, timely sorted out with an emphasis on the return to normal life, with the arrival of the parent in person. But he does so after the efforts of the young lovers have most genially been rewarded.

With the framing action contained in Aegeon's plot in The Comedy of Errors, Shakespeare infuses the pathetic tones of

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Aegeon's tragedy into his comedy. Yet he does not manage to weave him into the main plot, unless it is argued that Aegeon has originally propelled the action of the play by sending Antipholus, at eighteen then, to take up the search for the long-lost family. But it is Antipholus who has sought his father's permission on the subject of the quest. He volunteered to undertake the challenge in the first place.

Shakespeare, thus, provides his early comedies, each individually, with a framework through the element of 'parenthood'. Such framework cannot, however, be argued to have provided a form of dramatic integration, since it is employed with marked differences. There is, in my opinion, another enveloping element, less obvious but more integrating than that of parenthood, though still influenced by it. This is the framing pattern of journeys, which is used consistently in the early comedies, but above all in The Errors.

Viewed out of context, the enveloping pattern of journeys immediately suggests a happy ending. The journey or quest is known to have been one of the stock-in-trade motifs of romance and epic. In quest of some precious object or person, the hero with the proper traits of character, makes a journey into the unknown. Having passed a series of tests and overcome the guardians of the object or person, he either obtains the precious object, or rescues the captive person and finally marries the fair princess. In English pastoral romances, such as Sidney's Arcadia and Spenser's Legend of Courtesy, the

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basic quest story is somewhat modified. The pastoral hero does not travel in search of an external object or person as in the romance or epic, but journeys to the pastoral world because of certain unresolved conflicts in the urban world. In the pastoral world, the conflicts are after an educative process resolved, and the hero returns to the outer world. [19]

The type of enveloping journeys revealed through Love's Labour's Lost is very similar to that of pastoral romance. The Princess journeys with her train, because of an outstanding political dispute between France and Navarre over the 'surrender up of Aquitaine' (I.i.135), for which she seeks an immediate settlement. The brief negotiations are, however, postponed until further documents proving the 'payment of a hundred thousand crowns' (129) have been produced. In the meantime, the journeying ambassadresses are lodged in the palace park, presumably a miniature of the pastoral world. In this pastoral background, to which Navarre himself with his apparently fellow-scholars has also journeyed (allegorically speaking) escaping from the conflicts of the self-inflicted unnatural social regimen, the political discords presumably dissolve in oblivion and the academic debates are resolved in unanimity. This done, the two travelling parties 're-journey' from the 'inner' pastoral to the 'outer' urban world; the Princess and her ladies-in-waiting journey back to their court and the Navarrese noblemen return to theirs. The play of Love's Labour's Lost, therefore, begins and ends with a

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journey, which envelops the action of the drama. This formula is later going to bscome one of the most recurring structural features in Shakespearian comedy, as exemplified by the 'pastoral' comedy of As You Like It.

With The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Shakespeare uses the same pattern of journeys more clearly to enclose the fortunes and vicissitudes of his two Italian youths. The play starts with the voyagers at the moment of their departure. Valentine sees rightly the purpose of his initial journey as mainly educative, while Proteus is made to see education as the objective of his forced journey. Julia, another voyager, plans a journey or rather a pilgrimage to love's 'shrine'. All this is correct as far as the tradition of the journey-pattern in romance and epic is concerned. Shakespeare brings about a slight modification as Sidney before him, by making his voyagers, each individually, embark upon a journey not in quest of education or wisdom or a precious object, but as a result of certain problems in the urban world. Valentine is forced to journey into the pastoral forest, and so is Silvia, followed by desperate Proteus, broken-hearted Thurio, melancholic Julia and the indignant Duke. In the forest, all these several journeys reach their culmination, when the return to the urban world becomes after all possible.

In The Taming of the Shrew, the same enveloping pattern is utilised but without the pastoral implications. As in Love's Labour's Lost, the voyagers land in a new place for different purposes. Lucentio has journeyed for further educational quali-

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fications; Petruchio in quest of gold. The journey of Lucentio frames the play's sub-comedy, whereas that of Petruchio frames the play itself. The framing journey in the latter's case is more interesting. After the wedding business is settled, Petruchio forces his rich wife, Katherina, to journey with him to his home-town. There, she is confined until the time of her final journey back to Padua, not as the lately notorious shrewish daughter of Baptista, but as the then courteous wife of Petruchio. (It is noticeable that on one occasion, IV.iii, Petruchio cancels a journey, and on another, IV.v, threatens to postpone another as a result of what he believes to be Katherina's incomplete taming.) Interestingly, during their ultimate journey to Padua, they come across old Vincentio, who has been journeying also through the same route to find out what has become of his son. This pattern of journey, regarding a father following his son whom he has previously sent on an errand to a different town, leads directly, in my view, to the enveloping journey of Aegeon in <u>The Comedy of Errors</u>.

The framing pattern of journeys in Aegeon's case is not only the most obvious use of enveloping action in Shakespeare's early comedies, but also the most subtle. With this framework, Shakespeare challenges the very craftsmanship of his contemporaries, by showing them a way of designing an old formula into a multi-functioned piece of stage craft. In other words, he reveals a characteristic of elasticity in the Aegeon episode,

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in that this episode can technically be used either as an 'induction', or a 'prologue', or an integral portion of a play's plot. To an Elizabethan, the term 'induction' was a short dramatic action introducing a full-length play, normally performed by two or more actors, followed at the end by a dramatic epilogue. And the situation of Aegeon does not depart from this definition. To an Elizabethan spectator, again, a prologue was a direct communication from author or players (normally a single actor) with a view to paving the way for the following play (although there are a few exceptions to this definition). The situation of Aegeon does not fail to fulfil this expectation on the audience's part either. T.W. Baldwin has rightly taken the situation of Aegeon, in his description of the 'genesis' of The Comedy of Errors, as 'a prologue to give the setting for the play and to prepare for the reunited family at the end of the fifth act'.[20]

Nevertheless, the Shakespeare who showed little satisfaction with the induction tradition, and never used a prologue in a comedy,[21] chose to use Aegeon's episode as a framing action and integral part of his pattern. In so doing, he experimented, as is characteristic of his dramatic genius, with challenging structural devices. The framing device achieved in his early comedies in general, particularly in The Errors, emphasises the process of experimentation beyond little doubt.

It would have been impossible to consider Shakespeare's use of frameworks in his early comedies, without dwelling

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seriously upon the very theatrical background from which, the dramatist learned, practised and mastered his art of dramatic construction. Shakespearian drama, like Elizabethan dramatic literature in general, was founded upon a long tradition of medieval and early renaissance theatrical heritage. That made it somehow inevitable to look for the required background in the liturgical drama of medieval England, the secular drama of the early Renaissance and the popular drama of the Elizabethan public stage. I hope to have properly faced up to the task in the preceding brief article.

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Notes

1. This point is taken up and illustrated marvellously by Richard Levin in The Multiple Plot in English Renaissance Drama (Chicago: University Press, 1967).

2. See Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist (Oxford: Clarendon, 1929), 3rd edn., p. 361.

3. See Elizabethan Drama (London: Methuen, 1922), p. 15.

4. Anne Righter tackles this argument in Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play (London: Chatto & Windus, 1962), pp. 61 ff; 68 ff.

5. See M.M. Parrott, Shakespearean Comedy (New York & London: Oxford University Press, 1949), pp. 29-30.

6. The first edition of the play appeared in 1569, but the play is almost certainly earlier, possibly the History of Love and Fortune presented at Court by Derby's players in 1560. See Alfred Harbage, Annals of English Drama (London: Methuen, 1964), p. 48.

7. See Leo Salingar, Shakespeare and the Traditions of Comedy (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 268.

8. Harry Blamires, A Short History of English Literature (London: Methuen, 1974), p. 57.

9. See John Addington Symonds, Shakespeare's Predecessors in

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the English Drama (London: Smith and Elder, 1900), p. 447.

10. Quoted from G.K. Hunter, John Lyly (London: Routledge, 1962), pp. 306-07.

11. See Symonds, op.cit.

12. See The Cambridge History of English Literature, ed. by A.W. Ward and A.R. Waller (Cambridge: University Press, 1910), Vol. VI, pp. 23-4.

13. Richard Hosley points out that at least forty-five Elizabethan plays were written with 'induction'. See 'Was There a "Dramatic Epilogue" to The Taming of the Shrew?', Studies in English Literature, 1 (1961), No.2, pp. 23-4.

14. Quotations from Shakespeare embodied here are from Peter Alexander, The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (London & Glasgow: Collins, 1978).

15. I quote from the version of the play, included in Geoffrey Bullough's Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare (London: Routledge, 1957), Vol. I.

16. Moulton, op.cit., p. 297.

17. Ibid.

18. The essential plot of New Comedy, whose founder was Menander and whose best-known exponent was Terence, incorporates the following elements: 1) young man (knows already or) meets young woman; 2) young man (is already or) falls in love with young woman; 3) there is an obstacle to the fulfilment of that love (this obstacle is parental); 4) obstacle is overcome and there is a reorganisation of society. See Northrop

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Frye, 'The Argument of Comedy', in Shakespeare's Comedies: An Anthology of Modern Criticism, ed. by Laurence Lerner (London: Penguin Books, 1967), pp. 315-17; and Greek Comedy, trans. and introd. by Robert W. Corrigan (New York: Dell Publishers Company, 1965), pp. 6-7.

9. See Denton J. Snider, System of Shakespeare's Dramas (St. Louis: C.T. Jones, 1877), Vol. II, p. 25. The pattern of journeys has also been one of the stock motifs of Near and Far Eastern folk-literature since the olden times. In Arabic romance, there are the 'Seven Journeys' of Es Sindbad described in the book of the One Thousand and One Arabian Nights. Sindbad is known to have been a traveller of extreme interest in adventure and enterprise; yet the basic motive which normally instigated his journeying was usually the quest of money to meet the up-growing costs of living in El Basrah. There are, along with the Sindbad's famous journeys, the interesting peregrinations included in the descriptive book of Ajā'ib Al Hind (Wonders of India) of Buzurg Ibn Shahrayar. There are, also, other travels described in different contemporary works to The Arabian Nights, such as those of Ibn Jubayr, Ibn Faḍlān, Ibn Baṭṭuta and Al Ghazāli. But these are of less importance here, being factual rather than fictional.

20 Shakespeare's Five-Act Structure (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1947), pp. 706-07.

21 Shakespeare used prologues only three times in all his dramatic career: once in a history, Henry VIII, and twice in tragedy, Troilus and Cressida and Romeo and Juliet.

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