

**Shakespeare's Many Much Ado's:
*Alcestis, Hercules, and Love's Labour's Wonne***

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Twentieth century scholarship has largely disputed the possibility that Shakespeare employed Greek dramatic sources in writing his plays. The consensus has been that most of the Greek canon, including the works of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, had not been translated or printed in England by Shakespeare's time, and as Greek poetry was not included in the curriculum of English grammar schools, the author could not have been directly influenced by the Attic tragedians.

In his 1903 *Classical Mythology in Shakespeare*, Yale University Professor Robert Kilburn Root voiced the opinion on Shakespeare's 'lesse Greek' that presaged a century of scholarly neglect: "It is at any rate certain that he nowhere alludes to any characters or episodes of Greek drama, that they extended no influence whatsoever on his conception of mythology."¹ One hundred years later A. D. Nuttall, in "Action at a distance: Shakespeare and the Greeks," published in Martindale and Taylor's *Shakespeare and the Classics* (2004), succinctly summarized the continued prevailing opinion on the author's use of Greek sources:

That Shakespeare was cut off from Greek poetry and drama is probably a bleak truth that we should accept. A case can be made – and has been made – for Shakespeare's having some knowledge of certain Greek plays, such as Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, Euripides' *Orestes*, *Alcestis*, and

Hecuba, by way of available Latin versions, but this, surely, is an area in which the faint occasional echoes mean less than the circumambient silence. When we consider how hungrily Shakespeare feeds upon Ovid, learning from him, or extending him at every turn, it becomes more evident that he cannot in any serious sense have found his way to Euripides.²

In a succeeding chapter in Martindale and Taylor, “Shakespeare and Greek tragedy: strange relationship,” Michael Silk ultimately admits numerous “unmistakable” commonalities between Shakespeare and the Greeks, although he also echoes the assertions of Root and Nuttall.

Against all the odds, perhaps, there is a real affinity between Greek and Shakespearean tragedy. What there is not is any ‘reception’ in the ordinary sense: any influence of Greek tragedy on Shakespeare; any Shakespearean ‘reading’ of the Attic drama. There is no reason to suppose that Shakespeare ever encountered any of the Greek tragedians, either in the original language or otherwise.³

There exists, however, a century-old tradition of scholarship, including the works of W.W. Lloyd, A.E. Haigh and H.R.D. Anders, who recognized elements derived from Euripides’ *Alcestis* in the statue scene of *The Winter’s Tale*. Renowned Greek scholars Gilbert Murray and H.D.F. Kitto found potent traces of Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* in *Hamlet*. George Stevens, J.A.K. Thompson, J. Churton Collins and Emrys Jones have variously suggested that *Titus Andronicus* was indebted to Euripides’ *Hecuba* and Sophocles’ *Ajax*. A.D. Nuttall himself has argued for a profound Sophoclean influence on *Timon of Athens*, comparing it repeatedly to *Oedipus at Colonus*. Nuttall nonetheless refers to his analysis as only pressing “an analogy” and he retreats from ever suggesting there was a “direct influence” on Shakespeare by Sophocles.⁴

In “‘Look down and see what death is doing’: Gods and Greeks in *The Winter’s Tale*,”⁵ I reviewed the early scholarship of Lloyd, Haigh, Anders, Israel Gollancz and William Theobald, writers who all recognized Shakespeare’s debt to Euripides’ *Alcestis* for the statue scene. Remarkably, there is evidence that 18th century Shakespearean dramaturgy even recognized this connection; in a Johann Zoffany portrait of the actress Elizabeth Farren as Hermione in the statue scene, Farren is shown leaning on

a pedestal with a bas relief depicting two scenes from *Alcestis*.⁶

The early scholars appear to have limited their analyses to comparisons of the dramaturgy and speeches of the final scenes from these plays, and thus failed to identify the significance of several other noteworthy parallels between Euripides' and Shakespeare's dramas. None of them noted the obvious reference to a substitute statue in *Alcestis*, one that Euripides' King Admetus vows to adore in language reminiscent of Leontes' emotional outpouring on first viewing the statue of Hermione. These late 19th century scholars also failed to describe how Apollo is preeminent and prophetic in both these plays, delivering the prologue in Euripides and providing the oracular verdict of Hermione's innocence and Leontes' tyranny in Shakespeare.

Sarah Dewar-Watson's article in the Spring 2009 *Shakespeare Quarterly*, "The *Alcestis* and the Statue Scene in *The Winter's Tale*,"⁷ may signal a renewal of interest in the Greek dramas as Shakespearean sources. Arguing that several verbal echoes exist between George Buchanan's Latin translation of *Alcestis* and Shakespeare's romance, Dewar-Watson concludes that there is a substantial link to the statue scene and that, "In the absence of any conclusive indication that Shakespeare came into direct contact with Greek tragedy, evidence of this kind confirms that classical drama was accessible to him in a variety of other forms. It is clear that Shakespeare's use of neo-Latin writers and translators such as Buchanan demands further attention."⁸

Alcestis

It is also surprising that none of these scholars have suggested that the final scene of *Alcestis* is also strikingly similar to the last scene of *Much Ado about Nothing*. Given Shakespeare's tendency to populate his plays with characters from Plutarch's *Lives* and employ plots from Greek romance, it is surprising that more modern critics have not challenged the assumptions of Root, Nutall and Silk regarding their exclusion of the Greek dramas.

Two modern Shakespeare scholars, however, have recently recognized the distinctly Greek-like dramaturgy in the last act of *Much Ado about Nothing*. Shakespeare editors Jonathan Bate (Modern Library, 2007) and Claire McEachern (Arden, 2006) have both suggested that *Much Ado's* final scene is likely to have been based on Euripides' tragicomedy, *Alcestis*. Confirming Bate's earlier assessment of the importance of Euripides' play in his 1994

essay, "Dying to Live in *Much Ado about Nothing*,"⁹ McEachern's introduction notes that Shakespeare's dramaturgy in the marriage masque scene is much closer to Euripides' depiction in *Alcestis* than to Bandello's story, which is set in Messina and is considered the primary source of the Hero-Claudio plot:

Unlike Sir Timbreo, but like Admetus, Claudio must accept his second bride without seeing her face, a stipulation that reverses the terms of his initial error (in which he identified a woman by outward signs rather than inner conviction), and forces him to have faith where once he lacked it. Hero's mock funeral, in turn, recalls and prefigures other of Shakespeare's mock deaths, such as Juliet's or Helena's or Hermione's, in which heroines undergo a trial passage to the underworld. Euripides' *Alcestis* is also structurally similar to *Much Ado* in its use of comic scenes (those of Hercules' drunken festivities during the heroine's funeral) to counterpoint the apparent tragedy and hint at the comic ending to come.¹⁰

While the scholarship of Bate and McEachern seems to confirm Shakespeare's direct debt to *Alcestis* in *Much Ado*, as with the earlier scholars, they also have fallen short in identifying the full spectrum of Euripidean elements in Shakespeare's comedy. Both note the obvious parallels between the royal reunion scene in *Alcestis* and wedding scene in *Much Ado*, but both miss the possibility that the chorus of *Alcestis* is arguably the direct source of the funerary ritual at Hero's tomb in Act 5. Furthermore, Bate and McEachern also ignore the significance of Shakespeare's many allusions to Hercules in *Much Ado* as further evidence of a connection to Euripides' tragicomedy. In *Alcestis* Hercules performs the role of *deus ex machina*. In fact, a close examination of the Herculean allusions in *Much Ado* suggests a debt not only to Euripides, but to non-dramatic Greek sources, including Homer and Lucian.

Shakespeare's use of Euripidean dramaturgy in *Much Ado* is different from *The Winter's Tale* in that it creates a meta-theatric representation of resurrection, one where the audience and most of the players are aware that the heroine lives and that there is a plot to restore her honor. Claudio and Don Pedro, however, must perform the mourning rites at Hero's tomb and only then are they allowed to learn of Don John's villainous deception. In the reunion and marriage scenes both Queen Alcestis and Hero are

wearing veils when they are brought before King Admetus and Claudio. Both Admetus and Claudio are contrite, having been shamed by their willingness to sacrifice their wives, and both are required by honor to take the hands of the mysteriously veiled women before them. Only with the removal of the veils are they allowed to know their wives' true identities. Although Bate offhandedly suggests otherwise, none of the other accepted sources of *Much Ado about Nothing* includes this particular device of a veiled bride's reunion with her beloved.

Given the dramatic similarities in the final scenes of these two plays, I do not believe that it is mere coincidence that Hercules is alluded to on four occasions in *Much Ado*, and that the first of these allusions even suggests a connection to Hercules' role as savior and matchmaker in *Alcestis*, where he rescues the queen at her tomb by grappling with Death. The only episode among his many labors, adventures and romances in which Hercules performs such a duty is in this reunion of the king and queen in Euripides' tragicomedy. In the final scene Hercules reports how he acted heroically in retrieving the queen from the underworld, but Euripides actually portrays him quite satirically. In the midst of a series of pathetic scenes in *Alcestis*, Hercules staggers drunkenly on stage, raving about the blessings of wine and perfections of Aphrodite, unknowingly offending the horrified servants of the grief-stricken household. In this regard, Euripides' Hercules is similar to Shakespeare's Benedick, who is made a fool for love before Beatrice can dispatch him on the perilous mission to challenge Claudio and rescue Hero's honor.

Shakespeare alludes to Hercules in his dramas, referring to him no less than thirty-five times, far more often than any other classical hero or god. In this, he may have followed the example the greatest poets of antiquity from Hesiod to Ovid, who wrote about Hercules' auspicious birth, many labors and voyages, death, and apotheosis. Combined with the dramatic representations by Sophocles, Euripides and Seneca and the writings of Apollodorus and Diodorus, Hercules' stories comprise a rich mythology of human struggles against supernatural forces that inspired many Renaissance writers. Hercules as archetypal hero provided the personal template of tragic characters for both Marlowe and Shakespeare. We will argue here that Hercules also provided Shakespeare with comedic possibilities.

While Robert K. Root catalogued the many and varied allusions to Hercules in the Shakespeare canon, he restricted himself to citing sources in

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *Heroides* and Seneca's tragedies. Root considered the playwright's knowledge of the Hercules mythology to be "exceedingly scanty." He does not consider Euripides' two dramas about Hercules, *Heracles* and *Alcestis*, nor does he credit other Hercules sources that Shakespeare editors have subsequently identified, including Lucian's dialogues and Cooper's *Thesaurus*, as possible sources for the Herculean allusions in the canon. Root, though well versed in both classical literature and Shakespeare, was unable to acknowledge any debt to Greek poetic and dramatic sources most likely because he believed that they would not have been available to the playwright.

Jonathan Bate reopens the question of *Alcestis* as a Shakespeare source in "Dying to Live." He argues that the final scene of *Much Ado*, as well as the statue scene in *The Winter's Tale*, were based on *Alcestis*. Although Bate neglects to cite or quote any of the older scholarship on *Winter's Tale*, he is perhaps the first modern Shakespeare scholar to make this claim for *Much Ado*. Noting that an apparent death followed by a return to the living is an effective comedic device, Bate argues that comedy is often close to tragedy, and that the audience shares a vicarious rebirth through the return of Hero in *Much Ado* and Hermione in *The Winter's Tale*:

One way of putting it would be to say that *The Winter's Tale*, with its hinged tragicomic structure, is the logical conclusion of Shakespeare's work. That play is certainly the fully matured reworking of *Much Ado*. The temporary consignment to the grave is not only an analogue for the audience's experience in the theatre, and for the tragic element in comedy, it is also central to most myths and religions....Shakespeare made much of certain classical myths of temporary death and rebirth – the dying god, Adonis; Proserpina, goddess of spring, who dies to live and who is the archetype of Marina and Perdita; Orpheus bringing Eurydice back from the underworld.

The ultimate "source" for the Hero plot of *Much Ado* is a Greek myth, that of *Alcestis*. Shakespeare could have known a Latin translation of Euripides' play on the subject; he certainly received the story at secondhand through the prose romances that were the direct sources of *Much Ado about Nothing*.¹¹

Bate's argument on Euripides' tragicomedies as a source for Shakespeare

is most likely correct; however, his assumption on the availability of a Latin translation in England is questionable. In addition, there was no depiction of a veiled Queen or bride returning from the dead to be reunited with her husband in any of the prose romances considered to be sources for Shakespeare's comedy. There was but one Latin translation of *Alcestis* published before or during Shakespeare's lifetime. George Buchanan (1506-82) was a Scottish Latinist, court tutor and historian, who published many works and translations. Buchanan allegedly knew Latin poetry "like his native tongue" and his most famous pupil was Michel de Montaigne. In the 1540s, while residing in Bordeaux as professor of Latin, he translated Euripides' *Medea* and *Alcestis*. Buchanan's Latin *Alcestis* was first published in 1557 by Henri Estienne in Paris, and it was published a second time in 1567, again in Paris, this time in a collection of Greek dramas.

To accept *Alcestis* as a Shakespeare source, one would have to postulate that the playwright either had access to one of these rare Latin editions of Euripides published in France, or to someone who possessed a Greek edition of *Alcestis* and was capable of translating it. As 20th century scholars have generally agreed that Shakespeare's education would not have included translation of Greek poetry or drama, this adds to the existing challenge posed by the recognized sources for *Much Ado*, because Mateo Bandello's romance (which is set in Messina and has a character named Lionato in the role of father of the bride) was only available in Italian or French editions during Shakespeare's life. Neither French nor Italian would have been taught at the Stratford school.

Bate's claim that the prose romances that are the acknowledged sources of *Much Ado* would have informed the final scene of the play is also unsupported; he does not identify any specific source other than *Alcestis* for the reunion scene of a nobleman with his mysteriously veiled betrothed. Neither of the primary sources of *Much Ado* — Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, translated into English by Peter Beverly as the *History of Ariodante and Genevra* (1566), and Bandello's *La Prima Parte de le Novelle* (1554), translated into French in 1569 by Francois de Belleforest in his *Histoire Tragiques* — include a scene in which the estranged couple were brought back together in the same manner as the wedding of Hero and Claudio. George Pettie's interpretation of the story, "Admetus and Alcestis," which appeared in his 1576 collection, *Petite Pallace of Pleasure*, emphasizes the travails of the star-crossed lovers but does not include a scene in which the queen is

restored from the dead and secretly returned with the king. That the final scenes of *Much Ado* and *Winter's Tale* are specifically and directly indebted to Euripides' representation in *Alcestis* is the only supportable conclusion.

In his article "Dying to Live," Bate follows William Hazlitt's assertion that Hero is the principal figure in *Much Ado*, and that her passivity and relative silence contrast dramatically with the fact that she is the most discussed character in the comedy. Like Hermione, Hero is presumed dead and is absent for much of Acts IV and V:

She is a character who is talked about far more than she talks. And when we begin to look at her in this light we begin to come to the centre of the play, for talking about people is one of the central activities in the play. Messina is full of hearsay: ... Key moments occur when people overhear conversations about themselves or others.¹²

Claudio, newly engaged to Hero, says prophetically, "Silence is the perfectest herald of joy" (2.1.281). As Hero remains speechless, her actions are presented only by allusions to her kissing and whispering in her beloved's ear. Bate quotes Hazlitt's reason for admiring Hero so much in his *Characters in Shakespear's Plays* (1817): "The justification of Hero in the end, and her restoration to the confidence and arms of her lover, is brought about by one of those temporary consignments to the grave of which Shakespeare seems to have been fond."¹³ Friar Francis' speeches (4.1.200-243) are crucial here in that they lay out the strategy for transforming Hero's "slander to remorse."

She, dying, as must be maintained,
 Upon the instant that she was accused,
 Shall be lamented, pitied and excused
 Of every hearer. For it so falls out
 That what we have we prize not to the worth
 Whiles we enjoy it, but being lacked and lost,
 Why, then we rack the value, then we find
 The virtue that possession would not show us
 Whiles it was ours. So will it fare with Claudio:
 When he shall hear she died upon his words,
 Th'idea of her life shall sweetly creep
 Into his study of imagination,

And every lovely organ of her life
 Shall come appareled in more precious habit,
 More moving, delicate, and full of life,
 Into the eye and prospect of his soul
 Than when she lived indeed. Then shall he mourn
 (4.1.214-230)¹⁴

Bate calls this moment the very heart of the play. To him Hero's apparent death and silence are reminiscent of her classical namesake, Leander's Hero, who drowns herself rather than live without her beloved. According to Bate, Hero is probably named as a representative of Ovid's *Heroides*, the catalog of worthy women of antiquity who were betrayed and abandoned by their husbands and lovers. Hero and the other heroines of the *Heroides* are essentially tragic figures; in that Ovidian text there are no second chances. *Much Ado* is more in a romance mold, and this suggests a generic link with Euripides' *Alcestis*. The latter was a kind of transcended tragedy; it was performed in the position usually held by the comic satyr-play, as fourth in a group of dramas, following and in some senses defusing or providing relief from three tragedies. It is a potential tragedy, but one with last-minute relief. Life is heightened because of the process of going through death: The pattern is that of many works in the romance tradition and of several of Shakespeare's later comedies — *Much Ado*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Pericles* and *The Winter's Tale*.¹⁵

The plot of *Alcestis* is nicely summarized by Bate in "Dying to Live": Apollo delivers the prologue, which relates how Zeus killed the physician Asclepius with a thunderbolt for the sin of raising the dead. In revenge, Asclepius' father, Apollo, killed the Cyclops who forged Zeus' weapon, which resulted in Apollo's exile from Olympus; his punishment was to serve King Admetus for one year. Admetus treated the disguised god well, and was rewarded by Apollo, who later convinced the Fates to delay Admetus' death, if he could persuade another to die in his place. Queen Alcestis alone agreed to take his place, and this is the day that she must die. Alcestis is quite willing to die to keep her children from ever being fatherless, but insists during her deathbed scene that Admetus not remarry for the sake of their children. Admetus agrees and goes on to say "that he will have a statue of her made and kept in the house in memory of her. He speaks of the image of her coming to him in his dreams; there is an interesting consonance here with

that powerful passage in the Friar's key speech."¹⁶

Immediately after Alcestis dies and her body has been removed, Hercules arrives and Admetus insists on offering him hospitality, equivocating with his honored guest about who had died in order to conceal the grief of the household. Hercules unknowingly creates offense by getting drunk, and then disappears. The audience learns later that he has gone to the tomb of the queen and seized Death, forcing her release. In the final scene, after the Chorus has sung a four-stanza hymn honoring Alcestis and lamenting her fate, a veiled woman is brought forward by Hercules and presented to a repentant Admetus. The king resists at first, to honor his commitment to Alcestis to not remarry, but eventually yields to Hercules' insistence and takes the hand of the mysteriously silent woman. Alcestis is then unveiled to his astonishment and gratitude as the play concludes.

Several details of this are close to *The Winter's Tale*, but one particular feature is especially striking: Alcestis does not speak. This motif is taken into the mythic structure when Herakles explains that she will not be allowed to speak for three days, by which time her obligations to the gods of the underworld will have been washed away. Alcestis functions as the archetypal silenced woman, and in this, she is a precedent for Hero, who is allowed to say so little throughout the play and is given only two brief factual speeches on her unveiling at the climax.¹⁷

Bate asserts that *Alcestis* may not be the primary source of the Hero plot, but Euripides' heroine nonetheless serves as a "powerful, mythic prototype" for women like Hero, Hermione, and Helena in *All's Well That Ends Well*, who are silenced by a temporary consignment to the grave. As in *All's Well That Ends Well* and *The Winter's Tale*, the actual death of the myth is replaced by a self-conscious stage trick. Theophanies like that of Apollo and superhuman interventions like that of Herakles are replaced by domesticated divine agents: the Friar's scheme, Helena's self-contrived devices, Paulina's priestess-like art. Silence is not given a mythico-religious cause but becomes a psychological and social reality.¹⁸

Ovid's *Heroides* was well known during the Elizabethan age. Michael Drayton's *England's Heroicall Epistles*, published and reprinted several times between 1597 and 1599, was a popular imitation of Ovid's poems, and it was contemporaneous with *Much Ado*. In Ovid's poems, the heroines often refer to their tombs and several of them inscribe their own epitaph.

The epitaph and tomb scene makes Hero recognizable as one of

the *Heroides*. Her name makes this link: It sets up a prototype that can be recognized by the audience. This is something different from a direct source. Hero's swooning and supposed death, together with the obsequies and epitaph, derive more directly from the novella by Bandello that is almost certainly the play's primary source, but Shakespeare's effect turns on the change in name from Bandello's Fenicia to the more symbolic and Ovidian Hero.¹⁹

Though Bate's argument on the symbolic significance of Hero's name is relevant, he failed to note the distinct parallels between the Chorus near the conclusion of *Alcestis* and the tomb rites in Act 5, Scene 3, in *Much Ado*. In Euripides' drama, after Admetus has lamented his cowardly shame and sunk down in misery, covering his head with his robe, the Chorus sings its lamentation on how neither knowledge of "Orphic symbols" nor "the herbs given by Phoebus to the children of Asclepius" avails against man's mortality, that Fate's "fierce will knows not gentleness." The last stanzas serve as a paean to Alcestis, the "blessed spirit," and include expressions suggestive of Shakespeare's epitaph and song dedicated to Hero in *Much Ado*:

And the Goddess has bound you
Ineluctably in the gyves of her hands.
Yield.
Can your tears give life to the dead?
For the sons of the Gods
Swoon in the shadow of Death.
Dear was she in our midst,
Dear still among the dead,
For the noblest of women was she
Who lay in her bed.

Ah!
Let the grave of your spouse
Be no more counted as a tomb,
But revered as the Gods,
And greeted by all who pass by!
The wanderer shall turn from his path,
Saying: 'She died for her lord:
A blessed spirit she is now.

Hail, O sacred lady, be our friend!
Thus shall men speak of her.
(986-1005)²⁰

The tomb scene in *Much Ado* is very short, only 33 lines long, and half of the lines comprise the epitaph and dirge. This very solemn scene concludes with Don Pedro's description of dawn in an allusion to Apollo, "the wheels of Phoebus" (5.3.26), whose preeminence in *Alcestis* and *The Winter's Tale* has already been established. Hero's epitaph, remarkably, sounds very much like the *Alcestis* Chorus in that both proclaim the particular sacrifices of the deceased women, which merits their fame:

Done to death by slanderous tongues
Was the Hero that here lies:
Death, in guerdon of her wrongs,
Gives her fame which never dies:
So the life that died with shame,
Lives in death with glorious fame.
(5.3.3-8)

As soon as the epitaph is hung, Claudio calls for music and this "solemn hymn."

Pardon, goddess of the night,
Those that slew thy virgin knight,
For the which with songs of woe
Round about her tomb we go.
Midnight, assist our moan,
Help us sigh and groan,
Heavily, heavily.
Graves yawn and yield your dead,
Till death be uttered
Heavily, heavily.
(5.3.12-21)

If, as Bate has suggested, Claudio is modeled after Euripides' Admetus, whose contrition and sense of shame are well developed, then we must take

seriously his vow of an annual sackcloth visit to Hero's monument. Arden editor Claire McEachern suggests that the "goddess of the night" here is likely to be an allusion to Diana, goddess of the moon and of chastity. She also notes that "Round about her tomb we go" refers to the practice of circling clockwise, "a traditional way of averting evil."²¹ One is immediately reminded here of Greek choruses which danced as they sang, and often circled in unison in alternating directions, changing direction with each stanza. McEachern reports that the first Folio edition of *Much Ado* substituted the words, "Heavenly, heavenly" for line 21, which could certainly be an allusion to the possibility of resurrection.

The tomb scene in *Much Ado* thus resembles in specific details the scene at the tomb described by the Chorus in *Alcestis*. Both reflect a sober, melancholic pathos, and both are immediately followed by joyful reunions of the heroes-in-mourning to their mysteriously veiled wives, returned from the grave. As coherent as Bate is about Shakespeare's dependency on *Alcestis* for the plot and dramaturgy of the last scene of *Much Ado*, he reiterates his unsupported assumptions in the concluding paragraph of his otherwise brilliant discussion:

Did Shakespeare know the *Alcestis* story? There were sixteenth-century Latin translations of Euripides' play; there is a brief version of the story in Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*. But the story is also told in an Elizabethan collection of romances, George Pettie's *A Petite Pallace of Pettie his Pleasure*. One tale in there ("Cephalus and Procris") is a likely secondary source for *Othello*, a play with a theme of wrongful accusation of a wife that is closely linked to both *Much Ado* and *The Winter's Tale*; Pettie's "Admetus and Alcest" has an Admetus who first learns in his sleep that Alcestis will return from the dead, and when he learns this "he had much ado to keep his soul in his body from flying to meet her." I do not attach great significance to the common phrase "much ado" appearing here, but it would be intriguing if Shakespeare did know Pettie's version of the tale....²²

Bate is technically correct because of Buchanan's Latin *Alcestis*, but it was written and published in France. As for Chaucer as an *Alcestis* source, his poetic introduction to *Legend* does include a long discourse by Queen Alcestis, who offers the poet advice on ways to mend his troubled relationship

with the queen's second husband, the God of Love. However, *Legend* does not describe her return from the dead or even mention a reunion with King Admetus. In George Pettie's 1576 rendition, "Admetus and Alcest," the relevant text also does not duplicate in any way Euripides' scene of the resurrection of the Queen.

And Proserpine ye goddess of hell especialye pitying ye parting of this loving couple (for yt she her selfe knew the paine of partinge from freinds, beeing by Dys stolen from her mother (Ceres) put life into his wife againe, and with speed sent her unto him. Who beeing certified here of in his sleepe, early in ye morning waited for her coming seing her come a far of hee had much a do to kepe his soule in his body from flying to meet her. Beeing come he received her as joyfully, as shee came willingly, & so they lived longe time together in most contented happinesse.²³

While effectively focusing on the Hero and Claudio plot and establishing a credible argument about *Much Ado's* debt to *Alcestis*, Bate regrettably fails to cite a reliable source published in England that depicts a scene of a veiled reunion similar to Euripides' and Shakespeare's plays. He also seems to have overlooked the remarkable similarities between the *Alcestis* Chorus and the tomb scene in *Much Ado*. Relevant to the argument of a connection between Euripides and Shakespeare, Bate does not consider the significance of the unusual number of allusions to Hercules in *Much Ado*, or whether they offer possible additional connections to *Alcestis*, where Hercules plays such a pivotal role in the drama. An examination of Shakespeare's clever use of the Hercules mythography in *Much Ado* is overdue.

Hercules

The allusions to Hercules in *Much Ado* are highly intriguing, and reinforce a perception that Shakespeare's Benedick is modeled as a comedic "Herculean hero." At the end of Act 2, Scene 1, immediately after Don Pedro has successfully wooed for Hero's hand in Claudio's name, Beatrice courteously rejects his marriage proposal, saying "Your grace is too costly to wear every day," thus alluding to her low social status in relation to the Prince. Don Pedro then resolves that Beatrice "were an excellent wife for

Benedick.” (2.1.324). Vowing to use the days before Claudio and Hero’s wedding to good romantic purpose, Don Pedro hatches a conspiracy of matchmaking between the unlikely couple:

Come you shake your head at so long a breathing, but I warrant thee, Claudio, the time shall not go dully by us. I will, in the interim, undertake one of Hercules’ labours, which is to bring Signor Benedick and the Lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection th’one to th’other. I would fain have it a match, and I doubt not but to fashion it, if you three will but minister such assistance as I will give you direction.
(2.2.334-41)

Don Pedro likens his challenge to one of Hercules’ famous twelve labors. These were quite well known to Elizabethan writers, but none of them resembles this type of a matchmaking challenge. Robert Root pointed out a century ago how often Shakespeare makes very specific allusions to episodes in the demigod’s mythology, including a number of his labors, the events of his youth, his relationship with Queen Omphale as her slave, and the circumstances of his death. While Hercules’ mythology is not without its sexual heroism (in one tale he makes love to the fifty daughters of King Thespius, begetting fifty sons), only one episode includes a story in which Hercules acts in a way that unites separated lovers. The one exception that features the hero as matchmaker among all his labors, deeds and adventures is Euripides’ *Alcestis*.

In *Alcestis* Heracles, as he is known to the Greeks, provides the comic relief in an otherwise highly charged, tragic melodrama. The appearance of Apollo and Death at the beginning of the play sets a solemn tone, which is followed by the pathetic scenes in which the queen bids farewell to her family and household and dies amidst great lamentation. These scenes are followed by the wretched argument between Admetus and his father, Pheres, resulting in the King’s angrily disowning his father. Finally, after these miserable, degraded characters exit, a servant enters and begins complaining bitterly that Heracles has been the worst guest Admetus has ever welcomed to his hearth:

...knowing our misfortune, he did not soberly accept what was offered him, but if anything was not served to him he ordered us to bring it. In

both hands he took the cup of ivy-wood, and drank the unmixed wine of the dark grape-mother, until he was encompassed and heated with the flame of wine. He crowned his head with myrtle sprays, howling discordant songs. There was he caring nothing for Admetus's misery, and we servants weeping for our queen; and yet we hide our tear-laden eyes from the guest, for Admetus had commanded. (750-60)

Heracles then staggers drunkenly on stage, merrily sporting the myrtle wreath and carrying a wineskin in his hands. He begins by advising the servant to not be so sullen, but show a cheerful heart. Having been misled by Admetus into believing the dead woman was a stranger to the household, Heracles instructs the servant with "drunken gravity:"

Know the nature of human life? Don't think you do. You couldn't. Listen to me. All mortals must die. Isn't one who knows if he'll be alive tomorrow morning. Who knows where fortune will lead? Nobody can teach it. Nobody learn it by rules. So, rejoice in what you hear and learn from me! Drink! Count each day as it comes as Life – and leave the rest to Fortune. Above all, honor the Love Goddess, sweetest of all Gods to mortal men, a kindly goddess! Put all the rest aside....To all solemn and frowning men, life I say is not life, but a disaster. (784-800)

These platitudes expressed in an intoxicated manner by the misinformed and unsteady hero would have been the first light moment in an otherwise gloomy drama. Hercules' simple-minded discourse on the virtues of wine and of the kindness of the love goddess is truly laughable. Arden editor McEachern has taken note of this in her introduction to *Much Ado*: "Euripides' *Alcestis* is also structurally similar to *Much Ado* in its use of comic scenes (those of Hercules' drunken festivities during the heroine's funeral) to counterpoint the apparent tragedy and hint at the comic ending to come."²⁴

Hercules' speeches here even seem to parallel Benedick's ironic long speeches about love in Act 2, Scene 3 (1-34 and 213-237), where he first rails against it and then suddenly embraces his new passion, cleverly inverting every point in his earlier speech after secretly hearing of Beatrice's supposed great affection for him.

This can be no trick.... It seems her affections have their full bent. Love me? Why, it must be requited.... They say the lady is fair – ‘tis a truth, I can bear them witness. And virtuous – ‘tis so, I cannot reprove it. And wise, but for loving me. By my troth, it is no addition to her wit – nor no great argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her.

(213-27)

Euripides’ Heracles has his own immediate conversion from drunkenness to sober, implacable determination once he learns that it was actually Queen Alcestis whom the household was mourning when he accepted Admetus’ hospitality.

O heart of me, much enduring heart, O right arm, now indeed must you show what son was born to Zeus and Alcmena.... For I must save this dead woman, and bring back Alcestis to this house as a grace to Admetus.

I shall watch for Death, the black-robed Lord of the Dead, and I know I shall find him near the tomb, drinking the blood of the sacrifices. If I can leap upon him from an ambush, seize him, grasp him in my arms, no power in the world shall tear his bruised sides from me until he has yielded up this woman. If I miss my prey, if he does not come near the bleeding sacrifice, I will go down to Kore and her lord in their sunless dwelling, and I will make my entreaty to them, and I know they will give me Alcestis to bring back to the hands of the host who welcomed me, who did not repulse me from his house, though he was smitten with a heavy woe which most nobly he hid from me! Where would be a warmer welcome in Thessaly or in all the dwellings of Hellas?

(840-860)

Heracles accomplishes his goal exactly as he had predicted. In the final scene of the play, he returns with the veiled Alcestis in hand, first chiding his host for concealing his grief, and then graciously offering the hand of the veiled woman beside him, making up a story about how he had won her as a prize in an athletic competition. Insisting his host take the woman’s hand, Heracles then unveils Alcestis, who remains silent, presaging the near silence of Shakespeare’s Hero and Hermione. *Alcestis* ends with King Admetus’ farewell to Heracles and call for prayer and music:

Good fortune to you and come back here! In all the city and in the four quarters of Thessaly let there be choruses to rejoice at this good fortune, and let the altars smoke with the flesh of oxen in sacrifice! Today we have changed the past for a better life. I am happy.
(1153-58)

In *Much Ado about Nothing*, it is Benedick who performs the Herculean task of facing death in challenging Claudio, the instrument of Hero's slander and the cause of her near-death. Shakespeare's depiction of Benedick as a Herculean hero, as first a fool for love and later as a serious man who chooses to sacrifice himself for a virtuous woman's honor, is reinforced when he is provoked by Beatrice's mocking challenge to redress Hero's dishonor by referring to Hercules' valor:

But manhood is melted into curtsies, valour into compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and trim ones, too. He is now as valiant as Hercules that only tells a lie and swears it. I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving.
(4.1.317-321)

Seven lines later Benedick declares, "Enough, I am engaged. I will challenge him." Benedick is in fact the first character to allude to Hercules in Act 2, Scene 1 of *Much Ado*, and on this occasion as a barbed insult to Beatrice who had bested him in their most recent battle of wits. A careful examination of the classical allusions in this speech reveals how source-rich and subtle is Shakespeare's employment of this archetypal hero:

She told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I was the prince's jester, that I was duller than a great thaw, huddling jest upon jest with such impossible conveyance upon me that I stood like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me. She speaks poniards, and every word stabs. If her breath were as terrible as her terminations there were no living near her, she would infect to the North Star. I would not marry her though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgressed. She would have made Hercules have turned a spit, yea, and have cleft his club to make the fire too. Come, talk not of her, you

shall find her the eternal Ate in good apparel.

(2.1.222-234)

The image of Benedick as archery target, “a man at the mark” and of Beatrice’s powerful penetrating wit as she “speaks poniards” is most probably an allusion to Lucian’s satiric dialogue, *Heracles, An Introductory Lecture*. Neither Bate nor McEachern make note of this, but Shakespeare’s image of eloquence, of words delivered with “impossible conveyance” as arrows, seems to me to be derived directly from Lucian:

Indeed, we refer the achievements of the original Heracles, from first to last, to his wisdom and persuasive eloquence. His shafts, as I take it, are no other than his words; swift, keen-pointed, true-aimed to do deadly execution on the soul.’ And in conclusion he reminded me of our own phrase, ‘winged words.’²⁵

McEachern includes these footnotes in the Arden edition regarding Benedick’s reference to Hercules having “turned a spit”: “Turning the roasting spit over the fire was considered the most menial of Elizabethan kitchen tasks. Hercules’ club was a massive (and phallic) one, and splitting it into firewood would have been an arduous as well as emasculating task for him to undertake. The misogyny of Benedick’s caricatures increases as he elaborates them.”²⁶ Robert K. Root agrees with McEachern’s interpretation of “turned a spit,” and suggests that this image refers to Hercules doing women’s work in service to Queen Omphale.²⁷ Hercules served Omphale as her slave in order to expiate the sin of killing a friend. His heroic deeds in her service included capturing notorious thieves, razing the cities of Omphale’s enemies and killing giant serpents that threatened her people. However, he would also be required to wear women’s clothing with jeweled necklaces and golden bracelets, and to clumsily spin wool while he recounted his great deeds to the women in Omphale’s court. In jest, the queen would wear his lion pelt and swing his club. He was not assigned to kitchen duties, however, according to Robert Graves’ detailed and richly referenced recounting of Hercules’ adventures in *The Greek Myths*. Shakespeare, nonetheless, has already implied earlier in the scene that Beatrice is to be associated with Omphale:

Beatrice: Lord, I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face!

I had rather lie in the woolen.

Leonato: You may light upon a husband that hath no beard.

Beatrice: What should I do with him? Dress him in my apparel and make him my waiting-gentlewoman? (2.1.26-30)

“Turned a spit” could also refer to something far more sinister than menial kitchen labor. The phrasing has a cannibalistic overtone, one that parallels the many metaphors of carnality identified by McEachern²⁸. Hercules does die by fire because his skin was burned from a sacrificial shirt his wife Deianeira sent to him, one that she had unknowingly tainted with Hydra’s poison from the vengeful, dead centaur Nessus. Here is how Robert Graves describes the scene of Hercules giving his final sacrifice:

He was pouring wine from a bowl on the altars and throwing frankincense on the flames when he let out a sudden yell as if he had been bitten by a serpent. The heat had melted the Hydra’s poison in Nessus’s blood, which coursed all over Heracles limbs, corroding his flesh. Soon the pain was beyond endurance and, bellowing in anguish, he overturned the altars. He tried to rip off the shirt, but it clung to him so fast that his flesh came away with it, laying bare the bones. His blood hissed and bubbled like spring water when red hot metal is being tempered.²⁹

Another nuance to this image is the possibility that the author is referring to Hercules’ funeral pyre. Suffering excruciating pain from the Nessus shirt, Hercules was conveyed to the peak of Mount Oeta and there a pile of oak branches and trunks of the wild olive were built, and he spread his lions pelt and laid down using his club as a pillow, in the end “looking as blissful as a garlanded guest surrounded by wine-cups. Thunderbolts then fell from the sky and at once reduced the pyre to ashes.”³⁰

Benedick’s referring to Beatrice as “the eternal Ate in good attire” is a Homeric image from *The Iliad*. In Book 19 of the Greek epic, Zeus describes how this goddess of discord was the cause of Hercules’ being forced to perform his twelve labors for King Eurystheus. Although Hesiod, Aeschylus and Apollodorus all describe other episodes in the mythology of this troublesome goddess, I believe Homer is the only direct literary source for the difficulties Hercules will suffer because of the actions of Ate. What is

problematic here in grasping Shakespeare's use of a Homeric goddess is the fact that Books 11 to 24 of the *Iliad*, as well as the works of Hesiod, Aeschylus and Apollodorus, were untranslated from the Greek by the time *Much Ado* was known to have been written.

Noting that Ate is the goddess who also instigated the Trojan War, McEachern recounts how *The Lamentable Tragedy of Lochrine* (1595) represents Ate as a chorus entering "with thunder and lightening, all in black, with a burning torch in one hand and a bloody sword in the other, and warning that 'a woman was the only cause / That civil discord was then stirred up.'"³¹ An intriguing reference to Shakespeare's use of Ate is found in Howard Furness' New Variorum edition of *Much Ado about Nothing* (1899), where he discusses a curious allusion to Ate by Berowne in *Love's Labour's Lost*. At the presentation of the Nine Worthies Berowne exclaims: "More Ates, more Ates, stir them on, stir them on!" (5.2.685-6). Furness raises a very good question: "Where did Shakespeare get acquainted with this divinity, whose name does not occur, I believe, even in any Latin author?"³²

Shakespeare's multiple allusions to Hercules in *Much Ado*, first by Benedick to insult Beatrice, then by Don Pedro to unite the quarreling couple in love, and finally by Beatrice to provoke Benedick to challenge Claudio, invites an analysis of Benedick as a "Herculean hero," a hero with both the comedic and the heroic qualities of Euripides' depiction in *Alcestris*. Truly as a wine-happy fool raving about the goddess of love, Hercules is no more pathetic than Shakespeare's Benedick, himself converted in one brief interlude from misogynist-in-chief to sonnet-writing lover. That Hercules is the character Beatrice invokes to motivate Benedick to risk his life is inherent to the design of *Much Ado*. When Benedick says, "I am engaged, I will challenge him" (4.1.328), McEachern asserts that this is the defining moment for the hero and indicates a "crucial switch of allegiance from the world of his male companions to a woman's belief."³³ Benedick abandons the world of verbal jousting in order to challenge "Lord Lack-beard" (5.1.187), a most un-Herculean image.

Shakespeare and other Renaissance playwrights used Hercules as the model for a number of different characters, according to Yale University Professor Eugene Waith in *The Herculean Hero* (1962). Examining characters for the Herculean imprint from Marlowe, Chapman, Shakespeare and Dryden, Waith writes, "Hercules was for many Greeks and Romans and for many men of the Renaissance the hero of heroes, he was also an extreme

example of character traits which were often deplored in later ages....The number of striking allusions shows that the English playwrights I discuss were aware of resemblances between their heroes and Hercules, though there is no indication that any one depiction of him served as a model.”³⁴ Waith’s depiction of Hercules as a tragic heroic archetype is compelling. He suggests that Hercules was the ideal model of a man of action who must fight against his fate and who is impelled toward what Waith terms boundary situations. “No hero fights harder against his destiny or tries more desperately to extend the limits of his sovereignty than does the Herculean hero.”³⁵

Waith notes that Hercules is the hero who best exemplifies the Greek ideal of *areté*, which combined a proud and courtly morality with a warlike valor. As such, Hercules served as the embodiment of moral energy triumphing through physical means. The legends of Hercules used by the Renaissance writers were derived from a variety of sources, including the classical mythographers, poets, and playwrights, including Sophocles, Euripides and Seneca. Waith’s primary interest in Hercules is as a glorious, stoic, tragic hero, and he does not even comment on Euripides’ comedic use of the hero in *Alcestis*. Regarding the classical dramatists’ treatment of Hercules, he writes:

He is a warrior whose extraordinary strength is matched by his valour and fortitude. His self-assurance and self-centeredness amount to inordinate pride, but are not treated as *hamartia*. Though his savage anger is at times almost brutal, he is capable of great devotion, is dedicated to a heroic ideal, and is regarded as a benefactor of humanity. In him, *areté* is pushed to the ultimate degree; yet in defiance of justice, he is rewarded with extraordinary suffering.³⁶

Using this model, Waith makes strong cases for Mark Antony and Coriolanus to be seen as Herculean heroes. Mark Antony, according to Plutarch, actually claimed direct descent from Hercules and attired himself accordingly with a sword and rough mantle whenever he spoke publicly. Waith suggests that Hercules relationship to Queen Omphale is the model for Antony’s having become an effeminate libertine under the influence of Cleopatra; “We hear from Cleopatra herself how she ‘put her tires and mantles on him’ (2.5.22) while she wore his sword, a prank which seems to symbolize all too exactly the transformation lamented by Caesar. It

is Hercules unmanned by Omphale.”³⁷ Waith argues that Shakespeare emphasizes Antony’s flaws as much as he honors his reputation for valor, showing both his rage and his bounteous generosity, and he finds Antony’s suicide completely consistent with his heroic patron’s nature:

If in some respects he is no longer Herculean, in others he is more so than ever. This situation seems to be reflected in the allusions to Hercules, for although “the god Hercules, whom Antony lov’d,” is said to be leaving him on the eve of his last battles (4.3.15) some of the most striking identifications with Hercules are made shortly after Antony’s death.³⁸

Similarly, Waith points out how Coriolanus is not only presented as a god, but he is directly compared to Hercules, “like a thing / Made by some other deity than Nature.” Shakespeare’s Coriolanus is thus depicted as the hero who will “shake your Rome” like Hercules shook down the “mellow fruit,” an allusion to the Apples of the Hesperides, the hero’s eleventh labor.

If Professor Waith is correct in his argument that Shakespeare modeled tragic figures on Herculean characteristics, is it not likely that the playwright would do the same for comedy? After all, the Greek dramatists certainly understood Hercules’ comedic as well as tragic potential. Benedick, of all of Shakespeare’s comedic characters, is the one who most closely bears the Herculean imprint, one that combines the comic intoxication of the lover with the fearlessness of a hero who would risk death to rescue a woman’s honor. If *Alceste* is a direct source for *Much Ado* and features a satiric treatment of Hercules — and there are numerous allusions to Hercules in this comedy — is not Shakespeare’s Benedick another cleverly crafted comedic Herculean hero, akin to Waith’s selections of Mark Antony and Coriolanus? After all, classical authors used Hercules in comedic as well as tragic roles. In “At the Crossroads of Myth: The Hermeneutics of Hercules from Ovid to Shakespeare” Jeff Shulman reports that:

...it is, in fact, the comic Hercules that enjoys the greatest popularity. Serious criticism of Hercules is offered occasionally, but by and large the satiric temper of the classical authors is a fairly tolerant one; and the presentation of Hercules burlesquing his many heroic

manifestations in feats of gluttony, libertinism and general strutting around is seen in Aeschylus' *Heralds*, Sophocles' *Herakles at Taenarus*, Ion's *Omphale*, Aristophanes' *Birds*, & Euripides' *Syleus* and *Alcestis*... The important thing about Ovid's handling of the Hercules myth is that he pays equal attention to both the heroic and the satiric traditions of interpretation...."³⁹

The one allusion to Hercules in the play that does not directly relate to the romantic plot is spoken by Borachio, Don John's co-conspirator. During his lengthy interrogation by the Watch, Borachio uses a pastiche of pagan and Christian images:

Seest thou not, I say, what a deformed thief this fashion is, how giddily 'a turns about all the hot-bloods between fourteen and five-and-thirty, sometimes fashioning them like Pharaoh's soldiers in the reechy painting, sometimes like god Bels's priest in the old church window, sometimes like the shaven Hercules in the smirched worm-eaten tapestry, where his codpiece seems as massy as his club.

(3.3.126-133)

Arden editor Claire McEachern adeptly interprets this dense sequence of religious allusions: "Pharaoh's soldiers in the reechy painting" refers to depictions of the Egyptian army that drowned in the Red Sea pursuing the Israelites in smoke-stained paintings and frescoes on old church walls; "god Bel's priests in the old church window" refers to the biblical story of Daniel overthrowing the priests of Baal for their idolatry, depicted in stained glass windows of Catholic churches;" and "The shaven Hercules in the smirch worm-eaten tapestry, where his codpiece seems as massy as his club" seems more likely to be an allusion to Samson than to Hercules, who never shaved.⁴⁰

Although the mocking tone of Borachio's allusion to Hercules suggests the villain does not know the difference between the Hebrew strongman, Samson, and the Greek demigod, in some early Christian teachings these heroes were actually conflated. Hercules at the crossroads, a popular representation of the youthful (and therefore beardless) Hercules, poised between the paths of virtue and vice, is another possible interpretation. Shakespeare's mixing classical and Christian allusions in this comic scene

may even have encoded religious significance. In *Shadowplay: The Hidden Beliefs and Coded Politics of William Shakespeare* (2005) Claire Asquith included Hercules in her glossary of “coded terms.”

Hercules: The classical hero who fought the many-headed hydra, Hercules was a favorite Counter-Reformation image of resistance to the many heads of heresy. Shakespeare’s Hercules, often a humiliated figure, is associated with various aspects of resistance to the Reformation in England.⁴¹

Borachio’s speech seems more a satiric representation of the “old church,” and his allusion to Hercules suggests an intentional commentary on the confusion between the Greek and Jewish heroes. Furness, quoting Warburton in his footnote, writes that this passage definitely meant Samson, “the usual subject of old tapestry....What authorized the poet to give this name to Samson was the folly of certain Christian mythologists, who pretend that the Grecian Hercules was the Jewish Samson.”⁴² While Furness expressed the opinion that Borachio’s allusion to Hercules was none other than Hercules shaven and adorned in women’s clothing while in service to Omphale, his appendices included this commentary by A.E. Brae on this image: “The real allusion is evidently to the Hercules Gallus, about which there is a long description in one of Lucian’s minor treatises. This, the French Hercules, was an emblem of eloquence, and was represented as a bald old man with a *huge club!*”⁴³

No scholar has previously considered another possibility, that the “shaven Hercules” could be a mocking reference to Hercule Valois, later renamed François, the Duke of Alençon and Anjou, and Queen Elizabeth’s most ardent suitor in the early 1580s. According to Francis Yates,⁴⁴ the Valois Tapestries were eight superlative panels commissioned by Catherine de Medici and created in Antwerp during the early 1580s as a tribute to her son, Anjou, who had recently been made Duke of Brabant by William of Orange. François Hercule Valois is featured in two of the panels and appears to be partially shaven in the tapestry. Another contemporary portrait of Valois shows him to be clean shaven. Roger Stritmatter⁴⁵ has recently reviewed the evidence that Shakespeare mocked Valois by allegorizing him as Bottom in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. This suggests the distinct possibility that Borachio’s commentary on the “hot-bloods between fourteen and thirty-

five” could actually be an allusion to the unlikely romance between Valois and Elizabeth; he was seventeen when the marriage negotiations were begun in 1572, and she was thirty-nine. That Alençon and Elizabeth acted like “hot-bloods,” stealing away to his bedchamber unchaperoned every morning during his secret visits to court, is well attested by historian Martin Hume (in the *Courtships of Queen Elizabeth: A History of the Various Negotiations for her Marriage*) and, more recently, by Susan Doran (in *Monarchy and Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I* [1996]). In *Elizabeth and Leicester* (1944), Milton Waldman wrote that “Elizabeth mooned over him in corners, publicly kissed him, and succeeded in convincing everybody, including more than probably herself, that the long looked-for love which might be consummated in marriage had at last overtaken her.”⁴⁶

That Hercules served as a favorite allusion in Shakespeare is attested by the numerous references to the hero in the canon. Plays with Hercules allusions include *Much Ado*, *Love’s Labor’s Lost*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Merry Wives*, *Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, *All’s Well That Ends Well*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Cymbeline*, *Coriolanus*, *Hamlet*, *Two Noble Kinsmen*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Henry IV* and *I Henry VI*. In *Love’s Labour’s Lost* Hercules even appears, albeit incorrectly, as one of the nine worthies. He is also alluded to under his birth name, Alcides, in *Taming of the Shrew*, *Merchant of Venice*, *King John*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *I* and *III Henry VI*.

In *Classical Mythology in Shakespeare* Robert Root argued that while Shakespeare’s allusions to Hercules were extraordinarily numerous, the author’s grasp of the myth was quite limited, and that the playwright derived his Hercules material from “conversations and miscellaneous reading” as well as “more accurate knowledge gained from Ovid’s incomplete version of the myth, and possibly from the English translation of Seneca.”⁴⁷ Although asserting initially that most of Shakespeare’s allusions to Hercules represent only a type of strength or valor, he nonetheless recounts in great detail how the playwright was familiar with many of the labors, deeds and other episodes from Hercules’ life.

Root identifies multiple allusions to the Nemean Lion (*LLL*, *Hamlet*, *MSND* and *KJ*), which was the first of Hercules’ labors, and while not constituting direct allusions to Hercules, he notes there are six references to the Lernean Hydra, the destruction of which was Hercules’ second labor. Retrieving the Apples of the Hesperides was his eleventh labor and is alluded to three times (*LLL*, *Hamlet* and *Pericles*) and his twelfth labor, the kidnapping

of Cerberus from the underworld, was alluded to in *Love's Labor's Lost*. In this comedy, Moth also plays Hercules in the masque of the Nine Worthies, strangling the serpents sent by Hera to kill the infant hero. According to Root, these allusions to Hercules' labors were probably based on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which is also the likely source for the allusions to Hercules' love of Queen Omphale in both *LLL* and *Much Ado*. Professor Root also noted many allusions demonstrating Shakespeare's knowledge of the circumstances of Hercules' death:

The attempt made by the Centaur Nessus to ravish Deianira (*Metamorphoses* 9.101) is alluded to in *Alls Well that Ends Well* (4.3.283), and the poisoned Nessus-shirt in *Antony and Cleopatra* (4.12.43), and probably also in *As You Like It* (2.3.14-15). As to Hercules' death, Shakespeare is fairly explicit. He twice refers to the page of Lichias, who was thrown far into the air by the enraged hero; *Merchant of Venice* (2.1.32) and *Anthony and Cleopatra* (4.12.45), a detail which may have been learned from *Metamorphoses* (9.217-18), but the phrase ...seems nearer to the Senecan account of *Hercules Oetaeus* (815-22).⁴⁸

Robert Root points out that Shakespeare even seems to have mimicked John Studley's 1571 English translation of Seneca's *Hercules Oetaeus* in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* where Bottom claims to be able to "play 'erc'les rarely" and recites these lines: "The raging rocks / And Shivering shocks / Shall break the locks / Of prison gates; / And Phibbus' car / Shall shine from far, / And make and mar / The foolish Fates." (1.2) Root correctly notes that Studley's *Hercles* "recounts his own exploits in bad verse with excessive use of alliteration."⁴⁹ Studley translated four dramas of Seneca, dedicated his *Agamemnon* (1566) to William Cecil, and was intimate with members of the Inns of Court. Shakespeare seems to be masterfully mocking them all, Hercules, Bottom, Studley and Seneca.

Root incorrectly asserts, however, that Shakespeare was confused regarding Hercules' retrieving the golden apples of the Hesperides referred to in *Coriolanus* (4.6) and *Love's Labour's Lost* (4.3). He writes that in these plays "Hercules gathers the fruit himself; while, according to the myth, he sent Atlas to do it for him. It was during Atlas' errand that Hercules bore his burden for him."⁵⁰ In *Hamlet*, Hercules bearing the globe is alluded to by Rosenkrantz (2.2), so Shakespeare appears to have been aware of another

version of the eleventh labor. In *Heracles: The Twelve Labors and the Hero in Ancient Art and Literature* (1986), Frank Brommer elaborates the origins of both renditions of this myth:

The literature of the 5th century brings together the apples and the scene at the end of the world. Sophocles in *Trachiniae* describes the hero's arrival at the lair of the snake which lived at the outermost edge of the world guarding the apples. It seems that Heracles himself overcomes the snake. In his *Heracles*, Euripides states specifically that Hercules killed the snake and picked the fruit. Pherecydes, on the other hand, had another version: Hercules orders Atlas to pick the apples while he himself carries the heavens.⁵¹

Brommer points out that Diodorus later followed the text of Euripides while Apollodorus borrows from Pherecydes, so that two contradictory literary versions of the eleventh labor existed in later renditions. Root inexplicably also did not take into consideration the possibility that Shakespeare may have known the version found in Cooper's *Thesaurus*. In *Renaissance Dictionaries and Shakespeare*, the authors quote Cooper's entry on this question: "The twelfth and last labour was the taking of the *golden Apples*, out of the *gardeynes Hesperides*, and slaying the terrible Dragon, which continually watching kept those Apples, which were *called golden* for the beautie of them."⁵²

Root's categorical rejection of the Greek dramas as a Shakespeare source would lead him away from considering *Alcestis* as the inspiration for the final scenes of *Much Ado* or recognizing the literary significance of the play's Herculean allusions. In my opinion, there may be two other relevant Herculean allusions in Shakespeare that refer to Euripides' *Alcestis*. Bottom's doggerel-like recitation that "Phibbus' car shall shine from far, and make and mar the foolish Fates" may be a satiric reflection on Apollo's prologue speech in *Alcestis* where he admits to tricking the Fates. In addition, Hamlet's final words to Laertes after they have argued and grappled at Ophelia's grave, may be an allusion to Hercules grappling with Death at Queen Alcestis' tomb.

Hear you, sir,
What is the reason that you use me thus?
I loved you ever. But it is no matter.

Let Hercules himself do what he may,
 The cat will mew and the dog will have his day.
 (5.1.278-82)⁵³

Hamlet's obscure speech has instigated a wide variety of interpretations, but no editors have suggested the obvious association with Alcestis' rescue by Hercules. Oxford edition editor G.R. Hibbard's footnote reflects the level of interpretive confusion: "This is one of those enigmatic remarks that Hamlet so often produces. It seems to say more than logic can extract from it. However, as Hercules is sometimes associated with rant in Shakespeare's mind,...it is reasonable to assume that Hamlet sees Laertes as Hercules. As for the cat and the dog, both behave naturally; and nothing Hercules can do will stop them."⁵⁴ The Arden editor suggests these lines may mean that Hamlet has been attacked physically by Laertes and that even Hercules couldn't stop him from doing what he intended. Norton editor Stephen Greenblatt interprets the lines to mean that despite Laertes' Herculean ranting, his day will come. The phrase "every dog will have his day" was proverbial, probably first written down by Erasmus, and implied that a time will come when fortune will smile. As for the cat and dog, could these not refer to Hercules' first and last labors, the killing of the Nemean Lion and the capture of Cerberus, the three-headed guard dog of the Underworld? Hamlet is simply saying again that he is no Hercules and that Ophelia, unlike Alcestis, cannot be brought back to life.

There is one more Herculean element in *Much Ado* that warrants attention, and this refers to spelling of Benedick's name in the quarto edition. Beatrice cleverly suggests a possibility of madness when she likens Benedick's relationship to Claudio to an infectious disease that would require an exorcism:

O Lord, he will hang upon him like a disease! He is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker runs presently mad. God help the noble Claudio! If he have caught the Benedick, it will cost him a thousand pound ere 'a be cured.
 (1.1.81-5)

In the quarto of *Much Ado*, Benedick is spelled 'Benedict.' According to Claire McEachern, 'benedicts' were the "Catholic priests qualified to perform exorcisms, and madness was often thought to be caused by demonic

possession, hence *caught the Benedict*.”⁵⁵ This suggestion of Benedick’s madness has Herculean implications as the hero, in a fit of madness induced by Hera, murdered his wife and their children, for which his twelve labors were prescribed so he could be purified.

Was Shakespeare’s knowledge of the myths of Hercules “exceedingly scanty,” as Robert Root concluded a century ago? A better case can be made for an expanded view of Shakespeare’s knowledge of Hercules’ mythography, which is reflected in both highly inventive allusions and the characterization of both tragic and comedic heroes. The literary evidence suggests the playwright was not limited by the incomplete Herculean mythography of the Latin poets Ovid and Seneca, but was also familiar with the Greek poets, satirists and historians: Homer, Euripides, Diodorus, Apollodorus, and Lucian. The breadth of Shakespeare’s familiarity with Hercules myths seems wide enough to have required access to both untranslated Greek as well as continental Latin editions. Since a case has already been made for Shakespeare’s direct debt to Euripides’ *Alcestis*, we can conclude that Root, Nuttall, Silk and the other critics who have expressed prejudice against the Greek dramas do not base their case on a rational consideration of the literary evidence.

Language

Oxfordians interested in building a case for Edward de Vere as author of *Much Ado about Nothing* will particularly appreciate McEachern’s Arden edition, where she builds a powerful case for multiple literary associations with sources connected to the Earl of Oxford. These include the works of John Lyly and Anthony Munday, Oxford’s personal secretaries in the 1580s, Edmund Spenser, Thomas Watson and Bartholomew Clerke, translator of Baldassare Castiglione, all of whom dedicated works to de Vere.

Recognizing the importance of social discourse in this play, McEachern writes, “The leisured and literate universe of Baldassare Castiglione’s *Il libro del Cortegiano* (1528) provides another source of the play’s social climate (as well as the typology of a courtly world in which beautiful people pass the time with elegant conversation and literary games).”⁵⁶ Castiglione’s *The Book of the Courtier* had been translated from Italian into English by Sir Thomas Hoby in 1561, and quickly became the “holy writ for English gentlemen.”⁵⁷ Oxford’s sponsorship of Clerke’s Latin translation (1572), in which the Earl wrote

a long and fluent prefatory letter in Latin, would have made Castiglione's courtly philosophy available to scholars, even on the Continent.

McEachern asserts that many of the comedies' comments on female infidelity echo those of John Lyly's *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* and *Euphues and His England*, which Lyly dedicated to the Earl of Oxford. Regarding the euphuistic style of the *Much Ado*, she writes:

The prevalence of the dialogue convention in Renaissance prose fiction and rhetorical manuals – Castiglione's *Cortegiano*, Stephano Guazzo's *La civil conversazione* (1574), Lyly's *Anatomy of Wit* (1578) and *Euphues and His England* (1580) – bespeaks its availability for dramatic representation. Yet *Much Ado*, with its emphasis on wit, is particularly devoted to rhetorical contest, and these texts are especially pertinent. Many of Benedick's comments on the fair sex derive from Lyly, and Castiglione offers another model of intellectual contest and compatibility between the sexes....⁵⁸

Lyly's titles coined the pompous style of speech spoken in Shakespeare's comedy. McEachern points out how euphuism consists of syntactic parallels and inversions, and decidedly competitive turning and returning of one's terms and those of others. She argues that more than a stylistic feature of the play, euphuism provides the "articulated currency" by which the men of the play create community. In this regard, Beatrice's verbal sparring with Benedick is seen by Don Pedro as proof that she would be "an excellent wife" for him. Euphuism is thus not only a source of the play's prose stylings, but also provides a medium for its gender roles. Dialogue becomes a marker of social identity. Lyly's works often featured protracted discourses among friends on topics such as love and philosophy and McEachern offers this precise description of the spectrum of rhetorical devices employed by Lyly and the other euphuistic writers:

It is a style characterized by techniques of amplification such as parallelism and antithesis, chiasmus, strings of rhetorical questions, structural symmetries and turns of logic, and full of internal poetic effects generated by alliteration, syllabic echoing, the repetition of verbal roots, rhyme, puns, phrases patterned on sound and syntax, and myriad rhetorical figures identifiable only to the connoisseur. Crowning

these aural effects were displays of humanist learning: epigrams, aphorisms, proverbs, classical allusions and examples, fables, and information from natural and un-natural history. In other words, this is a prose as complicated, and as figuratively rich, as any verse.⁵⁹

Euphuism was employed by many Renaissance humanists and is “modeled after Ciceronian oratory in its copiousness and ornament; its balances and symmetries were meant to connote not merely rhetorical poise but ethical temperance.”⁶⁰ John Donne, Thomas Nashe, Thomas Lodge and Ben Jonson were all practitioners. Noting that the combative tone of euphuism derives from roots in debate forms, McEachern finally argues that euphuism in Shakespeare even provided a social map, a means of determining rank and status, that it is “as much sociolect as aesthetic.”

The writer must aspire to an encyclopedic range of reference and reiteration, whilst managing to stay on topic, balancing digressive expansion against thematic pertinence. This is the style that Benedick might call ‘so good a continuer.’⁶¹

Much Ado is written largely (70%) in prose and the euphuistic style dominates the Beatrice and Benedick dialogues as well as Benedick’s inverted long monologues in Act 2, where he is transformed from an outspoken misogynist to a romantic poet and defender of female virtue. It is no coincidence that the passages in *Much Ado* that display the most virtuoso instances of euphuism are those where a debate is underway, where a character is engaged in argument with himself, or where high feeling – either rage or contempt – propels the language. Indignation and invective, contempt and disdain are the motive forces of this style.⁶²

In his dedicatory epistle to Edward de Vere, Lyly admits that in composing *Euphues*, he regularly visited “Homer’s basin” to “lap up” the literary musings of his unnamed patron. Mark Anderson in *Shakespeare By Another Name* (2005) writes that Lyly actually wrote *Euphues* to satirize the euphuistic style:

Thus Lyly created a parody, with de Vere’s encouragement and perhaps even collaboration, using pompous and overblown language that is the hallmark of the “Euphuistic” style, making Lyly’s protagonist an

antithesis of Castiglione's ideal. Euphues, as painted by Lyly's brush, is boorish, misogynistic, bullheaded, insensate, arrogant, and deaf to others' advice but quick to dispense his own.⁶³

While John Lyly's *Endymion* depicted a comedic police interception not unlike the Watch in *Much Ado*, the most likely source for the Watch is Anthony Munday's play *Fedele and Fortunio* (1584), an adaptation of the Italian Pasaqualigo's *Il Fedele*. The argument for *Fedele and Fortunio* being a source for *Much Ado* has been elucidated recently by Joaquin Anyó in "More on the Sources of Much Ado about Nothing" in *Notes and Queries*. Bullough suggested that Shakespeare got the idea for Dogberry's and Verges' detainment of Borachio from Munday's Captain Crackstone, and that the very same language is used in the two plays, "We charge you in the Prince's name" (3.3.157):

This will explain the title of 'prince' of Don Pedro, king in *Bandello*. There is no prince in other arrests in Shakespeare. The editor of Munday's play, Hosley, portrays the talking of Crackstone, a parallel character to Dogberry, in a very similar way as the latter: 'he uses malapropisms, creates monstrous "cannibal words," coins silly neologisms, transposes the key terms of phrases, says the opposite of what he means, speaks mock-Latin...'⁶⁴

McEachern also cites Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* (1590) Book 2, canto 4, as another possible source, as it includes a rendition of the Ariosto story, which illustrates the dangers of intemperate, vengeful action. Spenser dedicated a sonnet to Edward de Vere in Book 4 of *The Faerie Queene*, referring to him as "most dear" to the "Heliconian imps," presumably in reference to the circle of poets supported by the Earl, including himself, Lyly, Munday, Robert Greene and Thomas Watson.

Finally, Thomas Watson dedicated his collection of one hundred sonnets, *The Hekatompathia or Passionate Century of Love* (1582), to de Vere. McEachern notes that Don Pedro's line to Benedick, "In time the savage bull doth bear the yoke" (1.1.242) is a near-direct quote from sonnet 47 of *Hekatompathia*, "In time the Bull is brought to weare the yoake."⁶⁵ Watson's dedication to him states specifically that de Vere had reviewed the volume in manuscript: "your Honor had willingly vouchsafed the acceptance of this

work, and at convenient leisures favorable perused it, being as yet but in written hand....”⁶⁶

Love’s Labour’s Wonne

Writing on the “The Hermeneutics of Hercules from Ovid to Shakespeare” (1983), Jeff Shulman includes this passage regarding the Herculean elements in another comedy:

In *Love’s Labour’s Lost*, Shakespeare found a mythic paradigm for the separate but equal follies of narcissism and fanaticism in the single figure of Hercules, next to Cupid the most frequently mentioned mythological character in the play. What appealed to Shakespeare in the history of this myth was the Ovidian idea that the two types of Hercules could be seen as integrally related aspects of the same figure. Shakespeare dramatizes the Ovidian formula by presenting his young lords initially as the heroic type of Hercules and then as the amorous type.... It is Ovid’s metamorphosis of the heroic that informs the path of mythic allusion in *Love’s Labours Lost*.⁶⁷

Shulman’s commentary on the prominence of Hercules in *Love’s Labour’s Lost* suggests a direct comparison to *Much Ado*, where Benedick is also portrayed as initially heroic and then amorous. The Herculean theme in *Love’s Labour’s Lost* suggests the figure of a young hero standing at the crossroads of life, as in the tradition of the Choice of Hercules, a parable attributed to the fifth century (B.C.) sophist, Prodicus. The Choice shows Hercules preferring the more arduous, uphill, philosophic path of virtue to the inferior path of carnal pleasure. Shulman suggests Shakespeare incorporated a French source for the theme of Hercules’ Choice in the philosophy of King Ferdinand:

It may be that Le Fevre’s Hercules, certainly familiar to Shakespeare by the time of *Troilus and Cressida*, affected the treatment of the Hercules theme in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*. Le Fevre presents Hercules...partly in the tradition of his championship of the intellect, “full of philosophic

and expert in all science,” and may have suggested Ferdinand’s hunt for intellectual fame. This aspect of the hero was popular with the neo-Platonic dilettantes of court circles, as in Castiglione’s description of Hercules’ apotheosis.⁶⁸

Consider how closely *Much Ado*, with its many Herculean allusions and hero and its euphuistic style, matches the underlying myths and language in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*. Stephen Greenblatt, in his textual note on *Much Ado* in *The Norton Shakespeare* (1997) writes, “Francis Meres does not include *Much Ado about Nothing* in a list of Shakespeare’s plays he compiled in September, 1598 (unless that is what he meant by the play he calls *Love’s Labour’s Wonne*).”⁶⁹ A number of scholars have also argued that *Much Ado* had been performed by 1598, when Meres compiled his list of twelve known dramas by Shakespeare. Thus, there appears to be at least a temporal link between these two comedies.

Howard Furness’ 1899 edition included commentaries from A.E. Brae’s 1860 *Collier, Coleridge and Shakespeare*, in which Brae presents a compelling case for *Much Ado* being the lost comedy, *Love’s Labour’s Wonne* in showing manifold similarities between *Much Ado* and *Love’s Labour’s Lost*. Brae’s discussion includes an analysis of the parallel relationships between the major couples, Beatrice and Benedick and Rosaline and Berowne, and the employment of euphuistic language in both comedies. He cites the common imagery of several specific speeches, such as his comparison of Dogberry (“A good old man, sir; he will be talking; - an honest soul, i’faith, sir; all men are not alike; alas good neighbor.”) with Costard (“There an’t shall please you; a foolish mild man; an honest man, look you, and soon dash’d! He is a marvelous good neighbor”). Brae even identified the common Herculean, mythopoetic context that most scholars have inexplicably overlooked:

But it seems to have escaped notice on all hands that the *mythological* sense of *Love’s Labour* would be much more consonant with the age in which Shakespeare wrote, than the *sentimental* sense. That is, that *Love’s Labours* in the dramatic writing of that time, would be much more likely to be understood as the jests or exploits of the *deity* Love, in the same sense as the fabled *Labours of Hercules*.⁷⁰

There are more allusions to Cupid and Hercules in these two comedies

than in any dramas in the Shakespeare canon. Both plays present a matrix of linked classical allusions amplified with euphuistic discourse. *Much Ado about Nothing* is ultimately a story about the triumph of love through the labors of many characters, including Don Pedro, Friar Francis, Beatrice, Benedick and Dogberry, which is quite literally a drama that is much ado about love won.

Conclusion

Much Ado about Nothing provides compelling examples of Shakespeare's direct literary debt to Greek sources. Shakespeare editors Jonathan Bate and Claire McEachern have provided proof of this in recent years, resurrecting a consideration of the importance of Euripides' tragicomedy, *Alcestis*, after nearly a century of scholarly neglect. An analysis of the Herculean allusions in *Much Ado* reveals a wide number of likely literary sources, including the works of Euripides, Lucian and Homer, and supports the idea that Shakespeare was well versed in the Greek canon. Shakespeare even seems to portray Benedick as a Herculean hero, albeit a comedic one, based on the Hercules in *Alcestis*. Both Hercules and Benedick are presented as deluded fools for love or the love goddess, who exercise their honor by risking death in order to redeem noble women. Both provide comic relief with bombastic speeches laced with hyperbole. Benedick even identifies Beatrice with Ate, Hercules' natal nemesis, and with Queen Omphale, the hero's lover and ruler.

When one considers the acknowledged sources of *Much Ado*, it could be argued that this comedy is the most "Oxfordian" of all the plays for its connections to Edward de Vere's literary patronage. The works dedicated to him by John Lyly, Anthony Munday, and Thomas Watson have all been identified as primary sources for this comedy. That both *Much Ado* and *The Winter's Tale* must now also be recognized as borrowing dramaturgy from a Greek tragicomedy also reinforces Oxford's authorship claim. De Vere's education and access to the Greek classics is well documented. For a number of years the young Oxford lived in the home of Cambridge scholar and Greek orator, Sir Thomas Smith, who lectured in Greek from Homer, Aristotle, Euripides and Aristophanes.

For nearly a decade Oxford also lived at Cecil House, where he was in close contact with England's leading translators, including his maternal uncle, Arthur Golding (Ovid's *The Metamorphoses*, 1567), George Gascoigne (Euripides' *Phoenissiae*, 1572), and Arthur Hall (the first ten books of Homer's

Iliad, 1581). Smith and Cecil possessed Greek editions of Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Plato in their libraries, and Cecil's collection also included editions of Ariosto, Bandello, Belleforest and Buchanan.⁷¹ Oxford's mother-in-law, Mildred Cecil, a highly regarded Greek scholar in her own right, even carried on a correspondence with George Buchanan, whose Latin *Alcestis* is arguably Shakespeare's direct source for several dramas.

Finally, the evidence that *Much Ado about Nothing* was originally titled *Love's Labour's Wonne* gains greater coherence, because *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Much Ado* share character parallels, mythopoetic roots in the Herculean canon, and the euphuistic language of love. Rediscovering Euripides' *Alcestis* in Shakespeare and recognizing the importance of the Herculean elements in these comedies enhances our understanding of their origins and their meanings, and at the same time challenges traditional scholarship.

Endnotes

- ¹ Robert Kilburn Root, *Classical Mythology in Shakespeare* (New York: Gordion Press, Inc. 1965 -1903), 6.
- ² A.D. Nuttall, "Shakespeare and the Greeks," in *Shakespeare and the Classics*. ed. Charles Martindale & A.B. Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 210.
- ³ Michael Silk, "Shakespeare and Greek Tragedy: Strange Relationship" in *Shakespeare and the Classics*. ed. Charles Martindale & A.B. Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 241.
- ⁴ A.D. Nuttall, Twayne's New Critical Introductions to Shakespeare: *Timon of Athens*. (Boston: G.K. Hall & Co., 1989), 107.
- ⁵ Earl Showerman, "Look Down and See What Death Is Doing': Gods and Greeks in *The Winter's Tale*," *The Oxfordian* 10 (2007), 55-6.
- ⁶ Stephen Orgel, *Imagining Shakespeare: A History of Texts and Visions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 130.
- ⁷ Sarah Dewar-Watson, "The *Alcestis* and the Statue scene in *The Winter's Tale*." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 60 (2009), 73-80.
- ⁸ Dewar-Watson, 80.
- ⁹ Jonathan Bate, "Dying to Live in *Much Ado about Nothing*." In *Surprised by Scenes: Essays in Honor of Professor Yasunai Takahashi*,

ed. Yasunari Takada (Tokyo: Kenkyusha, 1994), 69-85.

- ¹⁰ Claire McEachern, ed. *Much Ado about Nothing*, (London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2006), 21-2.
- ¹¹ Bate, "Dying to Live," 79.
- ¹² Bate, "Dying to Live," 72.
- ¹³ Bate, "Dying to Live," 77.
- ¹⁴ Shakespeare, William. *Much Ado about Nothing*. ed. Claire McEachern (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006), 271. Subsequent quotations from *Much Ado* included.
- ¹⁵ Bate, "Dying to Live," 83.
- ¹⁶ Bate, "Dying to Live," 81.
- ¹⁷ Bate, "Dying to Live," 81.
- ¹⁸ Bate, "Dying to Live," 81.
- ¹⁹ Bate, "Dying to Live," 82.
- ²⁰ Euripides. *Alcestis*. Trans. Richard Aldington in *The Complete Greek Drama*. ed. Whitney J. Oates and Eugene O'Neill. (New York: Random House, 1938), 709-710. Subsequent quotations from *Alcestis* included.
- ²¹ McEachern, *Much Ado*, 308.
- ²² Bate, "Dying to Live," 84.
- ²³ Hartman, Herbert. Ed. *A Petite Pallace of Pettie his Pleasure*. (London: Oxford University, 1938) 145.
- ²⁴ McEachern, *Much Ado*, 22.
- ²⁵ *Works of Lucian of Samosata - Volume 3*. trans. Fowler, H.W. and Fowler F.G. (Charleston: ibliobazaar, 2007), 254.
- ²⁶ McEachern, *Much Ado*, 193.
- ²⁷ Root, *Classical Mythology*, 73. Root noted that two Hercules allusions in *Much Ado* refer to Omphale (2.1.261 and 3.3.145), and that, "The last passage suggests that the subject was a favorite one in tapestry."
- ²⁸ McEachern, *Much Ado*, 75.
- ²⁹ Robert Graves, *The Greek Myths* (London: Penguin Books, 1955), 565.
- ³⁰ Graves, *Greek Myths*, 566.
- ³¹ McEachern, *Much Ado*, 193.
- ³² Horace Howard Furness. ed. *New Variorum Edition of Much Adoe about Nothing*. (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1927), 84.
- ³³ McEachern, *Much Ado*, 227.

- ³⁴ Eugene M. Waith. *The Herculean Hero in Marlowe, Chapman, Shakespeare and Dryden*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), 13.
- ³⁵ Waith, *The Herculean Hero*, 15.
- ³⁶ Waith, *Herculean Hero*, 38.
- ³⁷ Waith, *Herculean Hero*, 113.
- ³⁸ Waith, *Herculean Hero*, 115.
- ³⁹ Jeff Shulman. "At the Crossroads of Myth: The Hermeneutics of Hercules from Ovid to Shakespeare," *E.L.H.* 50 (1983), 90.
- ⁴⁰ 243.
- ⁴¹ Claire Asquith. *Shadowplay: The Hidden Beliefs and Coded Politics of William Shakespeare*. (New York: Public Affairs, 2005), 293.
- ⁴² Furness, *Much Adoe* 170.
- ⁴³ Furness, *Much Adoe* 171.
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- ⁴⁵ Roger Stritmatter, Roger. "On the Chronology and Performance Venue of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*." *The Oxfordian*: 9 (2006), 81-90.
- ⁴⁶ Milton Waldman. *Elizabeth and Leicester*. (London: Collins, 1969), 159-160.
- ⁴⁷ Root, *Classical Mythology*, 71.
- ⁴⁸ Root, *Classical Mythology*, 73.
- ⁴⁹ Root, *Classical Mythology*, 74.
- ⁵⁰ Root, *Classical Mythology*, 72.
- ⁵¹ Frank Brommer. *Heracles: The Twelve Labors of the Hero in Ancient Art and Literature*. trans. Shirley Schwartz. (New Rochelle: Aristide D. Caratzas, 1986), 49.
- ⁵² Dewitt T. Starnes and Ernest William Talbert. *Classical Myth and Legend in Renaissance Dictionaries*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955), 114.
- ⁵³ Shakespeare. *Hamlet*. ed. G.R. Hibbard. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 334.
- ⁵⁴ Hibbard, *Hamlet*, 334.
- ⁵⁵ McEachern, *Much Ado*, 155.
- ⁵⁶ McEachern, *Much Ado*, 12.
- ⁵⁷ Mark Anderson. *Shakespeare by Another Name: The Life of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford*. (New York: Gotham, 2005), 52.
- ⁵⁸ McEachern, *Much Ado*, 26.

- ⁵⁹ McEachern, *Much Ado*, 65.
- ⁶⁰ McEachern, *Much Ado*, 65-6.
- ⁶¹ McEachern, *Much Ado*, 67.
- ⁶² McEachern, *Much Ado*, 70.
- ⁶³ Anderson, 160.
- ⁶⁴ Joaquim Anyó. "More on the Sources of Much Ado about Nothing." *Notes and Queries* 55 (2008), 187.
- ⁶⁵ McEachern, *Much Ado*, 166.
- ⁶⁶ Anderson, *Shakespeare By Another Name*, 182.
- ⁶⁷ Schulman, "Crossroads," 99.
- ⁶⁸ "Crossroads," 99.
- ⁶⁹ Greenblatt. Ed. *The Norton Shakespeare*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1997), 1388.
- ⁷⁰ Furness, *Much Adoe*, 369.
- ⁷¹ Eddi Jolly. "Shakespeare and Burghley's Library: *Biblioteca Illustris: Sive Catalogus Variorum Librorum*." *The Oxfordian* 3 (2000), 12.