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Shakespeare's Leading Franciscan Friars:
Contrasting Approaches to Pastoral Power

Amy Camille Connelly Banks

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
Brigham Young University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
of
Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

Shakespeare's Leading Franciscan Friars:
Contrasting Approaches to Pastoral Power

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A popular perception persists that the Franciscan friars of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Much Ado About Nothing* bear heavy blame for the results of the play, adversely for Friar Lawrence and positively for Friar Francis. The friars do formulate similar plans, but their roles vary significantly. I contrast their approaches using Michel Foucault's definition of pastoral power, with Friar Lawrence as an overly manipulative friar controlling the lovers in spiritual matters, and Friar Francis as a humble military friar returning from the Wars of Religion to share his authority with others. This distinction—especially with Friar Lawrence appearing chronologically first—demonstrates Shakespeare as more fluid in religious themes, contrary to a significant body of scholarship that asserts Shakespeare's pro-Catholic sympathies.

Keywords: Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, Franciscan, friars, Foucault, pastoral power

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Introduction

While many of Shakespeare's characters represent religiosity, only a few are specifically noted as friars.¹ All of his Franciscan friars assist young couples trying to get married, either by determining fidelity or by orchestrating schemes to arrange weddings for which there are significant obstacles (Colston 19).² For the purposes and constraints of this research, I will focus on the two most seemingly similar, but very disparate figures: Friar Lawrence of *Romeo and Juliet* and Friar Francis of *Much Ado About Nothing*. Shakespeare's similar sources from Matteo Bandello for these friars show the deliberate choice to keep Friar Lawrence and to add Friar Francis (Salter 16). Shakespeare's specific source choices suggest the thematic fruitfulness of comparing and contrasting the friars' respective approaches to pastoral power. Foucault is useful here. Developing further insights about pastoral care, Foucault's observations on the "idea and organization of a pastoral power" allow for interesting complexities and insights to emerge in our understanding of both character development and theme (*Security* 123). Although Foucault's work could easily suit a book-length analysis of the topic, for my purposes here I would like to single out three issues: the question of dedicated zeal, the difference between authority as omnipotence or beneficence, and the problem of personal advantage (126-128). These issues will be developed at more length below.

Regarding popular perception of Shakespeare's plays, the notion persists that these friars—the one from *Romeo and Juliet* (published and performed in 1597) and the other from

¹ *Measure for Measure* could provide further research on the subject of friars, with as many as five additional friars (Colston 22). However, that play presents characters masquerading as friars, with Friar Lodowick as Vincentio in disguise, and I focus on the two most direct friar characters without the complication of disguise. For further research on *Measure for Measure*, David Beauregard's article provides a close examination: "Shakespeare on Monastic Life Nuns and Friars in Measure for Measure." *Religion & the Arts*. vol. 5, 2001, <https://search-lib-byu-edu.erl.lib.byu.edu/byu/record/edsbyu.aph.6109678>.

² A scheme here means that each friar develops a plan with some secrecy. Scheming can sometimes imply an underhanded and strictly secret approach, a more fitting description for Friar Lawrence of *Romeo and Juliet* or even Don John of *Much Ado* with his underhanded and evil intent, but as Friar Francis involves several adults (Hero, Beatrice, Benedick, and Leonato), scheming will be considered as it can serve others or as it can serve only oneself.

Much Ado About Nothing (published in 1600, performed as early as 1598)—bear responsibility for the results of their respective plays, adversely for *Romeo* and positively for *Much Ado* (“Romeo and Juliet” and “Much Ado About Nothing”: The British Library). A widely circulated Tumblr screenshot shares this conversation from November 14, 2018:

“Regardstosoul and romance: ‘what if the friar in much ado and the friar in romeo and juliet are the same friar and he’s just going around suggesting everyone fake their death as a solution to all issues’ Residesatshamecentral replies: ‘In that case, Much Ado *had better have happened first*’” (“14 NOV 18...”).³ This idea of the interchangeability may be a reason the existing scholarship is so limited in exploring the friars’ significant and revealing differences. Many scholars prefer to see their similarities, looking specifically at their Franciscan identities, and then arguing that both friars represent a redeemed representation of friars. While the friars formulate similar plans, their roles within each play vary widely, and their participation in the implementation could not be more different. Friar Lawrence is a religious manipulator who controls the saving deception, while Friar Francis is something of a military guide who develops strategy and tactics before delegating particular actions to Beatrice and Benedick.

This is not to say that the friars have no significant similarities: their identity as Franciscans establishes their similarity, as both come from monastic traditions of power and obedience, usefully outlined by Foucault (*Security* 175). This general view of friars is augmented by scholars publishing on Shakespeare’s Franciscans in the last twenty years: David Beauregard, Kenneth Colston, David Salter, and Jerry Weinberger, establish the similarities in the friars’ Franciscan identities. The similarities also extend to the friars’ choices, as Cheri C. Schulzke argues, since the friars’ redemption of characters (or attempt at redemption) through deception

³ David Salter alludes to this idea as well, “to quote Geoffrey Bullough, Friar Francis is none other than ‘Friar Lawrence up to his old tricks again’” (“Shakespeare and Catholicism” 17). This quip makes too much light of the death caused (at least in part) by Friar Lawrence.

confirms the similarities of the two (“Friars and Pseudo-Friars” 1).⁴ Still, though both friars advise a bride-to-be to pretend to be dead in seeming beneficence, my analysis suggests scholarship that presumes a sweeping similarity between the two limits the possibilities of ethical nuance that Shakespeare intended by providing two friars whose choices result in dramatically different endings.

In *Romeo and Juliet*, Friar Lawrence plays a more integral, controlling pastoral role in the text: speaking early and often as a religious adviser (to both Romeo and Juliet); then performing as an officiant for a wedding which he approved in political aspiration; later prescribing a sleeping drug to a 13-year-old girl; and fleeing in self-preservation at the end. In this pastoral leadership, Lawrence “continually oversteps his ecclesiastical functions” enabling rash decisions for young followers, all in the name of his aspirations for the two households (Brenner 53). The character and play warn that a religious leader like Lawrence should carefully consider the costs of interceding, particularly when taking confession from young, trusting members. In contrast, Friar Francis, a well-trained and judicious Franciscan military friar, speaks with controlled precision in *Much Ado* where, after the failed wedding, he suggests the deception meant to rescue Hero from the “death” her reputation has suffered at the hands of military men. Demonstrating his better judgment, Francis does not suggest a fake death to only a few, but rather clues in all key players in this deception. He also does not suggest a sleeping draught, which would have only added a new layer of deception. Instead, Francis trusts Hero to act her part, and he provides the details to Beatrice and Benedick for their parts, as suggestions in their dramatic roles. Beatrice and Benedick trust his advice and implement Francis’ plan by their own

⁴ Salter, while primarily looking at the Franciscan identities of the friars, also examines the similarities of choice between Lawrence and Francis: “the similarity in the role of the two Franciscans becomes apparent, for both friars seek to assist the couples in successfully negotiating the pitfalls that hinder or impede their respective marriages” (“Shakespeare and Catholicism” 17).

choice, again suggesting that this Friar's service takes on a more military hue, unlike Lawrence's power aspirations.

In considering Lawrence as a problematic religious leader, Gerry Brenner and Zdravko Planinc have both examined Lawrence for his detrimental choices.⁵ Brenner concludes his argument by calling for an analysis of Shakespeare's other plays in similar terms: "we find Shakespeare ever attentive to the subtleties, deceptions, finesses, failures, and problems that the desire for power, especially political power, can generate" ("Shakespeare's Politically Ambitious Friar" 57). My purpose here is to take up and extend this scholarship by contrasting Lawrence with Francis of *Much Ado*. Brenner concludes his argument with the call to consider Shakespeare's other plays in light of power politics: Brenner considers Shakespeare's attention to the failures of aspiring for pastoral and/or political power, but Shakespeare also considers the positive consequences when a pastoral leader resists personal advantage. Notably, *Much Ado* offers that contrast in Friar Francis, as he does not aspire for greater authority, but softly guides, following a more genuine Franciscan humility.

In short, what follows is a contrast analysis of Friar Lawrence, a manipulative pastoral friar, and Friar Francis, a more guiding military friar. This distinction—especially with Friar Lawrence appearing in print and performance first—reveals a more complex message on pastoral leadership than has been previously assumed of Shakespeare and complicates Foucault's notions of the Christian pastorate. As an addition and new creation, Francis provides complementary nuance to Shakespeare's examination of religious leadership. Contrary to a previously significant

⁵ Planinc's "Politics, Religion, and Love's Transgression: The Political Philosophy of *Romeo and Juliet*" examines politics throughout the play, focusing in some places on Lawrence, and so he concludes with the fair result that "Shakespeare's political philosophy is not a disingenuous exhortation to love God and do as you please. We must allow Juliet and Romeo to love one another and do as they please. And we must each search for, and always be worthy of, such a beloved" (33). This could be an allusion to *Much Ado*, with Benedick's advice to Beatrice to "Serve God, love me and mend" (5.2.85). But as he does directly extend his argument into other plays, I utilize Brenner's call for my own research.

body of scholarship that asserts Shakespeare's pro-Catholic sympathies, this contrast analysis seems to suggest a far less personally promotional approach to any specific religious thought. The purpose here is relatively modest, then: to invite Shakespeare's friars into discussions of drama and religion in the sixteenth century. I begin by contextualizing the friars' Franciscan identities and briefly considering Shakespeare's source material for each. I will then examine their pastoral power, borrowing from Foucault as he summarizes his sense of pastoral power's unique characteristics when they are:

“exercised on a multiplicity rather than on a territory. It is a power that guides towards an end and functions as an intermediary towards this end. It is therefore a power with a purpose for those on whom it is exercised...Finally, it is a power directed at all and each in their paradoxical equivalence, and not at the higher unity formed by the whole” (129).

The friars align with this summation of pastoral power, extending their influence on a multiplicity, or on their flock of parishioners. Both friars show the complicated, specific characteristics of this power, but in comparing and contrasting their choices *within* this power, I will apply three of Foucault's specifications regarding pastoral choices, beginning with the “zeal, devotion, and endless application” demonstrated in similarity by both friars (*Security* 127). Then, I will shift to a contrast between the friars' use of power as omnipotence versus power as beneficence (126-27). Despite their superficial similarity, the friars diverge radically here. I conclude with another radical divergence between the friars based on Foucault's perspective on the problem of personal advantage and how it complicates pastoral care (128). In examining these three propositions in relation to Shakespeare's two friars, something interesting emerges about the nature of pastoral care: when the pastorate utilizes its intended beneficent power for

personal advantage, it fails; success depends on operating without intentions for grand personal advantage.

Religious Questions: Catholicism and Franciscan Friars in Late Sixteenth to Early Seventeenth Century

In considering pastoral characters in Shakespeare's plays, scholars often consume themselves with perhaps the most difficult question surrounding Shakespeare and religion: What was his own religious affiliation?⁶ Gillian Woods offers important clarification for this rather impossible question: "to search for a defining religious label is to miss some of what is most interesting about religion in early modern England, and more importantly, what is most interesting about Shakespeare... The simple labels Catholic, Protestant, and Puritan paper over a complex lived experience" ("What was Shakespeare's religion?"). Shakespeare lived in a tempestuous climate of shifting religious belief and state-controlled expectations.⁷ Just as with Woods, it does not serve my argument to identify Shakespeare's religious affiliation, or even to presume his beliefs on religious authority, beyond the results of the plays. Certainly, these two plays with very dissimilar endings indicate Shakespeare's desire to avoid a pedantic approach to religion. Woods posits a similar prospect in her book, *Shakespeare's Unreformed Fictions*: "If

⁶ Even in specific scholarship on Franciscans in Shakespeare, David Salter considers Shakespeare's personal religious affiliation as Catholic, referencing the voices in Shakespeare's lifetime that called Shakespeare Catholic. Salter situates his scholarship as "not only as a means of gauging his own religious sympathies and convictions, but also to throw light upon the use that Shakespeare (and a number of his contemporaries) made of the Franciscan Order" (11). I am not concerned with Shakespeare's personal religious affiliation, but rather the way that religious characters, representing Roman Catholicism and spirituality in general, operate for differing thematics in the two plays.

⁷ *Shakespeare and Religion: Early Modern and Postmodern Perspectives*, for instance, views Shakespeare as a "religious skeptic who was critical of his own religiously conflicted society and also both intellectually and emotionally attached to some of the features of 'old religion' as he sought ways to translate some of them into psychologically and ethically powerful theater" (Jackson and Marotti 5). Certainly, Shakespeare utilized vestiges of old religion in these two plays, specifically with a Franciscan friar in each, during the conflicting religious views of his time. With *Much Ado*, a positive outlook on religion is presented, so long as pastoral leaders guide from the side. *Romeo and Juliet*, however, leads to a more complex understanding of Shakespeare's relationship with the "old religion" than Jackson and Marotti proffer, not one of emotional attachment, for the conclusion mourns a pastoral presumption of wisdom in the lives of parishioners, resulting, as it does, in the deaths of seven players, including two naïve teenagers.

the goal of criticism is to tell us what Shakespeare believed, we risk skipping over the theatrical impact of the plays themselves...The ambiguity of Shakespeare's engagement with religion self-evidently cannot tell us anything certain about his faith, but analyzing this ambiguity can help us better understand the drama" (8). I consider the theatrical and character effect of the differences of two friars of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Much Ado*, as an extension of Wood's framework.

The two friars require examination beyond simply reassessing current thinking on Shakespeare's religious affiliation. Wood's intent in *Shakespeare's Unreformed Fictions* is to ask, as her title suggests: "what is the imaginative function of Catholicism in Shakespeare's drama?" (19). Her question marks a shift from examining just Shakespeare's personal beliefs on Catholicism, to how the works function as fiction (20). I will combine this question of a distant, imagined Catholicism in the late 1500s-early 1600s, with a close character analysis of two friars not yet directly addressed by Woods.

So, we must finally more pointedly ask, what is there to gain from such a close character analysis within fiction, particularly when a character such as Francis lacks much explanation? Brenner explains this well as he inspects Friar Lawrence: "And while some characters' motives are more overt than others...our understanding of those characters and the plays in which they figure partly depends upon assessing motive. To discount motive-questioning discounts Shakespeare's psychological acumen" ("Shakespeare's Politically Ambitious Friar" 48). Brenner necessitates assigning motives to characters as a way of understanding the play in its entirety, as well as crediting Shakespeare's close and impressive attention to psychological themes. I therefore establish specific motives for Friar Francis as Brenner does Friar Lawrence and argue that Francis's significance comes from how we understand his motives. Both motives are less than apparent, which demands an assessment of actions (which point to intentions) in order to

better understand similar characters and the plays themselves. In connecting Brenner's assessment of Friar Lawrence to an evaluation of Friar Francis, I challenge scholarship that characterizes Shakespeare's religious views as static, and instead suggest a more supple, even fluctuating sense of pastoral possibility emerging out of the tension between the two plays.

Friars Lawrence and Francis in many ways show what Shakespeare would have known about friars in his life. Foucault's definition of the Christian Pastorate (including monastic traditions) situates the beginning of the institution during Shakespeare's life (*Security* 165). With this powerful historical circumstance for Shakespeare within the beginning of the Christian Pastorate, it follows that "[e]ven though the direct representation of specific theological controversy was banned, Renaissance plays frequently featured elements of the Roman Catholic religion that had been practically outlawed in real life."⁸ Shakespeare was surrounded by theological controversy, and he and his contemporaries were willing to step into the fray, since religious figures like friars would create a familiar setting. Woods explains, "By the 1590s, English friars, nuns and hermits belonged firmly in the past, and many writers used them like the formula 'once upon a time': to create a safely distant, fictional world" ("What was Shakespeare's religion?"). These would be familiar figures for the audience, and so Shakespeare could reference these past roles to conjure a familiar but temporarily unrealistic world. Just as he uses Italy to be both familiar and distant, Catholic friars could be recognized instantly, while also bending these representations to fit the fictional worlds created in the two plays.

⁸ The consistent references to Catholic practice in *Romeo and Juliet* demonstrate this, particularly between the two lovers in an affectionate association: saints interceding (1.5.98-104); reverence of statues/shrines (1.5.92-93); pilgrims and pilgrimage (1.5.94-101)

Friars prior to the seventeenth century served various public purposes, from offering pastoral guidance or even serving in the military in the Wars of Religion.⁹ Franciscans friars are regarded as the largest of the four mendicant orders and were perhaps most recognizable by Shakespeare and his audience (Lawrence 25). Recent scholarship identifies all of his friars as Franciscans, keeping with Woods' distanced but familiar setting.¹⁰ This distinction notably makes Shakespeare stand out in characterization of friars, as he seemingly breaks from "the pervasive hostility to the Catholic Church that was the dominant discourse in England during Shakespeare's time...also highlight[ing] the important rhetorical role that the Franciscan Order had unwittingly come to play in the anti-Catholic polemic" (Salter 9).¹¹ Given the general redemption of Shakespeare's friars, it may first seem that Shakespeare's Franciscans wholly represent a positive outlook on Franciscans. Certainly, recent scholarship prefers this reading, as David Beauregard surmises, "Shakespeare treats Franciscans particularly well" ("Shakespeare on Monastic Life" 249). Shakespeare's sympathetic approach is perhaps most evident in Friar Francis, but Friar Lawrence's role in such a negative ending suggests that he can hardly be seen as favored by the playwright.

Friar Lawrence is perhaps the most famous Franciscan of Shakespeare's friars (Colston 19). Friar Francis, bearing the name of St. Francis and adhering more closely to the order and

⁹ The *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) provides clarification with respect to the various possible designations of a friar in the period: "In the *Roman Catholic Church*: A brother or member of one of certain religious orders founded in the 13th cent. and afterwards, of which the chief were the four mendicant orders: the Franciscans (Friars minors or Grey Friars) ...; the Augustines...; the Dominicans...; and the Carmelites" ("Friar").

¹⁰ For further study, Kenneth Colston has published on this topic most extensively, including for the Catholic scholarship publications *Homiletic & Pastoral Review* and *Portsmouth Institute for Faith and Culture*. See these articles for additional resources on Shakespeare's Franciscans:

Colston, Kenneth. "Shakespeare and the Franciscan Order." *Homiletic & Pastoral Review*, Homiletic & Pastoral Review, 10 July 2014, www.hprweb.com/2014/07/shakespeare-and-the-franciscan-order/.

Colston, Kenneth. "What's in the Name Francis?" Portsmouth Institute for Faith and Culture, Portsmouth Institute, 28 Oct. 2015, portsmouthinstitute.org/whats-in-the-name-francis/.

¹¹ Contemporaries of Shakespeare like Chaucer and Boccaccio focus on "satirizing the moral failures of friars, particularly their sins of the flesh and their hypocrisy" (Beauregard 251). Foucault too rejects monastic traditions that adhere "through an oblique relationship to the law...a kind of exhaustive, total, and permanent relationship of individual obedience ("22 February 1978" 183).

even to the life of the Saint, is a better representation of a Franciscan, but Lawrence is the most famous because of the indelible popularity of *Romeo and Juliet*. Shakespeare references Saint Francis directly in the case of Friar Lawrence, when he utters “Holy Saint Francis, what a change is here!” as Romeo tells him he loves Juliet now and not Rosaline (2.3.61). Note how Lawrence uses the selfless Saint as a shocked epithet, rather than as inspiration for himself. He directly refers to Friar John, as “Holy Franciscan friar, brother, ho!”, here referencing their mendicant order in brotherhood (5.2.1). Lawrence also calls upon St. Francis, with the invocation, “Saint Francis be my speed!”, as he hurries to find Juliet in the graveyard (5.3.121). As David Salter asserts, “Lawrence is no mere generic priest or friar; rather, he is quite explicitly identified as a Franciscan” (14). This can be readily applied to Friar Francis, explicitly identified by his own name and even more by his own actions.

So, what was to be expected of these Franciscans? What would this mean in terms of assessing their expectations for pastoral power?¹² St. Francis of Assisi insisted that “[t]he sole model for his fraternity was to be the life of Christ and the disciples as depicted in the Gospel accounts” (C. H. Lawrence 32). This then meant they should preach as Christ does, teaching both to the unbelievers and to congregations of faithful (Zawart 242). By the 1500s, “their sermons have the polish of the Renaissance, are linguistically perfect and stylistically finished...it is the Friars Minor Conventual who were invited to the foremost pulpits of the land, at least as far as Italy is concerned” (376).¹³ Contemporarily to these sixteenth century Franciscans, Desiderius

¹² Salter importantly examines “that Catholic writing critical of the Franciscan Order was not simply a response to the fact that the Order failed to live up to the ideals it espoused –it often reflected fundamental differences in the ecclesiology of the Catholic Church. So in the Catholic tradition, Franciscans could be attacked for not being Catholic enough, in that they were seen to exist outside existing structures, hierarchies, and identities.” (“Shakespeare and Catholicism” 12). As I see them as representative of both Catholic and general spiritual leaders, I do not distinguish between these anti-Franciscan criticisms, but it is an important distinction of the variety of criticisms facing Franciscans in the period.

¹³ Perhaps most interestingly in considering the life of Christ as a pattern, Megan Armstrong explains that while St. Francis may not have anticipated “the many occasions of Franciscan disobedience during his own lifetime or in

Erasmus emphasized following the pattern of apostles, such as Paul, and he criticized “the religious and monks, most false in both titles, when both a great part of them are farthest from religion,” even specifically referencing Minors as he lists the many names of friars, “as if it were not worth the while to be called Christians” (*In Praise of Folly* 49). He issues a biting critique of their education and preaching: “they reckon it one of the main points of piety if they are so illiterate that they can’t so much as read,” while at the same time they “sufficiently revenge themselves in their public sermons and so point out their enemy by circumlocutions that there’s no one but understands whom ‘tis they mean, unless he understands nothing at all” (*In Praise of Folly* 49, 50). Erasmus represents the beginning of anti-Franciscan rhetoric in this criticism, but as he plays the character of ‘Folly’, he also offers suggestions of how these friars could be better. I will examine the friars in their success and failures for Franciscan preaching and speaking in comparing their devotion to mendicant service, and later in Foucault’s framework of beneficence and omnipotence in pastoral power.

Notably, Shakespeare implicated two different friars in relation to these religious expectations. Taken together, the two friars provide complexity, as Friar Francis alternatively chooses to be a more distanced leader so that, paradoxically, he provides better care. He is a specific type of Franciscan, as the *Oxford English Dictionary*’s secondary definition suggests: “Sometimes loosely applied to members of the monastic or of the military orders” (“Friar”). Francis fits this designation well, as Beatrice explains at the start of *Much Ado* that the company of men, presumably the friar included, have just returned from war. She teases, “Is Signior Mountanto returned from the wars or no?” referring to Benedick here (1.1.28-29), and a messenger tells her that Benedick is “a good soldier too, lady” (1.1.50). Friar Francis has very

subsequent centuries” he still “institutionalized an order of charismatic preachers, men so confident in their own understanding of God’s will that they were willing at times to defy the authority of their own superiors” (58). This fits with Lawrence especially as he does not consult the authority of a superior, but rather chooses to act on his own.

little identification in the play, but it is quite probable that he arrives at the start of the play with these men, as they all fought in the Wars of Religion. This fits the period of the first publication and performance of the play.

It is important to note, however probable their particular religious affiliations as Catholic Franciscan friars, both Friars also always represent religiosity and spirituality in general symbolic terms.¹⁴ From this referentially real and functionally fictional version of Catholicism in the plays, these characters represent a distant Catholicism while simultaneously representing pastoral power for the Renaissance audience with their own varying and complex religious affiliations. The Franciscan identity necessitates identification and consideration because it is the characteristic that most often unites Lawrence and Francis, and it implicates the expectations, from Foucault's rigorously prescribed tradition, either adhered to or not, for both friars.

Shakespeare's Source Material for Both Plays

Before turning to Foucault, it is worth considering Shakespeare's source materials. Shakespeare's characterization often begins with specific source texts, and in this regard, *Romeo and Juliet* is a unique adaptation, as he refers directly to the more contemporary, fully fleshed out poems, "Romeo and Juliet," each of which share both title and general plot similarities, not to mention details.¹⁵ According to René Weis, Shakespeare may or may not have read the Italian and French poems of Luigi da Porto, Matteo Bandello, or even the French translation of Bandello from Pierre Boaistuau, but, "Above all he based his play on Arthur Brooke's *Tragical History of Romeus and Juliet*" (44).¹⁶ From this version, the friar is a consistently integral, albeit

¹⁴ Especially for an audience today, these pastoral leaders do not even have to represent Foucault's Christian pastorate, as they can extend into other religious traditions, depending on the religious backgrounds of the audience and the interpretations of the adaptations.

¹⁵ *Romeo and Juliet*'s source material can be traced back as early as the fairy tale of Pyramus and Thisbe and even a reference from Dante in the 13th century about feuding Montagues and Capulets (Weis 43).

¹⁶ One unique version of the poem, from another author, Masuccio Salernitano, in the thirty-third *Cinquante Novelle* in 1476, maintains the friar, but in a very different way. In Salernitano's poem, Giannozza/Juliet bribes the

troubling, character. In a second printing of Brooke's "Romeo and Juliet" poem by Robert Robinson in 1587, the title-page calls it "a rare example of true Constance, with the subtle counsels and practices of an old fryer and their ill event" (Gibbons 32). From this beginning description of the poem, the Friar plays an essential part in the ill events of the play. Following the anti-Franciscan writing trend, Brooke had specific, condemning intents for his play and his friars, as he records that he wrote *Romeus and Juliet* to influence humanity's morality.¹⁷ Brooke condemns friars farther than Shakespeare, which I will explore further in contextualizing Foucault's problem of personal advantage.

Considering the conclusions for the two friars, Lawrence is given some mercy with the Prince's exoneration of "We still have known thee for a holy man" (5.3.270). Brooke's friar is also seemingly redeemed by the end of the poem, but because Brooke's friar's disgusting deeds happened in youth, the 70-year-old friar becomes a "friendly friar in this distress" who in the end of the poem is seen as a friendly friar who "many times he worthily did serve / The commonwealth and in his life was never found to swerve" (Weiss 46). This shocking shift from the moralizing warning of an evil friar to one found worthy in his service demonstrates a parallel with Shakespeare's Lawrence, perhaps the budding idea for Shakespeare to redeem the character in the end.

An argument can be made that Brooke's and Shakespeare's friars are both "forgiven" to protect the poem and/or play from being censored, as the Protestant-state Church would not

friar to give her a sleeping potion. She also dies of grief in a convent¹⁶ after Mariotto/Romeo is beheaded (Gibbons 33-34). Even in this unique version of the story, the friar still provides the problem-causing draught, a detail particular to Lawrence and notably absent from Francis. In the version of the poem more contemporary to Shakespeare, bearing the same name by Luigi da Porto in 1530, the friar plays almost the exact same roles, along with most of the characters (Gibbons 34-35). Shakespeare maintains the specificity of the role, with the willingness to marry the two lovers, down to his suggestion that Juliet flee to a nunnery at the end. As to be expected by such mirrored actions, the deaths therefore line up with Shakespeare's play as well.

¹⁷ This aligns with Geoffrey Bullough's characterization of Brooke as a "serious-minded Protestant moralist" (Weiss 45).

appreciate depictions of friars that end condemned, regardless of their Catholic affiliation. Recall Woods' explanation that "the direct representation of specific theological controversy was banned." This concludes that *all* theological controversy was banned, not just those that challenge the Protestant-controlled state. But, as Woods explains, "Playhouses provided spaces to explore these anxieties" ("What was Shakespeare's religion?"). Shakespeare could safely explore the tensions of friars, perhaps even relating them to Protestant notions of religious leadership, so long as his plays remained vague enough and concluded without directly blaming religious figures.¹⁸ Thus, Shakespeare's Lawrence at least recalls a far worse friar, in a complicated commentary of a what a friar should be.

In contrast to *Romeo and Juliet*, all source materials for *Much Ado*, dramatic and non-dramatic, do not have a friar.¹⁹ Shakespeare added Friar Francis to Bandello's original narrative²⁰ to experiment with motifs "all based on a group of *novelle* concerned with broken nuptials and their social and rational reconciliation" that appears in five of his plays: *Romeo and Juliet*, *Much Ado*, *All's Well*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Measure for Measure* (Gibbons 33). Note that all three of the plays with friars appear in this grouping. Shakespeare returned to these motifs and these characters in *Much Ado*, so he could tweak a few details to create entirely new characters and thematic implications. Friar Francis, like Beatrice, Benedick²¹, and Dogberry²², were all inventions of Shakespeare (Prouty 17-27; Sales 29-38). In adding Friar Francis to

¹⁸ Even *West Side Story* in its creation avoided the notions of a direct commentary on religious controversy. Even though Jerome Robbins initially wanted the musical to be a clash between Catholics and Jews, Arthur Laurents "worried that 'East Side Story' would settle into a musical version of the 1922 play 'Abie's Irish Rose,' a schmaltzy interfaith romantic comedy about Irish Catholics and Jews by Anne Nichols (Berson 23). Nuanced versions of *Romeo and Juliet* may succeed best when they avoid overly pedantic assertions about the good and evil of religion.

¹⁹ Besides Shakespeare's own source of his *Romeo and Juliet*.

²⁰ One consistent point is the suggestion of deception by "death", by a father, in Matteo Bandello's version of the tale (Prouty 28).

²¹ Mary Augusta Scott suggests in 1901 that the idea for the sparring lovers comes from *The Book of the Courtyer*, but even she maintains that Beatrice and Benedick were newly added, saying "Having decided upon his plot, meaning it for a main plot, I fancy the poet casting about for something bright to enliven it. (Prouty 1).

²² At least with the character of Dogberry, a specific answer seems possible, as he was most likely written for the talented, comedic actor William Kemp (*Shakespeare in Quarto*; Sales 21).

Bandello's existing narrative, Francis is new both in concept and in name to this play, appearing as a similar Franciscan friar to Lawrence but differing as a character in approaches to pastoral power.

Francis is often overlooked in analysis of source materials: Charles Prouty only directly considers the creation of Beatrice, Benedick, and Dogberry, arguing specifically that Beatrice and Benedick offer more than just comic relief; they are integral to the narrative (3). Prouty's insightful argument can be extended to Francis: he, too, integrally operates in the narrative because his guiding leadership allows for comedic relief, avoiding the tragic possibilities of the accusations that upend the wedding. Without his level head and insistence on familial harmony, the play could not relish in its humor and fun. He allows for the jovial moments because he is a more selfless, observant, and giving pastoral leader. This inclusion of a new, blended character in the person of the friar notably distinguishes Francis from Lawrence. Francis could have followed the same trajectory as his predecessor—good intentions gone tragically wrong in the endeavor—but Shakespeare invents Francis to represent the new possibilities for spiritual guidance.

Comparing the Friars' "zeal, devotion, and endless application"

In returning now to Foucault, I begin with the characteristics he identifies as the initial manifestation of pastoral power: "zeal, devotion, and endless application" (*Security* 127). Both friars demonstrate zeal towards specific pursuits: Lawrence with his botanical studies and Francis with his military service. Lawrence devotes his time to pursuits fitting for a studious Franciscan, botany and apothecaries, seen in his first monologue in Act II, Scene II.²³ This study goes beyond the names of plants, as Lawrence adeptly discusses two different schools of thought on medicinal practice that converge in acceptance in the Renaissance. Rebekah Owens, for the

²³ Colston connects this interest to the famous "Franciscan proto-scientist Roger Bacon of Oxford" ("Shakespeare's Franciscans" 19).

Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, explains: “When Friar Lawrence tries to heal the rift...he does it via a mix of Galenic and Paracelsian principles.” Claudius Galen, an early Roman physician, gave origin to the belief of the four humours (popular in belief in the Renaissance) and Philippus Paracelsus, an early modern physician, researched cures from plants, combined with the spiritual notions of a cure involving practices like alchemy and astrology (“Shakespeare and Medicine: Friar Lawrence”). Shakespeare intends for Lawrence to appear zealous and studious in this botanical pursuit, since Lawrence pursues this knowledge for more than personal interest. He will make the sleeping draught he gives to Juliet, with a long explanation of the side-effects which includes a Galenic allusion to “A cold and drowsy humor” that she will feel (4.1.93-103). Lawrence intends to reassure Juliet of his knowledge in this prescription. I will return later to the implications regarding problems of personal power as they emerge through Lawrence’s botanical study, but first, Lawrence’s interest in botany and apothecaries shows Lawrence’s devotion to rigorous study.

Despite the “endless application” possible for a Renaissance friar, such characters’ variations have been overlooked in the plays. Friar Francis provides such variety as a military Franciscan (Armstrong 3). It may seem that a militaristic friar must represent a strong, pursuant arm of the Church, like Lawrence. But Foucault clarifies that the figure of pastoral care, operating in endless application, is not a person of striking strength, like the gods, but rather a shepherd who keeps watch over his flock by “keeping an eye out for possible evils, but above all in the sense of vigilance with regard to any possible misfortune” (*Security* 127). So Friar Francis of *Much Ado* best fits as military friar, since he watches his flock of soldiers that return home

from war.²⁴ Most productions include the military setting, with Branagh's company riding home from conflict on horseback, and with the 2019 *Shakespeare in the Park* emphasizing the war as the soldiers return from war at the start and are called back to the fight at the end of the play (Leon). The most obvious military distinction for Friar Francis appears in the costuming of Josie Rourke's 2011 production. Rourke's Francis, played by Clive Hayward, wears the naval military insignia of his fellow soldiers, as the play takes place in 1980's Gibraltar (Gans; Billington).²⁵ In the original play, the setting of Italy, specifically Messina in Sicily, also interplays with the play's military setting, connected to the actual military branch of Italianate Franciscans in the sixteenth century (Zawart 377). Shakespeare is sometimes criticized for his unrealistic, continued use of Italy as a location, but in *Much Ado* "it matters that the drama takes place in Italy. The play exploits masks and revels, and conjures up an Italian location where festivities permit the concealment of identity" (Mullan). Francis plays a key role in concealing identity, and his role in the military is clearly connected to and developed within the setting.

Francis can be further aligned with military service through the Franciscan's famous founder, Saint Francis of Assisi. These men who share the same name serve with zeal in military pastoral duties, as St. Francis journeyed to southern Italy in a military crusade (Lawrence 30). But distinctively, both only utilize the military service to better their dedication to pastoral care. St. Francis at twenty-four "heard the call of Christ in a dream, which made him abandon his quest for military glory and return home" (Lawrence 30). Friar Francis could arguably too be distancing himself from war as he is in Italy to primarily assist the soldiers who have just

²⁴ This war may be the Wars of Religion, which would fit the period, but it is unclear. For historical readings on the Wars of Religion in connection to Friars, Megan Armstrong's *The Politics of Piety: Franciscan Preachers during the Wars of Religion, 1560-1600* is an excellent, thorough resource.

²⁵ Francis wears this military insignia at the first wedding, and he wears a black robe at the final wedding, to match the distinct mourning clothing of the entire wedding party, symbolic of how he works within the needs and requests of the community with different marriage ceremonies.

returned. Francis has quietly observed the princes' patterns, and so in his marriage plan, Francis calls the accusers "every hearer" as he explains his plan and points out that Claudio will be convinced "when he shall hear she died upon his words" (4.1.217, 223). He knows how to best reach the princes and specifically Claudio because he knows Claudio does not look at evidence. He only listens to the words of men, and so Francis suggests a plan that will work regardless of the failings of Claudio. Francis prepares with considerate diligence, unlike Lawrence's only (uninformed) assistant Friar John, with various reinforcements to ensure the plan's success: confiding in many trusted adults, not implementing the plan alone, and avoiding drugs as way to make Hero appear dead. Midst this military planning approach and war setting we see Friar Francis anew: a pastoral leader devoted to peace.²⁶ Here, Francis diverges slightly from Foucault, since Foucault keeps politics/military and pastoral power distinctly separate (*Security* 165). Francis clearly steps into both roles, with an allegiance both to pastoral power and political sovereigns and the overlap for Francis may aid in his decision to detach from Foucault's definition of blind monastic obedience, later discussed in the problem of personal advantage (176).

As both Lawrence and Francis work within marriage plays, they watch over their flocks as they concern themselves with the well-being of their communities. Lawrence has been a continual counselor to Romeo, seemingly before the play begins. Lawrence also appears to genuinely want to heal Verona, motivations aside for the moment, in aiding Romeo and Juliet: "In one respect I'll thy assistant be, / For this alliance may so happy prove, / To turn your households' rancour to pure love" (Shakespeare 2.3.86-88). Even though that eventually fails,

²⁶ It is possible that Francis is an Observant Franciscan friar, as Franciscans of the period distinguished themselves as Conventual, Capuchin, or Observant, of which the Observants took on the most active and visible role (Armstrong 3). Megan Armstrong's research on Observant Franciscans establishes many key factors about these friars. But even then, I do not know that Shakespeare would have specifically placed Friar Francis as a member of the Observant branch, a detail of religious practice that may have been too obscure.

Lawrence did try to keep evil out of his flock initially. Francis, too, performs marriages for his flock, and when the first one is derailed, he aides the families in reconciliation that eventually leads to not one but two community-uniting marriages.

Francis particularly demonstrates the careful watching of his flock through Franciscan attentive study and preaching. In trying to redeem Hero, Francis details his observations: “By noting of the lady. I have marked / A thousand blushing apparitions / To start into her face, a thousand innocent shames / In angel whiteness beat away those blushes; / And in her eye there hath appeared a fire / To burn the errors that these princes hold / Against her maiden truth” (4.1.158-164). He chooses to observe Hero, the accused, with the whiteness of her face shown in performance as shock at the accusations and the fire in her eye seen perhaps as the indignation of being accused. He explains his observational evidence because he does not listen solely to the male accusers who could bring evil to his flock. Kenneth Colston explains that Francis has “an ability to bring good from evil, to see innocence when others see guilt” (“Franciscan Friars” 21).²⁷

Indeed, Francis compares Hero to a good and innocent angel to evoke positive spiritual images for Hero herself, and doubly demonstrate his scriptural acumen. He is therefore not only devoted to his military training but also to his pastoral study. As he compares the fire in her eyes, it evokes burning of a heretic, or the cleansing of the evil accusations. He is bringing good from evil as Colston compares. Francis reframes burning to be a positive, inward action rather than the public condemnation of the accused because Francis sees with patience and study, rather than infers as Claudio has done. The play famously contains no scene for the evening of which Hero is being accused, and so Claudio has only heard the rumors rather than looked to Hero for the

²⁷ Colston lists this as a comparison to Lawrence, whereas my argument situates Lawrence as failing in these attempts.

truth. As Andrea Varney emphasizes, “Through careful ‘noting of the lady’, the Friar sees the truth, realising that Hero ‘is guiltless’” (“Deception and Dramatic Irony”). The Friar looks and sees the facts in Hero, allowing him to speak up on behalf of the truth. Here is a slight divergence between Francis and Lawrence in their devoted zeal to pastoral care: Francis works in detailed observation of truth to protect his flock while Lawrence defends his flock less methodically with experiment and chance. The friars will further diverge in considering the other two elements of Foucault’s pastoral care, beginning with the essential questions of omnipotence and beneficence in exercising power.

The Intended Use of Pastoral Power as Beneficence in Omnipotence

Foucault asserts that pastoral power is beneficent, since “this is a part of all religious, moral, and political descriptions of power. What kind of power would be fundamentally wicked? What kind of power would not have the function, purpose, and justification of doing good? It is a universal feature.” In this guaranteed initial beneficence, simply defined here as charitably working for the good of others, there is significant overlap, as noted in the previous discussion, of Lawrence and Francis’ zealous devotion to watching their flock. Both friars work, at least from appearances, in beneficent protection of their communities. But this beneficence is also characterized “as much by its omnipotence, and by the wealth and splendor of the symbols with which it clothes itself” (*Security* 126). Here ends the overlap, and suggests instead the need for thorough contrast. Omnipotence evokes acting alone in the belief of great power, and in Foucault’s exercise of beneficence and omnipotence together, Lawrence demonstrates his pride; his beneficence fails as he prefers his omnipotence and splendor in symbols of his power. Francis, on the other hand, fulfills his careful use of omnipotent authority because he is driven foremost by his goodness, choosing to consult others and then extend his power to them. That is,

Francis seems to divide his authority from power, initiating action, but allowing others to exercise saving their own powers in the drama of rescue and reconciliation to follow.

The question of beneficence in omnipotence connects first with Lawrence's botanical interests.²⁸ In his first speech, he explains how his apothecary concoctions function, and as he will give one to Juliet, this interest now aligns him with "the play's other drug-maker, the apothecary who commits the outlawed act of selling poison to Romeo" (Brenner 53). Since he prescribes his own sleeping draught to Juliet, this shows his vice of pride in his omnipotent authority. Rather than studying to learn and to offer simple cures, he uses them to hide Juliet without telling anyone of the plan. He also contemplates the implications of vice and virtue in his monologue: "Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied, / And vice sometime by action dignified," foreshadowing his eventual downfall (2.3.17-18). Brenner notes that this line "serves notice that [Lawrence] is capable of committing an act which, though it might appear a vice, could be dignified as virtue" (51). He thinks of his beneficence in virtue to try to unite the families, when really it is the misapplied vice of omnipotence without control. And perhaps his vice is dignified by action, but not his action, as he could have taken other paths, seen in Francis' choices. Francis does not need to offer a potion to Hero because he trusts her to act her part.

Then, beneficence and omnipotence interplay with the most popular comparison of the two friars: the suggested marriage plot. It is in the choice to be private or public that we see the need for omnipotence in beneficent action. Consider the motives of Lawrence's choice to marry the two teenagers in secret, with Brenner here arguing Lawrence's decision "shows not only his political disregard of Romeo and Juliet as individuals but also his pragmatism, electing the

²⁸ Brenner here knowingly questions, "First appearing in the play as a flower and herb gatherer, who could be more innocuous?" and then examines the analogy Lawrence makes about flower's medicine and power as kings of grace and will, concluding that this "defines his mental habit of seeing power and conflicts of power all about him" (51).

policy that ends will justify the means” (51).²⁹ His motive was to assert his pastoral omnipotence rashly, without the permission of higher ecclesiastical authority or even authority from God through prayer. By marrying them in secret, he alone controls the reuniting of the two families, and would receive the glory for his decision. Jerry Weinberger argues that Lawrence “goes for broke as he does because he really has no alternative and because this strategy comports with the political circumstances and with his priestly ambitions—he wants to win big for the sake of absolute peace” (369).³⁰ I concur with Weinberger’s assessment of priestly ambitions, but only as Lawrence aspires for Foucault’s omnipotence despite his initial intentions of beneficence. Weinberger also suggests that Lawrence has no alternative, but this only holds when considering *Romeo and Juliet* alone. With Francis, alternatives appear, such as confiding and consulting with other trusted adults, and even delegating responsibilities to others.

Lawrence’s incomplete benevolence in favor of omnipotence leaves him to blame. As Planinc points out,

“Everyone fails *Romeo and Juliet* in some way; no one more than Friar Lawrence. The friar's limitations as their spiritual counselor and his incompetent and cowardly meddling in worldly affairs are the primary causes of their entirely unnecessary deaths; but his reputation as ‘a holy man’ (5.3.270; 4.3.29) helps to cloud over the tragedy with a sense of inescapability and predestination” (10-11).

Planinc illustrates the limits of Lawrence’s pastoral care, and he judiciously places primary blame with Lawrence. The adults all fail these two teenagers, but Friar Lawrence does

²⁹ Brenner clarifies with important historical context: “As an ecclesiastic he must have motive for defying canon laws that forbade clergy from performing secret marriages and that suspended for as many as three years any cleric who wed minors without parental knowledge or consent” (47).

³⁰ Interesting to consider in religious context, Weinberger continues this section, “We are not too impressed with the friar’s wit, however. For he had an obvious model on which to depend: the central mystery of his religion, which is an extraordinary execution followed by a miraculous pardon” (369).

the most damage because he believes in his omnipotent power. His reliance on his identity as a “holy man” may make it appear that he can be forgiven for the inescapable predestination of it all, but in actuality, he gambled with the belief that fortune would reward his omnipotent, controlling approach. And as Foucault warns, Lawrence fails and represents the worst of pastoral power.

Lawrence continually relies on chance rather than Francis’ careful, observant planning. When he finds Romeo and Paris dead in the tomb, he curses, “Ah, what an unkind hour / Is guilty of this lamentable chance!” (5.3.145-146). He blames an unkind hour and chance, while he is much to blame in his dicey choices. We see a glimpse again of his original intent, as he sees Juliet wake up and asks for his help. She trusts him, and he replies, trying to defer his involvement, “A greater power than we can contradict / Hath thwarted our intents” (5.3.153-154). This great power is ambiguous: it could be God or chance, and the difference is left hanging, an ambiguity perhaps not best associated with a preaching friar.³¹ He did not consult this higher power of God or chance, as Foucault explains the pattern should be for Lawrence; rather Lawrence considered himself the omnipotent power in his original plans (*Security* 173). He also references his intent, but now he brings Juliet into it. This would be a comfort if he owned the tragedy with her, but instead he immediately encourages her to flee the tomb in secret. Francis alternatively performs all of the marriages in public view presumably operating with the permission of the Church, with full knowledge of all parties, and therefore succeeds. He does not need to particularly exert his omnipotent power as a clergyman because he is there to beneficently perform the marriages at the request of his community.

³¹ Lawrence does not mean fate here, clarified by his specific mention of chance just a few lines before, which contrasts with Romeo’s famous struggle with fate, often referred to in the play as ‘stars’ in reference to the Prologue’s “star-crossed lovers.” Perhaps Lawrence operates as the fate that manipulates Romeo’s last few days of life.

The two friars further explore beneficence and omnipotence in what they say and how they say it.³² Recall the expectations for both of these Italian Franciscan friars: Erasmus and the mendicant order expected them to follow the life of Christ and the apostles, to preach with expertise. This would lend great, omnipotent power to the advice they give to both the faithful and unfaithful. Lawrence represents the problematic friar of Erasmus, preaching too long with allusions and logic that suffice his personal interests. Francis, brief in his teaching, preaching plainly, follows the recommended teachings of Christ and the apostles (*In Praise of Folly* 45).³³ Lawrence says he will “be brief” in his explanation, but he instead tells a long tale, which fits the expectations of anti-Franciscans criticisms in this long-winded speech (5.3.229; Zawart 376).³⁴ Francis conversely listens to his host, Leonato, to “be brief” in the marriage ceremony, and Francis later asks for his friends to “Hear me a little” when he explains his plan (*Much Ado* 4.1.1,155). In this request, Francis is brief, demonstrating further devotion to the humility of a more-admired Franciscan approach.

In a particularly choice feature of speech, both friars exaggerate their old age to accomplish very specific ideas on omnipotence. Lawrence, in his lengthy final recounting to the Prince, includes a final claim of blame, included with a plea to remember his age, “and if aught in this / Miscarried by my fault, let my old life / Be sacrificed some hour before his time / Unto the rigor of severest law” (5.3.266-269). He owns his part, an admirable note, as if he can finally see his responsibility in exerting too much omnipotent power. But he is quick to reference his old age, calling for pity as he adds the extreme suggestion he should be killed by the severest extent

³² Lawrence takes up such a substantial portion of the narrative that I cannot attend to all of his spoken dialogue, so this could provide a place for necessary further research. Francis speaks far less, so I attend to as much of his speech as possible.

³³ Planinc makes apt biblical comparisons of Lawrence, that “It is ultimately in [Juliet’s] faith in her ‘holy father’ that leads to her death,” and in denying Romeo and Juliet “Lawrence is Peter, but he is also the play’s Judas.” These diverge dramatically from the expected pattern of Christ and even Paul expected of Franciscans.

³⁴ The lengthiness of the recounting is one potential reason for this portion to be omitted from many stage and film adaptations, another being the redundancy of having already seen the events for a current audience.

of the law. He exaggerates here to point out whichever reading the audience prefers: that he tried to be wise in his old age but sadly failed, or he was forgivably foolish in his old age and now admits his error fully. Either way, he calls for trust in his omnipotence to save himself, rather than to redeem his flock.

Francis exaggerates his old age for a different effect, to show his willingness to admit imperfection in seeming omnipotence: “Call me a fool, / Trust not my reading nor my observations, / Which with experimental seal doth warrant / The tenor of my book; trust not my age, / My reverence, calling, nor divinity” (4.1.164-167). He says this right before suggesting the marriage plot because he wants to enable trust. He uses self-deprecation to call attention to his experience. He allows his parishioners to call him a fool, and he says that they may not even believe what he observes. He knows that some in his flock doubt him, particularly Leonato, because they falsely trust evil rumors. He swiftly delineates his many qualifications: his experience sealed with spiritual authority, the meaning of his words, his age that implies wisdom, and then he concludes with his religious qualifications. Here he references his age to demonstrate wisdom; he is reverent, demonstrating his peaceful disposition. He takes his role with the gravitas it demands, so he intends to assist those around him. Francis uses faux humility for others to believe him, while Lawrence acts in his own self-interest. Francis points out why he is worth trusting in his omnipotent authority, so his beneficent plan can empower his flock to act on their own.

The Problem of Personal Advantage in Complicating Pastoral Care

As Lawrence operated only in self-interest in his speech, so he, too, functions as Foucault’s problem of personal advantage in pastoral care. Foucault explains this with the shepherd analogy again, this time distinguishing good and bad shepherds: “The bad shepherd

only thinks of good pasture for his own profit, for fattening the flock that he will be able to sell and scatter, whereas the good shepherd thinks only of his flock and nothing else” (*Security* 128). Lawrence is the bad shepherd in this regard as he thinks of his Verona pasture as existing for his own profit. Lawrence carries great personal advantage as an adviser to Romeo, who relies on the friar for guidance. Recall Planinc’s situating of the Friar’s role as “spiritual counselor” to these children, as a particularly condemning indictment of Lawrence’s seeming omnipotence (10-11). Foucault specifically references this power in the structures of monastic life, pointing to the tradition “that every individual entering a monastic community be put in the hands of someone...who takes total charge of him and tells him what he must do at every moment. The novice’s perfection and merit ultimately consists in considering it a fault to do anything without having received an explicit order to do it” (*Security* 176).³⁵ Lawrence was trained in this tradition, and he therefore follows this pattern in advising both Romeo and Juliet as his training novices. Even more damning within his chosen order, he simultaneously rejects the tradition for himself, not consulting other religious leaders or prayer, but rather operating for personal power.

Lawrence’s problematic abuse of his role as a counselor recalls Brooke’s original friar and the moralizing intent of *Romeus and Juliet*. Brooke wrote that the lovers of his poem confer with “superstitious friars (the naturally fit instruments of unchastity) attempting all adventures of peril, for the attaining of their wished lust, using auricular confession (the key of whoredom and treason) for furtherance of their purpose, abusing the honourable name of lawful marriage, the cloak the shame of stolen contracts” (Weiss 46). These are friars to be despised for their personal

³⁵ Foucault’s explanation of strict obedience in mendicant orders was certainly a focus and concern in Franciscan leadership during the Wars of Religion. As Megan Armstrong looks specifically at the reform of disobedient French Franciscans during the Wars of Religion, she explains that this expectation of obedience would come from someone in charge, and in this case, “the community was in serious trouble with the head of the Observant order, the minister general, for outright disobedience to his authority” (33). Leaders like this set out with the goal internal reform in “reminding [French Observants] that the route to salvation lay in unquestioning service to the will of God” (34). Leaders, like generals, would be the ones to interpret the will of God.

abuse of pastoral power, particularly in taking sexual confession, for nefarious purposes: unchastity, lust, whoredom, and treason.³⁶ Erasmus³⁷ warns against friars like this in the sixteenth century, “especially those begging friars, because they are privy to all men’s secrets by means of confessions, as they call them.³⁸ Which yet were no less than treason to discover...by hints and conjectures but suppressing the names” (*In Praise of Folly* 50). As Erasmus criticizes how friars obtain confessions, Shakespeare’s Lawrence, too, takes Romeo’s (and Juliet’s) confession through coercion. This problematic abuse of personal power fits well with Foucault’s condemnation of how the Christian pastoral insists on confessions of sexual indiscretion, “whether they try to force the secret, or whether in some obscure way they reinforce it by the manner in which they speak of it” (*The History of Sexuality* 35). Brooke’s and Shakespeare’s friars do both: they coerce the sexual secrets out, and then they reinforce sex by how they speak about it with their flock.

Brooke’s more malicious friar has a well-hidden cell with a bed that he used for “secret sexual assignations” in his youth, as he took sexual confession to then exploit it for his own sexual desires (Weiss 46).³⁹ Shakespeare’s Lawrence at least refers to Brooke’s friar since

³⁶ In comparing Shakespeare’s Lawrence to Brooke’s, current scholars prefer a reading that shows Shakespeare redeeming Friar Lawrence entirely. Colston concludes, “Far from Brooke’s friar who used ‘auricular confession’ for ‘whoredom’ and ‘treason,’ Lawrence uses it to moderate and legitimize youthful passion and to overcome civil discord” (“Shakespeare’s Franciscans” 21). But in this very statement of differences, Colston must acknowledge the similarities. Lawrence also requires confession from both Romeo and Juliet. Rather than creating dramatic distance between the characters, Shakespeare uses these behaviors to allude to Brooke’s salacious friar. Shakespeare does the same thing himself: he recalls Lawrence in the creation of Francis, demonstrating his aplomb at subverting characters and stereotypes to keep the audience invested in the complexity of messages regarding pastoral power.

³⁷ Erasmus makes for a particularly astute consideration of approaches to pastoral power in the period because he specifically addresses monks and friars in his book *In Praise of Folly*. And since Erasmus speaks as ‘Folly’ in these quotations, he condemns hypocritical behavior of religious figures like these while also maintaining a considerate approach that all men, by the nature of being born human, are subject to folly (9). Since Friar Lawrence appears to be sincere in his hope to unite the families, Erasmus provides the fairest way to criticize the misused power.

³⁸ This alludes to “A belief in the absolute poverty of Christ and a desire to make it, and itinerant preaching, the model of their observation” associated with Franciscan friars in the twelfth century (Lawrence 33). I will further this connection to Franciscans later.

³⁹ The OED provides the first specified definition of cell as “A dwelling consisting of a single chamber inhabited by a hermit or anchorite.” The anchorite here being Friar Lawrence, furthered by the OED’s literary examples for this

Lawrence in his “close cell” presses Romeo for confessions of sexual indiscretions (2.3.40,77). The continual presence of Lawrence’s cell in the narrative demonstrate his desire for personal advantage. Lawrence also brings up sex first, jumping to the assumption that Romeo hasn’t seen his bed because he has been sleeping with Rosaline (2.3.40). Lawrence offers sexual advice to Romeo several times, most notably with his caution, “Young men’s love then lies / Not truly in their hearts but in their eyes”; with the double-entendre: “Women may fall when there’s no strength in men”; and his advice to Romeo about marrying Juliet, telling Romeo to “love moderately; love long doth so; Too swift arrives as tardy as too slow” and Juliet is referred to as ‘the lady, O, so light a foot / Will ne’er wear out the everlasting flint; A lover” (2.3.63-64; 2.3.76; 2.6.13-15; 2.6.16-18).⁴⁰ This explicit, repeated sexual advice oversteps boundaries with a young parishioner, further exploited when Lawrence, again in his cell, marries Romeo and Juliet, representing his desire to be credited alone for the reuniting of the two families (Brenner 53). Brooke suggests that friars abuse and ruin the institution of marriage, fitting as Lawrence performs the disastrous marriage, while he as a friar vows to avoid marriage (Weiss 46). Francis’ personal dwellings are entirely absent, and he avoids talk of sex in preference for resolving the chaos in his flock instead.

Lawrence the bad shepherd grabs at personal power to save himself when he last speaks with Juliet. Rather than console her, he tries to resolve his problems quickly, “Come, come away. / Thy husband in thy bosom there lies dead, / And Paris, too. Come, I’ll dispose of thee / Among a sisterhood of holy nuns. / Stay not to question, for the watch is coming. / Come, go, good

definition including a 1597 usage entry for “W. Shakespeare *Romeo & Juliet* ii. iii. 171 Bid her..come to shrift to Friar Laurence cell” (“Cell”).

⁴⁰ The performance tradition of this line has the Friar pause before ‘eyes,’ even to indicate with his own eyes the sexual connection of where love lies for young men. This is most notable with Pete Posthelwaite’s telling pause in *Romeo + Juliet*. Even with just the word ‘eyes,’ the indication is that love is physical for young men, and therefore sexual in nature.

Juliet. I dare no longer stay” (5.3.154-159). He tries to hide away Juliet as a nun, which “overly indicates his motive to hurry her from the tomb and so conceal his plot entirely rather than to offer her needed consolation” (Brenner 55). Lawrence rather ominously with the word ‘dispose’ in this goal of concealing his plot. If she obeys, he would require her to disappear into a quieter version of monasticism than his own.⁴¹ He tells Juliet not to be questioned because he does not want the truth revealed. With the exception of the Nurse, no one would know, with Romeo dead and with Friar John not even knowing why the letter was sent (5.3.18-19).⁴² Lawrence says he “dare no longer stay” because he knows the fault he bears, and he is a coward unwilling to face it on his own accord. Juliet tells him to leave because she will not go with him (5.3.160). He does not try to convince her again, instead choosing to flee. This is perhaps the surest indication of his investment in his personal advantage: he would rather escape with his own life than help save Juliet, a single sheep of his flock. Because he leaves, he is not there when Juliet takes her own life, with Planinc even suggesting that he well knows “she is likely to kill herself” (20).

When Lawrence has to face his personal power grab in being captured by the watches, he behaves as Erasmus warns: a trembling, weeping friar, appearing “like pleasant fellows, with all this vileness, ignorance, rudeness, and impudence, they represent to us, for so they call it, the lives of the apostles” (49). Lawrence plays the part of a friar while he is simultaneously ignorant, rude, and impudent in this half-testimony of his part in the narrative. Vile behavior indeed. He knows the blame he bears for the abuse of pastoral power in the name of personal advantage.

⁴¹ Planinc concurs, that “[t]he unadorned meaning of these words is clear: he will “dispose” of her in a convent where she will remain undiscovered” (20).

⁴² The information from Friar Lawrence given to Friar John is correct but only partial truth: “By my brotherhood, / The letter was not nice but full of charge, / Of dear import, and the neglecting it / May do much danger” (5.3.17). He waits until John has departed to discuss his fear of Juliet in the tomb as a “poor living corse, closed in a dead man’s tomb!” (5.3.30).

With surprise, then, no blame is directly leveled at Lawrence after all of this, since the Prince replies, “We still have known thee for a holy man,” previously examined in connection to the original source material (5.3.270). The Prince still blames Lawrence, at least in part, as he declares, “All are punished” (5.3.295), as the friar is a part of that “all,” but ultimately, it is an act of reconciliation. No more blood needs to be spilt on this stage, and it serves everyone best to forgive him for his large part in the tragedy. Even while Jerry Weinberger sees Lawrence as a positive leader, he must acknowledge, “No one could argue that the friar is indeed innocent because his intentions were pure...The friar’s meddling in public and political affairs, indeed precisely out of his good intentions, has without question contributed to the disaster” (“The Politics of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet* 361). And yet, the prince forgives him, where Weinberger argues this shows the Prince’s piety as he had demonstrated pious mercy in only banishing Romeo (360-361). Lawrence does not do the forgiving but must rather be forgiven himself, and this limited forgiveness unites the families in their collective blame. This decision helps resolve Lawrence’s grab at personal power, perhaps to benefit Verona’s overall stability, not fully whole as six people died to arrive at that conclusion.

Francis alternatively avoids notions of personal power, instead operating as the good shepherd to watch over his flock. He is “a kindly, scheming cleric. He recommends that Hero pretend to be dead. His plan is successful in bringing about the repentance of Don Pedro and Claudio and in preparing the way for the happy ending” (*Salem Press Encyclopedia of Literature*). In kind recommendations and in “preparing the way,” Friar Francis did not execute the plan. Rather, it is implemented by other characters, demonstrating his lack of interest in personal power. He plans a scheme with others, and with little thought for himself, consistently suppressing his role in the process.

His identity as a good shepherd is most evident in his few words after Claudio slanders Hero. Francis maintains his dedication to observing, standing back and listening, as the accusations fly from Claudio, Don Pedro, and Don John. Francis hears Beatrice calls to him for aid at the end of her list: “Hero! Why Hero! Uncle, Signor Benedick, Friar!” (4.1.114). Leonato ignores her request, calling instead for the death of Hero (4.1.115). Benedick says nothing yet, and Beatrice asks Hero, “How now, cousin Hero?”, and Hero wakes up (4.1.118). Only then, does the Friar kindly encourage, “Have comfort, lady” (4.1.119). This is a double address: to answer Beatrice’s request for aide, in directly helping Hero. It is further clarified as comfort for Hero because Leonato questions her, “Dost thou look up?” and the Friar replies, “Yea, wherefore should she not?” (4.1.120-121). Francis waits to speak first to the accused Hero, with his primary goal to defend her as a sheep in his flock. All of his actions ultimately aide others: he attempts to marry Hero and Claudio, he responds to Beatrice’s cry for help, he comforts Hero, and he defends Hero to her father, Leonato. He helps Hero, as is his service-oriented beneficence because she needs assistance, and he senses she may not have the autonomy and control in this place to absolve herself, given Leonato’s furious reactions.

Friar Francis waits with further patience as Leonato continues in shaming his daughter. Francis does not intercede yet, allowing Benedick and Beatrice to try to calm Leonato first. Only when they are unsuccessful, the Friar asks for their ears: “Hear me a little; / For I have only been silent so long, / And given way unto this course of fortune” (4.1.155-157). By asking them to hear him, rather than commanding them or demanding obedience to his plans, he maintains his lack of personal aspirations in guiding his flock. He points out that he was silent to watch fortune first, but he does not trust fortune as Lawrence does. He makes another similar request when he suggests the marriage plot, in pleading, “Pause awhile, / And let my counsel sway you in this

case” (4.1.200-201). He offers his pastoral guidance once a larger conflict arises, and even then, he is cautious in his approach with the request of patience from everyone.

In his work as a military friar, he anticipates that Leonato will question him, regardless of Francis’ visual evidence or personal qualifications. Leonato holds more trust in the words of his men, rather than the silence of Hero. Since his observations did not convince the father, Francis asks for further clarification from Beatrice first, “Lady, were you her bedfellow last night?” (4.1.147). He only questions the two women, as they would best know what transpired. His next inquiry gives Hero a chance to speak for herself, asking the critical question, “Lady, what man is he you are accused of?” (4.1.176). He gives her a platform to redeem herself, rather than claiming to know for her. Francis knows he has authority in his omnipotent beneficence, as the lone religious leader present, but he uses that authority not only for himself, but to empower others, as he did by giving Hero a chance to speak. He listens to her reply, and then he accuses the men who blamed her with the assertion, “There is some strange misprision in the princes” (4.1.185). He knows something is wrong, after long observing these soldiers, and he suggests here that not only that Don John is at fault, but that the misprision is in *all* of the princes.

As Friar Francis suggests what do next, he suggests deception, but only in careful public consultation. Varney explains that “rather than providing a new model for honesty and integrity, he also uses deception as a means to achieve good ends” (“Deception and Dramatic Irony”). Note how Varney explains the new capabilities of pastoral power: because it is without personal advantage, Francis uses deception to achieve good ends. Francis is focused on restoring honor to Hero through the deception, rather than establishing greater power for himself. It should also be clarified that he uses *limited* deception, as he shares the plan with four key members of his flock and does not rely on drugs or letters to communicate the deception. He is truly only deceiving the

men (Don Pedro, Claudio, and Don John) that allowed themselves to be deceived by evil in trusting only what they heard.

When Francis suggests the deceptive marriage plan, he gives an explanation to distinguish his motivations from Lawrence: “Marry, this well carried shall on her behalf / Change slander to remorse; that is some good. / But not for that dream I on this strange course, / But on this travail look for greater birth” (4.1.210-214). He does not dream for the change of slander to remorse. He does not dream it because he does not plot for himself, as Friar Lawrence plots for himself. Rather, Friar Francis looks to work *on her behalf*, for the greater birth of redeeming Hero.

He does not plan with chance in mind, but rather plans as a military man, with a final fail safe, to “conceal her, / As best befits her wounded reputation, / In some reclusive and religious life, / Out of all eyes, tongues, minds, and injuries” (4.1.240-243). This may at first recall Friar Lawrence who tries to hide Juliet as a nun, so Lawrence can run away (*Romeo and Juliet* 5.3.156-157). But compare the motivation the two explicitly offer. Francis seeks to conceal Hero to protect her from anyone who would judge her. He sees the religious life as a place of refuge, and only as a last option. Lawrence, however, seeks to *dispose* of Juliet. He sees her as a problem to be removed, and he tries to silence her, telling Juliet not to speak. Francis gave Hero the platform to speak by asking her for information. Lawrence intends to give a command to protect himself, as he concludes that he cannot stay longer. He fears for himself, rather than comforting Juliet whose husband just died. Friar Francis comforts Hero, and he seeks to truly help her, even suggesting a last resort: life as a nun.

Francis allows for the facilitation of his idea because he trusts Benedick and Beatrice to enable the reconciliation strategy. This trust in the two becomes an exchange, as Benedick

reciprocally shows his trust in Francis, encouraging “Signor Leonato, let the friar advise you” (4.1.244). Francis works as a leader prescribing solutions and then assisting as others actually take the actions. In this model of trust and love provided by Francis, Benedick and Beatrice are then able to express their love in the subsequent lines because he offered his assistance (4.1.267-270). Had they not been comforted with a plan forward, they may not have turned to each other in these moments. Beatrice finds the strength to utter her most famous line, “Kill Claudio” to end the problem of the “villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonored my kinswoman” (4.1.288, 300-301).⁴³ She can make these declarations because Francis came to her aide, offering her solutions and demonstrating how she can ask the same of others. She now requests a deadly solution, where Claudio almost becomes Benedick’s Tybalt. Fitting the comedy of *Much Ado*, the friar’s plan works. This saves Claudio and Hero, and perhaps even a third as Benedick’s life would have been ruined. The friar performs these self-suppressive acts in the name of aiding his followers, and these two characteristics fit the notions of a Franciscan best, following the notion of a military friar placed at a post. He understands as a part of the military that the group must choose to work as a team rather than solely executing the plan.

In this humble self-suppression of pastoral power, Friar Francis aides the other characters, preserving the relationships of several key partnerships, as well as the larger group of friends and family. He repairs a damaged father-daughter relationship with Hero and Leonato, shifting a father who wanted his daughter dead to a father who aides in her deception of death. Francis also allows Benedick and Beatrice to claim their voices and their feelings, as they implement the plan and add to it with the vengeance against Claudio. The Friar ends by repairing the marriage between Hero and Claudio. While not ideal to marry a ‘clod’ (evoked by his name)

⁴³ There are several excellent studies on this famous line, but one particularly worth consulting comes from Denzell S. Smith: “The Command ‘Kill Claudio’ in *Much Ado about Nothing*,” 1967.

or even a “villain” (as Beatrice and Benedick call him), Claudio did demonstrate some change, and the friends end happily as the friar prevents real death in Benedick from killing Claudio.⁴⁴ Friar Francis aides in the redemption of Claudio in order to bring further peace to the community. The union of Claudio and Hero preserves the friendships in the extended group, making it the ideal solution to aide all of the friar’s congregation. As Francis intends to resolve the most conflict for all, these three relationships are spared, and the first two improved because he offers sincere assistance. The key point of his ability to serve his parishioners only comes because they choose to follow his plan, demonstrating his trustworthiness as a spiritual leader.

Here Francis diverges from Foucault’s definition of a good shepherd, but in a better way. Foucault argues that a good shepherd “does not even consider his own advantage in the well-being of his flock” and that a pastoral leader must reconcile with their failings in the conclusion of Foucault’s definition: “Finally, it is a power directed at all and each in their paradoxical equivalence, and not at the higher unity formed by the whole” (*Security* 128, 129). Foucault argues the higher unity of the whole cannot be resolved because of the problematic Christian paradox of “the sacrifice for one for all, and the sacrifice of all for one” (129). I argue instead that in order to be a good shepherd, a friar like Francis must think at least *a little* of his well-being in the flock, because his trusted authority is key in facilitating further trust. Francis had to ensure his flock in Messina trusted him in order to then give away some of his own power. And it is precisely because they are empowered to act on their own that Francis saves the one, Hero, and all, the families. Francis was assigned to Leonato’s family as a military friar, and so he

⁴⁴ While villain can be used for humor, as Beatrice calls Benedick a villain while he is in disguise (2.1.128), both Beatrice and Benedick call Claudio a villain in earnest. Beatrice uses the word in her famous, “O, that I were a man!” speech, saying, “Is he not approved in the height a villain that hath slandered, scorned, dishonored my kinswoman?” (4.1.300-302). She lists his faults, clarifying his villainy. Benedick, too, clarifies his intent, as he calls Claudio a villain when he follows through on his promise to Beatrice to challenge Claudio to the death: “You are a villain. I jest not” (5.1.143). Benedick calls Claudio a villain to his face, and he even clarifies there is no jest in the name. Benedick, like Beatrice, holds Claudio responsible for what has happened with Hero, making him a villain for his actions.

guides thoughtfully while also ensuring the action comes from his parishioners and not solely from himself.

At the conclusion of the play, Francis cannot help but point out the truth as he chides, “Did I not tell you she was innocent?” which fairly preaches truth to his community and reminds his friends that they were right to trust his beneficent authority (5.4.1). Shakespeare gives Francis this first scene line to emphasize Francis’ wisdom. Benedick shows further trust in Francis’ authority when he asks the Friar to marry him to Beatrice: Francis has proven to even the most skeptical of marriage that he can be trusted to perform such a union (5.4.18-20). He unites those individuals who are most critical of unity, reifying rather than degrading marriage for this community. Foucault offers one way to “refus[e] submission to pastoral power” by forming communities (*Security* 208). Francis shows instead how to work with pastoral power, rather than refuse it, as he activates a community in resolving the threat of lies and deceit. He acts when the community requests, strengthening the community in sharing his pastoral power.

Friar Francis’ final lines are to assure everyone that he will explain Hero’s death, as “All this amazement can I qualify, / When after that the holy rites are ended” (5.4.67). He will willingly share further truth, but he first wants to ensure he completes the marriages: “Meantime let wonder seem familiar, / And to the chapel let us presently” (5.4.70-71). He does not need to be the center of attention, as Friar Lawrence does with his speech at the conclusion of *Romeo and Juliet*, but rather invites them to enjoy the wonder of it all. Friar Francis allows everyone to revel in their happiness (as Benedick calls for a dance) and he will provide the answers after he has served his people with his spiritual authority of performing marriages.

Contrasting the Friars to Complicate Spiritual Leadership

By alluding to Roman Catholic Franciscan characterizations as a bygone fantasy, Shakespeare develops interesting political religious debates that can extend to the complex shifting religious beliefs of his audience. Shakespeare's two plays demonstrate that pastoral leaders should avoid personal aspirations of unrestrained omnipotent power. Friar Francis shows this in his selfless actions that appeal to St. Francis of Assisi's original goal: to mirror the lives of Christ and the apostles. Friar Lawrence, in contrast, uses sexual confessions to fuel a deceptive plot that ultimately leads to the deaths of those who trusted him most. Friar Francis has no overt personal advantage to gain, except in preserving the familial peace and order of his flock, as a pastor to the unbelieving and believing alike. Francis therefore complicates Foucault's notions of the Christian pastoral tradition, demonstrating that a good shepherd can remember to support his own authority, but only if done in true beneficence for the whole flock. In this way, a spiritual leader like Friar Francis can overcome Foucault's Christian pastoral paradox and save not only the one but the whole. Where Friar Lawrence seeks for personal advantage, Friar Francis offers a more peaceful option for pastoral guidance. Friar Francis first and foremost seeks to assist his friends and to enable their own power in the process. Francis therefore rejects Foucault's notions of the institutionalized monastic tradition who demand and work in exact obedience because he rejects the obedience to his own authority and does not demand obedience of others (*Security* 176).

Shakespeare therefore provides these opposing friars as a purposeful contradiction to avoid direct implication on notions of religion. He was cautious of power, and the savviness of his writing indicates he knew to demonstrate spiritual possibilities rather than a sole trope of damaging and troublesome pastoral leadership. Friar Lawrence came first as a warning of what

could happen, and Friar Francis follows as an indication of a better option. Therefore, Shakespeare does not intend his plays to be a wholesale critique of the spiritual leaders, just a condemnation of seeking power personally while giving and taking too much authority. Friar Francis is a positive spiritual leader at work, but this can only be seen when reading the two plays together.

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