

Analysis Paper: Comedy of Errors

What is food to people? Having the required nutrients helps humans live better lives, with strength, good health and taking better care of their body. In *Comedy of Errors* by William Shakespeare, he refers to a lot of imagery and symbolism to work his poetry and plays into a relatable status for his audiences. Not only did it help with creating clever references between everyday objects with specific intent, Shakespeare's imagery and figurative language helped set his plays and poetry above others by his specific writing. *Comedy of Errors* is a fantastic play, possibly considered his shortest play ever written, and Shakespeare's use of food imagery is referenced to the necessity of sex but more in between the loving bond of man and wife.

One instance in *The Comedy of Errors* where food imagery is specifically referenced is found in Act I, Scene II, lines 47-50, seen here: "She is so hot, because the meat is cold; You come not home, because you have no stomach; You have no stomach, having broke your fast". In this scene, Dromio of Ephesus is talking to the "wrong" twin of Antipholus of Syracuse, NOT Antipholus of Ephesus, Adriana's wife who is referenced as the "She" during this scene. Adriana is Antipholus of Ephesus's wife and is expecting him for lunchtime. But when Dromio of Ephesus, expecting to see his master any moment for the anticipated lunch date, but notices that Antipholus of Syracuse is late (not expecting the wrong twin to show up), he starts talking about how his wife is hot because the meat is cold. In reality, this meat is really their lunch date including a time for sexual intimacy. Being hot could also be seen as Adriana upset or angry because her time for lunch is not being met since her husband appears to be late.

While Antipholus of Ephesus is not the one who ends up going to lunch with her, but his twin brother, Antipholus of Syracuse, Adriana is concerned with the lateness of her husband, being absent for lunchtime and expresses her concerns with Luciana, her unwed sister. In this particular context, lunchtime is considered to really mean sex, and Shakespeare uses this specific imagery here to help the audience understand the importance of sex between man and wife, but also the real concern of affairs and having sex outside of a wedded bond. With Adriana, she fears that Antipholus of Ephesus is late to lunch because of his non-existent affair with some woman outside of their marriage. Why does she fear of an affair? She believes that, since he is late, he must be out with other women. Shakespeare tends to make a point with this particular ideology of sex outside a matrimonial bond as a negative

aspect for humans. If there is sex between a man and woman who are not bonded by loving marriage, then bad things will happen.

The same with Luciana and Adriana's conversation in Act II, Scene I. Luciana talks about how she is unwed because she would rather not deal with "troubles of the marriage-bed" and instead, to "learn love, [and] practise to obey" (*Comedy of Errors* 2.1. 27-29). Luciana sees the troubled Adriana worrying about her husband and why he hasn't shown up. Luciana is not someone who can be easily persuaded by social error, she is a stouthearted and stubborn woman and shows it by putting Adriana in her place of the too-personal curiousness dealing with her unwed status. Adriana also mentions it being "Two o'clock". Back during Shakespeare's era, there were no real ways to consider the time, time might not have even been thought of in that particular way yet. With no real way to mention time and accurately tell it, why mention it at all? Shakespeare's cleverness is again shown here, where "two o'clock" really deals with where the hands are positioned on a clock today. Where are both the hands when it is noon? Straight up, reaching towards the sky. What else can reach straight up, seemingly trying to reach outside of a confined space, but an erect penis? A phallus joke here, what a novelty. Adriana mentioning the time is again, referencing her intimate want for sex with her newlywed husband. I believe this specific reference is quite clever, as it deals with showing that women's sex drive is just as much alive as their counterpart.

In *The Comedy of Errors*, this specific imagery with food, with lunch and with being hot and cold, is quite brilliant, only in the fashion of an early era first making merry with the somewhat awkward context that sex usually brings to a conversation. I love William Shakespeare's intent to focus on what the loving bond between man and wife should pertain to be, and realize that without it, there would be issues with "sharing the same blood" from a mistress and her infidel husband. By having that as a problem within the marriage, there could be a path from an affair between a man and a mistress to connect somehow, between the "shared juices" that would flow from the accused man to his faithful wife, in turn making her an adulterer as well. The possibility of contracting sexually transmitted infections is also something that Shakespeare makes note of quite often. I believe that this food imagery was not only meant for comedic fun during this particular play, but also once again, showing the importance of it in a marriage, giving the two unioned together a way to express their admiration and matrimonial love in only the way that a man and woman can show.