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Reading Performance, Reading Gender: Early Encounters with Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Scornful Lady* in Print

This essay investigates Francis Beaumont's seventeenth-century afterlife through material evidence left by early readers. Taking his immensely popular collaboration with John Fletcher, The Scornful Lady*, as a test case, it traces patterns of shared interest and attention in different readers' engagements with the play in quarto. Considering commonplacing habits, readers' marks, and preparations for performance from a printed text, the article emphasizes fluidity between page- and stage-based engagements with drama in the seventeenth century. It also argues for the perhaps surprising receptiveness of Beaumont and Fletcher's drama to readers' reflections on and interrogations of gendered expectations, particularly regarding public female decorum.*

What can we learn about Francis Beaumont's seventeenth-century reception from the evidence left by early readers? What, moreover, might an account of that reception contribute to wider histories of reading, or of the early modern theatre? Beaumont was something of a print phenomenon in the decades following his death; readers most commonly encountered his work on the page through a handful of works — co-written with John Fletcher — that were amongst the most reprinted commercial plays of the era, in particular *The Maid's Tragedy,* the tragicomic *Philaster,* and *The Scornful Lady,* as well as in the 1647 and 1679 Beaumont and Fletcher folios (containing rather less of Beaumont's work than their title-pages suggest).[1] Of these, *The Scornful Lady* may be 'the most popular play by the most popular playwrights of the century', despite attracting minimal critical interest today.[2] First performed by the Children of the Queen's Revels perhaps in 1610, and printed in 1616, this comedy saw eleven seventeenth-century editions, all naming Beaumont and Fletcher on their title-page.[3] A number of early readers have left tantalizing and suggestive traces of their engagements in extant copies, not only elucidating Beaumont's reception and afterlife in the century or

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so following his death, but also offering wider suggestions as to how drama was read in the period. This article uses evidence in printed playbooks to consider readerly engagements with *The Scornful Lady,* in particular tracing the potential significance of performance and gender to early readers.

Reading practices have changed considerably over the last four centuries. When James Shirley imagined his contemporaries 'dwell[ing] and convers[ing]' in the 'immortall Groves' of the 1647 folio, his words combined the fanciful hyperbole of a paratext writer with a precise and pertinent account of early modern reading practice: his image of a 'convers[ation]' between readers and writers aptly captures the active and creative engagements that printed drama invited.[4] Echoing wider habits of early modern book use, several recent studies have traced strikingly active engagements with the quarto playbook: as a repository of sexual material; as a spur to reflection upon contemporary society and politics; even as an active means of exploring dramatic craft and construction through textual intervention.[5]

The genre of printed drama, moreover, raises unique questions for historians of reading, the most pressing and consequential of which concern the interplay of text and performance. Competing scholarly claims for Shakespeare's work 'perhaps not [being] viewed as textual in his era', or, conversely, having been understood as literature at the time of its earliest printing, have at times led to quite separate accounts of early modern drama's seventeenth-century consumption on stage and page, regardless of which medium is granted priority and authority.[6] Yet compartmentalized approaches are ill-equipped to account for the abundant evidence of early modern subjects cheerfully resisting any such distinction between theatre and print whilst they 'lurk[ed]' in the playhouse 'in corners, with Table bookes', used shorthand to transcribe plays wholesale, or even corrected speech prefixes and added stage directions to printed texts. Accordingly, several scholars have begun to explore some of 'the similarities … between performance and publication', Tiffany Stern arguing that in the theatre, '"watching" was a highly textual activity', and Holger Syme considering early play-readers who appear to have had 'performance of one kind or another in mind'.[7]

Focusing, then, on an apparent fluidity in some consumers' conceptions of printed and performed plays, this article takes the popular *Scornful Lady* as a test case to investigate how early readers engaged with commercial drama, paying particular attention to ways in which performance might matter. Such readers repeatedly display interest in performance and performativity — both within and without the dramatic world of the play — as well as pursuing a series of potentially unexpected explorations of the presentation and representation of gender.

These engagements all arguably involve 'reading for performance' in some way, despite ranging from straightforward commonplacing to prompt-book annotation. By focusing on a remarkably successful yet now largely forgotten play, this investigation also hopes to offer clues as to what a history of play-reading dictated by early modern popularity — rather than the all-eclipsing twenty-first-century reputation of Shakespeare — might look like. It thus makes a wider case for performance's greater significance to early modern play-readers than is often acknowledged, besides raising the more local possibility that Beaumont and Fletcher's readers may have sought to explore contemporary views of female decorum and gendered expectations through a text that at first glance might seem to close down any such exploration.

When considering the early reception of a play like *The Scornful Lady,* modern readers should remind themselves from the outset that seventeenth-century readers are more likely to show interest in Beaumont and Fletcher's collective authorship than to be particularly concerned with Beaumont's distinct voice. The period's readers seem generally to have approached plays attributed to the pair as the collective product of an effectively inseparable playwrighting partnership, without attempting to distinguish one playwright's work from the other's. This practice in part reflects their collaborative popularity in the print marketplace: playbooks such as *The Maid's Tragedy, Philaster,* and *The Scornful Lady* were among the great successes of early modern dramatic publication, and all three offered explicit title-page attribution to Beaumont and Fletcher together (although, in the case of *The Maid's Tragedy,* not until its third printing).[8] Beyond title-page encouragements to treat the pair as a single source of authority, moreover, the physical configuration of quarto playbook collections assembled in the seventeenth century often foregrounds their collective rather than individual identity, sometimes even doing so in conflict with solo title-page attributions. One volume of twelve plays includes ten books bequeathed to the Bodleian Library in 1640 by Robert Burton, author of *The Anatomy of Melancholy.* A manuscript contents page in a mid-seventeenth-century hand groups plays by title-page attribution (Table 1), a sequence in which the quartos remain bound today (with the exception of *The Late Lancashire Witches* (1634), which was removed and sold in 1865).[9] Three consecutive plays, including *The Scornful Lady,* are attributed to Fletcher and/or Beaumont, followed by five attributed to Shirley.[10]

Another volume, probably bound slightly later in the seventeenth century, consists exclusively of plays with title-page attribution to Beaumont and/or Fletcher. Acquired in 1767 by Richard Warner, the volume was previously owned in its current binding, which appears to be seventeenth-century, by a Master Williams

Table 1. A sequence of quarto playbooks bound together after 1640. Oxford, Bodleian 4° T 38 Art.

Title Page Attribution	Title	Date of Publication
Lording Barry	*Ram Alley, or Merry Tricks*	1611
Nathan Field	*A Woman is a Weathercock*	1612
Richard Brome	*The Northern Lass*	1632
Thomas Heywood and Richard Brome	*The Late Lancashire Witches*	1634
Beaumont and Fletcher	*The Scornful Lady*	1616
John Fletcher	*The Coronation*	1640
John Fletcher	*Rule a Wife and Have a Wife*	1640
James Shirley	*The Lady of Pleasure*	1637
James Shirley	*Changes, or Love in a Maze*	1632
James Shirley	*The Humorous Courtier*	1640
James Shirley	*The Opportunity*	1640
James Shirley	*The Wedding*	1633

of Adle Street and an Edward Collit. *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* appears in a falsely dated printing now tentatively assigned to the early 1650s, providing a possible earlier assembly limit.[11] Particularly striking is the volume's 'sandwiching' of 'Beaumont' and 'Fletcher' as individual authors between 'Beaumont and Fletcher' together, according to title page attributions (Table 2): the co-accredited *Scornful Lady* and *Cupid's Revenge* precede Beaumont's *Pestle* and three apparent Fletcher plays, before two jointly attributed works close the collection.[12] Whoever created this sequence appears particularly interested not just in grouping together plays with authors in common, as in the Burton volume, but also in entangling Beaumont and Fletcher with each other as, in some sense, the same thing: by this logic, Beaumont plays and Fletcher plays are subsets of Beaumont and Fletcher plays, bound in a sequence that encourages readers to approach them as such, and seemingly illustrating a wider early modern tendency to think of these two figures collectively, even when this does not reflect a particular text's true circumstances of production.

Table 2. A sequence of quarto playbooks bound together after 1651. Oxford, Wadham College A.34.25.

Title Page Attribution	Title	Date of Publication
Beaumont and Fletcher	*The Scornful Lady*	1651
Beaumont and Fletcher	*Cupid's Revenge*	1630
Francis Beaumont	*The Knight of the Burning Pestle*	early 1650s? [false date of 1635]
John Fletcher	*Monsieur Thomas*	1639
John Fletcher	*The Night Walker*	1640
John Fletcher	*The Coronation*	1640
Beaumont and Fletcher	*Thierry and Theodoret*	1649
Beaumont and Fletcher	*The Woman Hater*	1649

All of the plays collected in the Warner volume are excluded from the 1647 folio, but included in the expanded 1679 edition. When the quartos were bound together, then, perhaps as early as the 1650s, they may have been intended as an addendum to a 1647 folio, taking up that volume's encouragements to think of 'Beaumont and Fletcher' collectively. Both the Warner and Burton volumes suggest that seventeenth-century book owners and readers would have seen *The Scornful Lady* as a pre-eminent example of 'Beaumont and Fletcher' comedy, perhaps largely unconcerned about who actually wrote a given scene. The aspect of Beaumont's seventeenth-century afterlife under consideration in this article, then, is one in which his separation from Fletcher would certainly not be straightforward, and perhaps not even historically appropriate.[13]

Reading for Performance

We can first trace an unusual and quite radical example of reading *The Scornful Lady* for performance through the marks of a reader who treats a printed quarto as a pre-performance text. Reader A, working with a copy of the 1616 *Scornful Lady* quarto now held in the British Library's Garrick Collection, marks the text for performance in a distinct seventeenth-century hand with secretary features, indicating cuts to the text, adding marginal actor warnings before entrances, and rather sporadically cueing properties and costumes.[14] Exactly when this reader

prepared the text is unclear; Edward Langhans includes the volume in his survey of *Restoration Promptbooks,* but does not rule out a Jacobean or Caroline date.[15] Much of the mark-up is similar to that of quartos thought to have been annotated before 1642, including the placement of the actor warnings relative to entries (*passim*) and the method of indicating both long and short cuts (D1r–v, H1v–H2v, H4r–v).[16] Whilst disguises are often integrated in entrance warnings (D2r–v, I1r), a lack of annotation regarding music, special effects and, with minor exception (C4r), properties, may indicate a connection with smaller-scale amateur performance, or perhaps incomplete preparation for commercial production. A 2016 exploratory staged reading organized from a transcription of the Garrick copy at the Queen's College, Oxford, in which twenty-first-century amateur performers still managed to enter with prop in hand and rudimentary disguise in place where required, may suggest that the level of mark-up is sufficient for less formal performance, if not for the early modern professional stage.

Questions of precise date and context aside, the cuts made in the text are of particular relevance to this investigation for their careful attention to numerous performance aspects, and, in one case, for what may be particular interest in gendered behaviour and related archetypes and stereotypes. Excised material includes a forty-line exchange between Welford and his servant in act two scene one (D1r–v), all of act four scene two (H1v–H2v), in which Young Loveless and his fiancée the Widow banter with the Comrades in anticipation of their wedding, and six and a half lines from a soliloquy in act five scene two (H4r–v), in which the Lady chastises herself for her inability to stop scorning Elder Loveless. Langhans sees the cuts as 'primarily to delete extraneous material and some bawdry', although given that the remaining text includes advice to 'put in deeper, tis the sweeter' (C4v), and some graphic reflection on chafing (K1r), it is unlikely that taste was a motivating factor.[17]

We might understand the removal of act four scene two as the deletion of 'extraneous material', for the Widow and Loveless's union is previously agreed on in act three scene two, with the later scene doing relatively little to move the plot forward. But, in fact, a more sophisticated dramatic rationale appears to be at work here, in addition to a possible desire to shorten the performance by a few minutes. By removing act four scene two, Reader A focuses Young Loveless's entire subplot into the first three acts, leaving the final two acts to concentrate almost exclusively on a series of increasingly outrageous tricks and counter-tricks between Elder Loveless and the Lady, along with the bed-trick that enforces Martha's agreement with Welford, and, finally, Abigail's union with Roger. The cut thus gives a new dramatic rhythm to the play, the first part dominated by Young

Loveless and his prodigality, the second by Elder Loveless and the Scornful Lady. This structural adjustment can be particularly apparent in performance: in the 2016 staged reading described above, the play's centre of gravity shifted clearly and determinedly from younger to elder brother at the end of the third act.

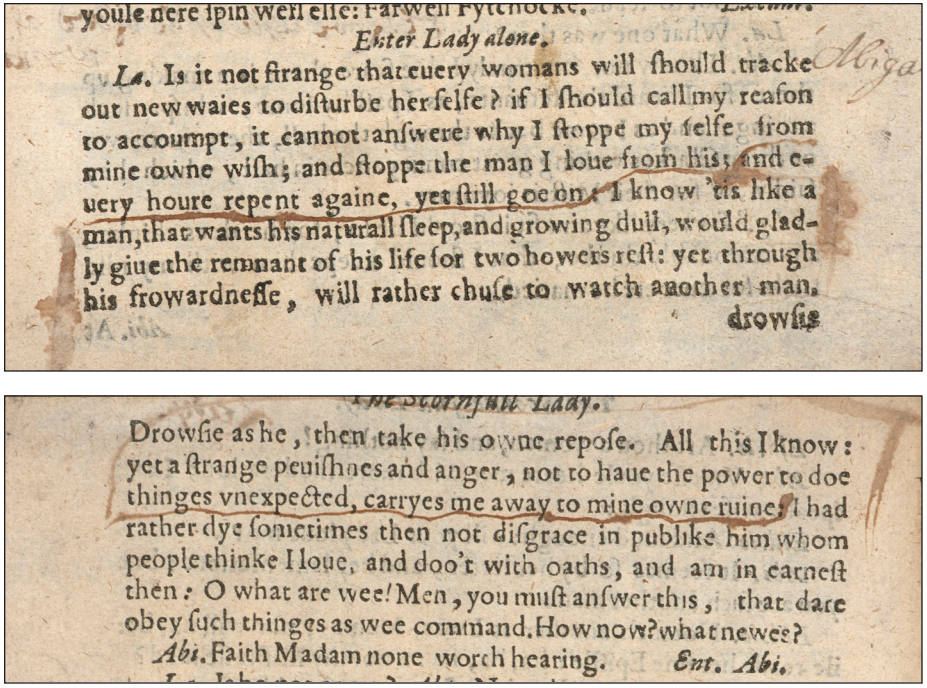
The excision of the exchange between Welford and his servant in act two scene one seems to reflect similarly precise thinking about dramaturgy, this time motivated by pragmatism rather than structure. The cut passage consists predominantly of dramatically extraneous, non-sexual jests, but its excision saves no more than two and a half minutes. If length is not the main factor, then, we might consider the practicalities of performance, specifically regarding the servant's role. Servile roles elsewhere in the play might be doubled by the actor playing the 'servant' in the cut scene. Such roles include the First Servingman, the page, and other generic 'servant' characters, but these other parts are all limited to carrying messages, offering drink, and speaking no more than five lines. In contrast, the cut scene gives its servant twenty-four lines, in which he must drunkenly play the clown to Welford's 'straight man' and give extended speeches of up to seven lines. The decision to cut is likely to have been a practical one, then, reflecting the lack of an actor suitable for and willing to perform a comic part qualitatively distinct from functional service roles elsewhere. Such a decision could indicate a professional company unwilling to make use of a clown for one short scene, or simply an amateur context without an appropriate participant.

The final cut is the most tantalizing, the most obscure, and the most deliberate, and it draws attention to the play's treatment of gendered behavioural expectations and female stage decorum. Where previous interventions trim away dramatically self-contained exchanges, this deletion occurs in the middle of a speech; indeed, the slightly unclear line marking off the cut echoes the difficulty of separating the passage neatly from surrounding words (Figure 1), perhaps suggesting that A's concern was with a very specific part of the speech. The deletion may reflect a simple desire to shorten the scene — or the Lady's part within it — although the removal of less than seven lines of prose would not make a substantial difference in this regard, particularly given the Lady's verbosity elsewhere. We can, therefore, look internally for clues as to why these lines are cut:

> LA[DY]. Is it not strange that euery womans will should tracke out new waies to disturbe her selfe? if I should call my reason to accoumpt, it cannot answere why I stoppe my selfe from mine owne wish; and stoppe the man I loue from his; and euery houre repent againe, yet still goe on: *I know 'tis like a man, that wants his naturall sleep, and growing dull, would gladly giue the remnant of his life for two howers rest: yet through his*

> *frowardnesse, will rather chuse to watch another man, Drowsie as he, then take his owne repose. All this I know: yet a strange peuishnes and anger, not to haue the power to doe thinges vnexpected, carryes me away to mine owne ruine*: I had rather dye sometimes then not disgrace in publike him whom people thinke I loue, and doo't with oaths, and am in earnest then: O what are wee! Men, you must answer this, that dare obey such thinges as wee command. (H4r–v)

The cut has two particularly significant effects. First, by removing the digressive simile, it focuses the passage on the Lady, her lack of self-control, and her resultant emotional torment. Second, the removed digression is about stubborn (and perhaps competitive) male behaviour — a generalized characteristic of 'a man' — where the rest of the passage is about stubborn female behaviour, the Lady an exemplum of a universalized female fault: it is apparently 'euery womans will' to sabotage herself. This final cut, then, brings female-gendered behavioural expectations, relating in particular to 'oaths' spoken 'in publike', into immediate focus


youle nere spin well elle: Farwell Pytchocke.

Exeter Lady alone.

La. Is it not strange that euery womans will should tracke out new waies to disturbe her selfe? if I should call my reason to accoumpt, it cannot answere why I stoppe my selfe from mine owne wish; and stoppe the man I loue from his; and euery houre repent againe, yet still goe on: I know 'tis like a man, that wants his naturall sleep, and growing dull, would gladly giue the remnant of his life for two howers rest: yet through his frowardnesse, will rather chuse to watch another man, drowsie

The Scornfull Lady.

Drowsie as he, then take his owne repose. All this I know: yet a strange peuishnes and anger, not to haue the power to doe thinges vnexpected, carryes me away to mine owne ruine: I had rather dye sometimes then not disgrace in publike him whom people thinke I loue, and doo't with oaths, and am in earnest then: O what are wee! Men, you must answer this, that dare obey such thinges as wee command. How now? what newes?

Abi. Faith Madam none worth hearing. *Ent. Abi.*

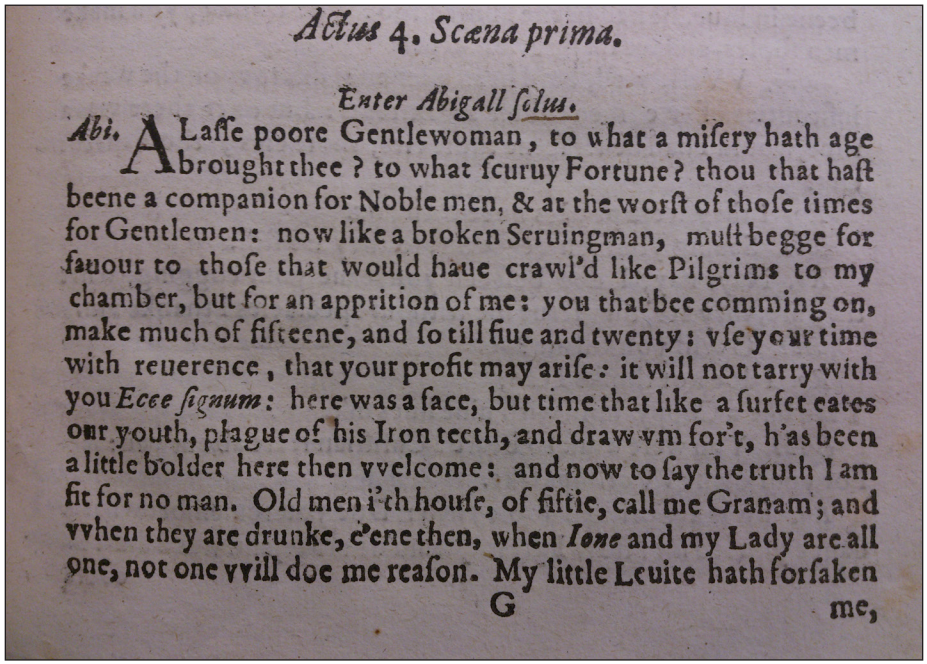
Figure 1. Details from Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *The Scornful Ladie* (London, 1616; STC: 1686), H4r–v. © British Library Board (C.34.c.5).

at the expense of an implicit comparison between these expectations and others that are gendered male. To put it another way, a relatively modest deletion brings into greater relief the so-called 'scornful' behaviour alluded to in the play's title.

We can trace similar interest in a female character's speech — and the staging and performance implications of that speech — in another copy of the 1616 *Scornful Lady* quarto, now held at the Huntington Library, containing some limited annotation unusual amongst the marks of seventeenth-century play-readers.[18] This annotation is difficult to date, consisting simply of underlining, although the fairly severe browning of the ink is consistent with a seventeenth-century intervention, and it is likewise difficult to establish whether this reader had future performance of one sort or another in mind or was simply keen to visualize stagecraft from a printed text. Where Reader A appears to have prepared the entire play-text for performance, Reader B's intervention relates to a single entrance and speech: he or she underlines the word 'solus' in a stage direction for Abigail, the Scornful Lady's waiting woman (Figure 2), who must enter and begin act four with a substantial soliloquy. Abigail is a touchstone for misogyny in the play, no longer considered attractive by other characters but determined to have sex with each man she encounters. The act opens with her alone on stage, finally seeing herself through the eyes of the others, resolving to give up her pursuit of attractive younger men and to settle, finally, for the older curate, Sir Roger, who pursued her in his youth (G1r).

Besides signalling a potential interest in contemporary anxieties around the articulation of female desire and related conventions of public propriety, this intervention is perhaps most significant for its very focus on performance, specifically the fact that Abigail is alone on stage when she speaks. Where more typical early modern readers might identify a phrase or passage of dialogue that interests them, B instead marks the fact that a female character speaks her lines upon an empty stage. Not unlike Reader A, whose interventions suggest a more formal context of performance preparation, Reader B appears to use the printed text to think about the gendered performance of a hitherto marginal female character opening an act alone on stage with a lengthy speech.[19]

Recent scholarship suggests that, whilst playbooks were not normally purchased as the basis for future production, many early modern readers still nonetheless approached such books with performance in mind. Holger Syme and Hannah August have found readers adding stage directions, whilst Emma Smith shows how commonly speech prefixes were corrected in the 1623 Shakespeare folio, for instance.[20] B's mark therefore seems to fit an emergent pattern of early modern play-reading in which imaginative attention to performance — Meric Casaubon's



Actus 4. Scæna prima.

Enter Abigall ſolus.

Abi. ALaſſe poore Gentlewoman, to what a miſery hath age brought thee? to what ſcuruy Fortune? thou that haſt beene a companion for Noble men, & at the worſt of thoſe times for Gentlemen: now like a broken Seruingman, muſt begge for fauour to thoſe that would haue crawl'd like Pilgrims to my chamber, but for an apprition of me: you that bee comming on, make much of fifteene, and ſo till fiue and twenty: vſe your time with reuerence, that your profit may ariſe: it will not tarry with you *Ecce ſignum*: here was a face, but time that like a ſurfet eates our youth, plague of his Iron teeth, and draw vm for't, h'as been a little bolder here then vvelcome: and now to ſay the truth I am fit for no man. Old men i'th houſe, of fiftie, call me Granam; and vvhen they are drunke, e'ene then, when *Ione* and my Lady are all one, not one vvill doe me reaſon. My little Leuite hath forſaken

G me,

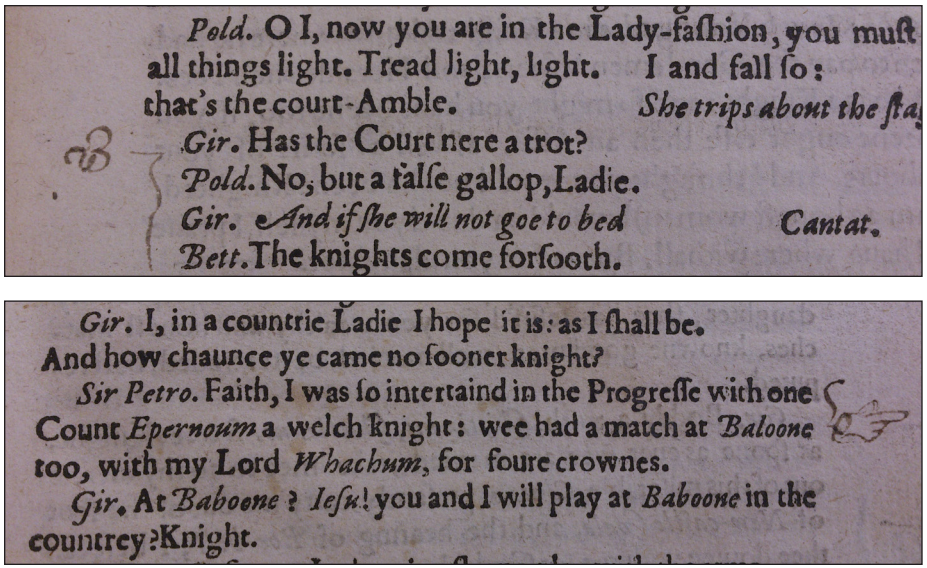
Figure 2. Detail from Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *The Scornful Ladie* (London, 1616; STC: 1686), G1r. 60260, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

'paper pictures', explored by August — can often be central.[21] Indeed, B's intervention is particularly telling in that the underlining indicates not the required correction of an error, without which a passage does not make sense, but rather a reader's choice. B appears simply to be interested in the staging of act four, specifically the structural significance of a middle-aged female character's substantial soliloquy, and this interest is potentially continuous with the final cut in A's more sustained prompt book preparations. It may even be the case that questions about the decorum of female performance — relating to the staging choice of this substantial soliloquy — provoked material intervention from a seventeenth-century reader. If so, B's reading is also continuous, as we shall see, with the engagements of other seventeenth-century readers who approached plays such as *The Scornful Lady* with the commonplace book in mind. We can now turn to such encounters with Beaumont and Fletcher's text.

Commonplacing Performance

Having traced print engagements with *The Scornful Lady* as a text for performance, or text representing performance, we can now consider slightly more conventional early modern approaches to the play that nonetheless suggest readerly interest in gender and performativity. Throughout the early modern period, it was extremely common to follow humanist ideals — and schoolroom practice — by pursuing fragmentary and even cannibalistic modes of reading involving identification and isolation of particularly interesting words, phrases, or passages. Such material would be physically marked and copied, perhaps into the margin but by the early seventeenth century more typically into separate table or commonplace books.[22] As William H. Sherman reminds us, then, in early modern England, 'marking' one's 'words' was a physical act performed by a reader upon a book as well as one of mental concentration, and could even mean 'writing a glossarial note or commentary', as well as simply underlining or otherwise indicating material of interest.[23] John Brinsley's guide to schoolteaching relates these interventions to passages requiring 'speciall obseruation', although we sometimes forget that he recommends the same marks for identifying 'difficulty' as well.[24] Whilst Brinsley is thinking predominantly about language learning and the rules of rhetorical composition, we should remember that the act of marking a book may also have retained associations with the difficult or the problematic, as well as the laudable, for early modern readers of all ages. Such marks may at times indicate interest, then, without necessarily implying approval.

To read plays as repositories of choice ideas and phrases was to treat them as continuous with a range of other texts in Latin and the vernacular, and as numerous scholars have explored in recent decades, much seventeenth-century printed drama explicitly invites such modes of reading. The printed commonplace markers found in many playbooks offer the clearest of these invitations, whilst surviving commonplace books rich in dramatic quotation demonstrate early readers' willingness to engage accordingly.[25] Brinsley recommends that readers mark passages with 'little lines vnder them, or aboue them, or against such partes of the word wherein the difficulty lieth, or by some prickes, or whatsoeuer letter or marke may best helpe to cal the knowledge of the thing to remembrance'.[26] Readers of printed drama utilize various marks, occasionally including visually striking manicules or trefoils (Figure 3), but more typically involving commonplace marks, lines, or crosses in the margin, as well as underlining, or a single word next to a passage of interest. Reader C, working with the very same copy in the Garrick collection that bears A's performance mark-up, identifies passages of interest with the word 'for' in


Pold. O I, now you are in the Lady-faſhion, you muſt all things light. Tread light, light. I and fall ſo: that's the court-Amble. *She trips about the ſta*

Gir. Has the Court nere a trot?
Pold. No, but a falſe gallop, Ladie.
Gir. *And if ſhe will not goe to bed* *Cantat.*
Bett. The knights come forſooth.

Gir. I, in a countrie Ladie I hope it is: as I ſhall be. And how chaunce ye came no ſooner knight?
Sir Petro. Faith, I was ſo intertaind in the Progreſſe with one Count *Epernoum* a welch knight: wee had a match at *Baloone* too, with my Lord *Whachum*, for foure crownes.
Gir. At *Baboone*? *Ieſu*! you and I will play at *Baboone* in the countrey? Knight.

Figure 3. Details from George Chapman, Ben Jonson, and John Marston, *Eastward Hoe* (1605; STC: 4971), B1r. 87481, The Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

a large, scruffy, and deliberate secretary hand, perhaps dating from the first half of the seventeenth century. This method of indicating passages for extraction or further consideration is popular with Beaumont and Fletcher's early readers: another marks up numerous moments of interest in *Philaster* with the single word 'this', a choice that seems eerily prescient of social media convention today (although seventeenth-century margins generally remain free of hashtags).[27]

Reader C identifies just three passages of interest in *The Scornful Lady* where other annotators often mark up a dozen in a single play, further indicating that these few are of such 'special excellency', 'vse', or 'difficulty' that they are to be copied into a commonplace book, rather than simply marked for future attention.[28] The marked passages appear in two scenes: act one scene one, containing two marks, and act three scene one, containing a single mark. Act one scene one is generally attributed to Beaumont, whilst act three scene one is said to bear the traces of Fletcher's hand.[29] Particularly suggestive are the two marks in act one scene one. These accompany an extended argument between Elder Loveless and the Lady that catalyzes both plot and sub-plot: Loveless has scandalously kissed the Lady in public. She demands that he atone by travelling abroad for a year before recommencing their wooing from scratch. In Loveless's absence, his younger brother is to run his house and estate, providing the prodigal sub-plot. Much disguising follows,

together with a series of Beatrice and Benedick-esque exchanges between the Lady and Elder Loveless until they eventually agree to marry.

The first marked speech is Loveless's. He points out that in kissing her, he only 'forc't' in public what 'all the howers of day and night' had already seen in private. She retorts that besides the kiss itself, he has also referred publically to many private kisses, further staining her reputation. He responds, in the passage marked for extraction, that:

> no singne [sic.] of disgrace neede to haue staind your cheeke: you your selfe knew your pure and simple heart to be most vnspotted, and free from the least basenesse. (B3r)

She replies that when any maid is even 'suspected' of being unchaste, her 'owne face' will 'write her guiltie' regardless of the truth (B3r). Loveless and the Lady thus propose contrasting relationships amongst female behaviour, self-knowledge, and the physiology of blushing. Loveless believes a woman need only blush when she knows herself to be guilty, in this case in relation to her sexual conduct, making the blush a potential performance of sorts. For the Lady, however, the blush is an involuntary response to the public accusation of impropriety, not an indicator of guilt. She has the weight of contemporary medical opinion behind her: Thomas Wright argues that blushes arise equally in 'those that have committed a fault' and in those who 'imagine they are thought to have committed it'; likewise, Robert Burton believes blushing is 'not only caused for some shame or ignomy', but can arise from 'a conceit of our defects'.[30]

Perhaps C's interest in this exchange relates to early modern medical views of blushing and the body: the blush's signification was much contested, and yet it could still be treated as an indicator of guilt in quasi-judicial contexts, as Derek Dunne notes.[31] The reader may even be considering what is at stake for an early modern woman when words and actions become public, particularly regarding the decorum of response in the specific context of public accusation. The argument between the Lady and Loveless offers an important reminder that the significatory potential of the female body was much debated in the period, and the reader's marking of this exchange raises further questions as to exactly where different early modern sympathies might lie upon hearing this verbal account of a strikingly public and potentially performative encounter.

The next marked passage reiterates many of these concerns. This time, Loveless suggests that, because the Lady already 'chose me for her husband', there was no 'disgrace' in public knowledge of their having kissed. She responds that until

the wedding vows are complete, nothing should be known in public about what might pass between a couple:

> Beleeue me; if my wedding smock were on,
> Were the gloues bought and giuen, the License come,
> Were the Rosemary branches dipt, and all
> The Hipochrists and cakes eate and drunke off,
> Were these two armes imcompast with the hands
> Of Bachelers, to leade me to the Church;
> Were my feete in the dore, were I *Iohn,* said,
> If *Iohn* should boast a fauour done by me,
> I would not wed that yeare: (B3r)

'For' accompanies the first five or so lines of the speech, presumably marking the full passage for commonplacing. Notable, in light of C's previous attention to public blushing, is the sequence of explicitly public and increasingly performative scenarios in which the Lady imagines refusing to wed, should Loveless 'boast' of her 'fauour', culminating in an interruption of the wedding vow — 'I *Iohn*' — itself. Yet if the previous passage dwells on female public vulnerability, this speech emphasizes female strength, the Lady imagining herself resisting the highly codified behavioural expectations of a bride during the wedding ceremony — perhaps the most important of which is to say 'I do' — in order to stand by a principle and punish male subversion of female virtue.

The Garrick copy also contains some intriguing underlining, which may be the work of C, or may be the traces of another user of the book; here, I assign these marks to Reader D. This reader underlines another female character's words, this time the wealthy widow pursued first by the usurer Morecraft, and then, more successfully, by Young Loveless. In act two scene three, Morecraft seeks her hand, but she is adamant that the wealth she has inherited from her first husband merits a knight at the very least:

> I must haue you dubd, for vnder that I will stoope a feather. My husband was a fellow lou'd to toyle, *feede ill,* made gaine his exercise, and so grew costiue, which for I was his wife, *and gaue way to, and spun mine owne smocks course, and sir, so little;* but let that passe. Time, that vveares all things out, vvore out this husband, vvho in penitence of such fruitlesse fiue yeeres marriage, left mee great vvith his vvealth, vvhich if you'le bee a worthie gossip to, be knighted Sir. (D4v)

The marks draw attention to a passage that has caused some difficulty for later readers. In 1798, John Monck Mason suggested that the line should read as a complete sentence, emended to 'spun my own smocks, coarse, and, sir, *too* little', on the grounds that 'the smallness' of these coarse smocks 'was an additional proof of her frugality'.[32] Alternatively, however, given the emphasis on the lack of issue from the marriage and the ironic image of being 'great', or pregnant, 'vvith his vvealth', the semicolon may correctly indicate a phrase broken off before the widow explicitly refers to her husband's sexual inadequacies, or lack of appetite, that meant the marriage bore no fruit. The longer underlined phrase may thus build towards an innuendo, binding the husband's thrift to a similarly frugal sex life, evidenced by the absence of offspring.

Both underlinings pick up on threads of money, status, and sex — encompassing thrift, abstinence, and ambition — all of which are filtered through the prism of female desire, not just for sex, but for the money gained from the widow's first marriage and the social status she demands from a second. The marks might suggest a reader with different priorities from C's concern with female chastity and its performance or demonstration in public contexts. However, C and D do share a wider interest in female choice, particularly through the agency of selecting and accepting a husband.

Critics have typically perceived *The Scornful Lady* as rather conventional in its gender politics. Finkelpearl, for example, expresses concern that it 'seems to be a rather gross and implausible portrayal of the battle of the sexes', while Sandra Clark argues that 'For all its apparent challenge to the social and economic ethos of city comedy the gender politics of this play are not at heart subversive'.[33] Yet in places, the ambivalence with which the play handles the shaping of gendered expectations and stereotypes may destabilize this view. Interventions like C's provide a crucial indication that early readers may indeed have attended to the play's probing of the very stereotypes upon which its central premise of a 'scornful lady' relies. Such attention could even suggest a seventeenth-century afterlife for Beaumont (and indeed Fletcher) that contributed to the problematizing, as well as the assertion, of gendered behavioural expectations.

Stage and Page

> On friday the nineteenth [i.e. eighteenth] of October, 1633, I sent a warrant by a messenger of the chamber to suppress The Tamer Tamd, to the Kings players, for

> that afternoone, and it was obeyd; upon complaints of foule and offensive matters conteyned therein.
>
> They acted the Scornful Lady instead of it[.][34]

In 1633, Henry Herbert, *de facto* Master of the Revels, recorded a last-minute substitution in the King's Men's repertory at his request, Fletcher's *The Tamer Tamed* being withdrawn in favour of *The Scornful Lady.* Herbert became increasingly concerned about 'ould revived playes' being performed from texts licensed by his rather more relaxed predecessors, eventually insisting that the King's Men submit any such play-texts for fresh licensing before performance.[35] Besides attesting to *The Scornful Lady*'s enduring popularity on stage as well as page, this incident offers insights into perceptions of the play some years after its composition. Both *The Tamer Tamed* and *The Scornful Lady* are products of the early 1610s; yet whilst the former is considered an 'ould' play, the substitution indicates that the latter, in contrast, is not. Pragmatically, Herbert's request suggests that *The Scornful Lady* was re-licensed sufficiently recently to be a suitable substitute, and was therefore a regular feature of the King's Men's 1630s repertory. Moreover, the very fact of its discussion in 1633 as current rather than old is telling, given the comedy's — and by extension Beaumont and Fletcher's — striking ability, for much of the seventeenth century, to appear as both popular and, in some sense, contemporary.

Readers of *The Scornful Lady* who left visible traces of their engagements upon printed pages attest to this persistent contemporaneity from a different perspective. We have encountered early modern subjects attending to moments of the play in which gendered expectations — particularly questions of female decorum in public contexts — are at the fore, often whilst seemingly considering staging, from the use of female soliloquy to open an act to the structural and practical possibilities afforded by performance cuts. Perhaps most significantly of all, despite radically different reading methods and priorities, the interventions of four (or three) of Beaumont's early readers all emphasize performance and gender in ways that problematize the separation of text and performance. Any seventeenth-century encounter with an early modern play was by definition an imaginative act, given the conventions of presentation both in the playhouse and on the printed page. Perhaps, then, there is a fitting continuity between Shirley's figure of the stage as a 'conjuring glasse', and Casaubon's account of the 'paper pictures' generated by readers' imaginations, a shared image of illusion both known to be artificial yet temporarily accepted through fantasy, each combining imagination

and performance in one way or another. If early modern play-going was indeed 'a highly textual activity', and if, as this essay has argued, play-reading was likewise dependent on ideas of performance, then it is critical that models of early modern dramatic consumption — whilst continuing to maintain precise distinctions between play-reading and playgoing — find ways to recognize the period's understanding of drama as simultaneously text *and* performance, whether encountered on page or stage.[36]

Notes

1 Whilst the majority of early modern playbooks were not reprinted at all, these three collaborations each saw five editions within twenty-five years, with only *Mucedorus, The Spanish Tragedy, 1 Henry IV,* and *Doctor Faustus* receiving more. Peter Blayney, 'The Publication of Playbooks', John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (eds), *A New History of Early English Drama* (New York, 1997), 387–8; Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser (eds), *DEEP: Database of Early English Playbooks,* 2007, http://deep.sas.upenn.edu.

2 Philip J. Finkelpearl, *Court and Country Politics in the Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher* (Princeton, 1990), 115, https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400860722. Sandra Clark, like Finkelpearl, does give the play some attention in a wider study of Beaumont and Fletcher. Clark, *The Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher: Sexual Themes and Dramatic Representation* (New York; London, 1994), 95–6, 135–9.

3 Lucy Munro, *Children of the Queen's Revels: A Jacobean Theatre Repertory* (Cambridge, 2005), 168, 176, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511486067; Martin Wiggins in association with Catherine Richardson, *British Drama: A Catalogue, 1533–1642,* 10 vols (Oxford, 2012-), 6.98–102.

4 James Shirley, 'To the Reader', *Comedies and Tragedies Written by Francis Beaumont and Iohn Fletcher* (London, 1647; Wing: B1581), A3r.

5 Hannah August, '"Tickling the Senses with Sinful Delight": The Pleasure of Reading Comedies in Early Modern England', Simon Smith, Jackie Watson, and Amy Kenny (eds), *The Senses in Early Modern England, 1558–1660* (Manchester, 2015), 201–16; Lucy Munro, 'Reading Printed Comedy: Edward Sharpham's *The Fleer*', Marta Straznicky (ed.), *The Book of the Play: Playwrights, Stationers, and Readers in Early Modern England* (Amherst, MA, 2006), 39–58; Albert H. Tricomi, 'Counting Insatiate Countesses: The Seventeenth-Century Annotations to Marston's *The Insatiate Countess*', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 64.1 (2001), 107–22. On wider habits, see William H. Sherman, *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia, PA, 2008), https://doi.org/10.9783/9780812203448; Katharine A. Craik, *Reading Sensations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, 2007), https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230206083.

6 William B. Worthen, 'Drama, Performativity and Performance', *PMLA* 113.5 (1998), 1099, https://doi.org/10.2307/463244; Lukas Erne, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* (Cambridge, 2003), https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139342445.

7 Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *The Woman Hater* (London, 1607; STC: 1692), A2r; Tiffany Stern, 'Sermons, Plays and Note-Takers: *Hamlet* Q1 as a "Noted"

Text', Peter Holland (ed.), *Shakespeare Survey Volume 66: Working with Shakespeare* (Cambridge, 2013), 1–23, https://doi.org/10.1017/SSO9781107300699.001; Holger Syme, 'Well-Read Plays II', *Dispositio,* 23 December 2011, http://www.dispositio.net/archives/703; Tiffany Stern, 'Watching as Reading: The Audience and Written Text in Shakespeare's Playhouse', Laurie Maguire (ed.), *How to Do Things with Shakespeare: New Approaches, New Essays* (Oxford, 2008), 137, https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470694114.ch6.

8 See Farmer and Lesser, *DEEP.*

9 Oxford, Bodleian, 4° T 38 Art. *The Coronation* and *The Opportunity* are not amongst those catalogued by John Rous, Bodley's librarian, as having been selected from Burton's library. The contents list therefore indicates a sequence made up for the library rather than the melancholy student. N.K. Kiessling, *The Library of Robert Burton,* (Oxford, 1983), vii–x, 20; John Rous, 'A Note of Mr Robert Burtons Books given to the Library by His Last Will and Testament Anno Domini 1639 [1640]', n.d., Bodleian MS. Selden supra 80, ff. 163r–194r, 196v.

10 *The Coronation* is in fact a Shirley play, but was attributed to Fletcher on the title-page of the 1640 edition and so was included and indexed as such.

11 Oxford, Wadham College, A.34.25. See W.W. Greg, *A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration,* 4 vols (London, 1939), 2.316c; Francis Beaumont, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle,* ed. Sheldon P. Zitner, Revels Plays (Manchester, 1984), 5.

12 Both *Thierry and Theodoret* (Greg 368b(ii); Wing: F1353) and *The Woman Hater* (Greg 245b(ii); Wing: B1619) are 1649 reissues of 1648 editions; in each case, attribution to Fletcher alone in the initial edition is replaced with an attribution to both playwrights on a newly set title-page.

13 This is in contrast to a twentieth-century afterlife during which scholars working in attribution studies — most influentially Cyrus Hoy — have repeatedly attempted to separate the playwrights' respective contributions to the 'Beaumont and Fletcher canon' through a range of methods. On *The Scornful Lady* in particular, see Cyrus Hoy, 'The Shares of Fletcher and His Collaborators in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon (III)', *Studies in Bibliography* 11 (1958), 96.

14 Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *The Scornful Ladie* (London, 1616; STC: 1686), British Library, C.34.c.5.

15 Edward A. Langhans, *Restoration Promptbooks* (Carbondale, 1981), 14–17.

16 On the annotation of comparable playbooks, see Richard Rowland, 'Two Plays in One: Annotations in the Third Quarto of *Edward IV*', *Textual Cultures* 1.1 (2006), 46–63, https://doi.org/10.2979/tex.2006.1.1.46; Leslie Thomson, 'A Quarto "Marked for Performance": Evidence of What?', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama*

in England 8 (1996), 176–210; Munro, 'Reading Printed Comedy'; Charles Read Baskervill, 'A Prompt Copy of *A Looking Glass for London and England*', *Modern Philology* 30.1 (1932), 29–51. On typical manuscript placement of actor warnings, see W.W. Greg, *The Shakespeare First Folio: Its Bibliographical and Textual History* (Oxford, 1955), 139–41; Paul Werstine, *Early Modern Playhouse Manuscripts and the Editing of Shakespeare* (Cambridge, 2013), esp. 392–7, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139103978. The *systematic* placement of actor warnings in *The Scornful Lady* (the odd overlooked entry notwithstanding) is most consistent with texts thought to have been marked up in the 1620s and especially the 1630s: as Werstine notes (209–18), prompt book markings that have been dated earlier in the seventeenth century tend to be a little more haphazard about which characters' entries they signpost, whilst nonetheless including such warnings.

17 Langhans, *Restoration Promptbooks,* 17.

18 Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *The Scornful Ladie* (London, 1616; STC: 1686), Huntington Library, 60260.

19 I am grateful to Lois Potter for pointing out that this intervention may also be a form of correction: the (female) character Abigail technically enters *sola,* even if the (male) actor playing her enters *solus.* If so, this concern for Latin grammar draws further attention to the literal performance of femininity occurring in the scene, and the complexities of determining whether a boy actor playing a female part is best understood as male, female, or otherwise.

20 Syme, 'Well-Read Plays II'; Hannah August, 'Early Modern Readers of Small Format English Commercial Drama, 1584–1660: Identities, Expectations, and Responses' (PhD thesis, King's College London, 2013), 223–5; Emma Smith, *Shakespeare's First Folio: Four Centuries of an Iconic Book* (Oxford, 2016), 155–9.

21 Meric Casaubon, *A Treatise Concerning Enthusiasme* (London, 1655 [i.e. 1654]; Wing: C812), N4v. See August, 'Tickling the Senses', 204–5.

22 Ann Moss, *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford, 1996), 215–53.

23 Sherman, *Used Books,* 1, 7.

24 John Brinsley, *Ludus Literarius: Or, the Grammar Schoole* (London, 1612; STC: 3768), G3v.

25 See Zachary Lesser and Peter Stallybrass, 'The First Literary *Hamlet* and the Commonplacing of Professional Plays', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 59.4 (2008), 371–420, https://doi.org/10.1353/shq.0.0040; August, 'Small Format Drama', 136–83; Jean-Christophe Mayer, 'Reading in Their Present: Early Readers and the Origins of Shakespearian Appropriation', Peter Holland (ed.). *Shakespeare Survey Volume*

68: Shakespeare, Origins and Originality (Cambridge, 2015), 146–57, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316258736.012.

26 Brinsley, *Ludus Literarius,* G3v.

27 Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *Philaster. Or, Loue Lies a Bleeding* (London, 1622; STC: 1682), Bodleian Library, Malone 242(2).

28 Brinsley, *Ludus Literarius,* G3v.

29 Hoy, 'Beaumont and Fletcher Canon (III)', 96; Wiggins and Richardson, *British Drama,* 6.98.

30 Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (London, 1604; STC: 26040), C7v; Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (Oxford, 1621; STC: 4159), R6r.

31 Derek Dunne, 'Blushing on Cue: The Forensics of the Blush in Early Modern Drama', *Shakespeare Bulletin* 34 (2016), 234–5 and *passim,* https://doi.org/10.1353/shb.2016.0026. See also Jennifer Panek, 'Shame and Pleasure in *The Changeling*', *Renaissance Drama* 42 (2014), 192, https://doi.org/10.1086/678123; Anna Weirzbicka, *Emotions Across Languages and Cultures: Diversity and Universals* (Cambridge, 1999), 109–11, https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511521256.

32 John Monck Mason, *Comments on the Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher* (London, 1798), 35.

33 Finkelpearl, *Court and Country Politics,* 115; Clark, *Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher,* 139.

34 N.W. Bawcutt (ed.), *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama: The Records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels, 1623–73* (Oxford, 1996), 265a, https://doi.org/10.1093/actrade/9780198122463.book.1.

35 Ibid, 265c.

36 Shirley, 'To the Reader', A3r; Casaubon, *Enthusiasme,* N4v; Stern, 'Watching as Reading', 137. See August, 'Tickling the Senses', 204–5.