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## **‘You shall see me do the Moor’: The Blackfriars Children and the Performance of Race in *Poetaster***

*The repertory of the Blackfriars children frequently alluded to plays performed by adult companies across the Thames. In Jonson’s Poetaster, a boy player performs a scene as ‘the Moor’ from Peele’s The Battle of Alcazar. These parodies of adult performances in the children’s repertory not only evidence early modern acting style but also specifically reference styles of performing racial difference on the early modern stage. I argue that this parody showcased playing skill associated up to this point with adult actors, and that the Blackfriars children used these references to racialized characters to highlight skill and appeal to audience taste.*

Early studies of performing racial difference on the Shakespearean stage focused largely on iconic ‘race plays’ like *Othello* and certain types of characters in these plays like ‘talking devils’ or ‘kings and queens’.<sup>1</sup> This scholarship did not always overtly recognize how the performance of racial difference functioned within the early modern repertory as a feature of certain companies. Noémie Ndiaye’s work on racialization in the repertory of the Queen of Bohemia’s Men in the Jacobean and Caroline periods is a significant contribution to repertory studies and a reminder that discussions of race are indispensable to the study of early modern playing companies.<sup>2</sup> But to date no one has investigated boy companies like the Children of the Chapel (later of the Queen’s Revels) at Blackfriars, where the repertory rarely featured non-European settings or characters, in this way. These companies have instead captured the most critical attention in recent studies of gender and sexuality on the early modern stage.<sup>3</sup> I have not yet encountered a similarly sustained critical reading of the performance of racial difference in children’s plays. This absence undoubtedly results from the lack of ‘raced’ characters in their repertory, given that most criticism on race and early modern drama in the last forty years has focused on the characters and settings of the aforementioned

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'race plays'. Here I take up David Sterling Brown's call made at the 2019 Shakespeare Association of America annual meeting to consider the 'other race plays' written by Shakespeare while also considering his contemporaries.<sup>4</sup> By examining the performance of racial impersonation in Ben Jonson's *Poetaster* and the boys' parody of *The Battle of Alcazar* at Blackfriars, I demonstrate how the performance of racial difference on the early modern stage does not lay solely in the presence of foreign characters, nor is it synonymous with blackness.

The 1602 title page of Jonson's satirical comedy *Poetaster, or The Arraignment* describes the play as being 'sundry times privately acted in the Blackfriars, by the children of her Majesty's Chapel'.<sup>5</sup> This play is most well-known today for its role in a conflict known as the War of the Theatres, a competitive exercise between the children's companies of St Paul's and Blackfriars and the adults on the South Bank.<sup>6</sup> Jonson was not alone in his writing of satirical material for the children's companies; in fact, satire became their calling card. One of their most lauded skills was imitation, or their ability to ape their elders. *Poetaster* features self-conscious citation of the adult repertory in its references to the roles associated with the star of the Lord Admiral's Men, Edward Alleyn, like Muly Hamet in George Peele's *The Battle of Alcazar*. Jonson, who wrote for both adult and children's companies, later expressed his distaste for 'the Tamerlanes and Tamer-Chams of the late Age' and their 'scenical strutting and furious vociferations'.<sup>7</sup> This criticism of Edward Alleyn's known star vehicles (Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* and the lost *Tamer Cham*) and his often-cited mode of traversing the stage ('strutting' as well as 'stalking') manifests in *Poetaster* itself. In act 3, scene 4, two child actors, one sitting on the other's shoulders, impersonate Alleyn as 'the Moor'. The child on top recites a speech from *Alcazar* while the one on the bottom 'stalks' around the stage. While this scene has often been mentioned in critical studies of the children's companies over the last twenty years, the emphasis has been more on the acting skills on display by the children and their commentary on the adult company without any attention to the parody of the spectacle of racial impersonation.

This imitation of a celebrity actor provides an unusual representation of a racialized character in the Children of the Chapel's repertory. Unlike the adult repertory of the 1580s and 1590s, which often traded on the exotic appeal of foreign locales and characters, the children's repertory only presented non-European settings or characters on rare occasions. The single extant example at Blackfriars during the Children's tenure (roughly 1600–8) is John Marston's *Sophonisba* (1606), which features an enslaved Ethiopian character.<sup>8</sup> Why was the villainous Moor type of Elizabethan revenge tragedy and political drama, like Aaron in *Titus Andronicus*, not staged by children in the indoor theatres? Why an absence

in the children's repertory of a constitutive element of the adult repertory that was popular enough to be parodied but not presented on its own? The absence of such material in the early Blackfriars repertory might be a product of the children producing fewer plays than their adult counterparts as well as their focus on city comedy and satires of court culture, which almost always centred the white European male as their subject. I suggest, however, that perceptions of actor skill and embodiment might also partially account for this absence. As one of the earliest plays performed by the children at Blackfriars, *Poetaster* displays uncertainty on the playwright's part concerning the capabilities of his performers, particularly in their presentation of 'the Moor', where, as I argue, the physicality associated with playing that dramatic type does not align with the image of the diminutive white early modern boy actor.

Plays written for the return of the children's companies circa 1599, like John Marston's *Antonio and Mellida* and Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*, self-consciously address this anxiety about the children's performance capabilities. Their inductions show metatheatrical displays of the child actors preparing to play roles that might be deemed unsuitable for them, given their young age. These scenes allowed audiences to witness what could have been the new company's insecurities, or perhaps they used these inductions as a sneaky marketing tool to lower expectations and then impress their audiences with the talents of their youthful actors. Lucy Munro notes that 'the boy actor's performance [in *Cynthia's Revels*] highlights his virtuosity as an actor even as the induction also insists on the incongruity of his playing an adult role'.<sup>9</sup> The play texts depend on the actors drawing attention to their so-called deficiencies, only to deliver what we might imagine were highly skilled performances. Marston's Children of Paul's play *Antonio's Revenge* actually offers a critique of adult playing: Antonio assures us that he 'will not swell like a tragedian / In forced passion of affected strains' (2.2.105–6).<sup>10</sup> His refusal (or inability) to 'swell' could be a reference to the little stature of these players, a quality often remarked upon by playwrights like Marston and Jonson. This marking of the child as diminutive resonates with Evelyn Tribble's idea of the child as 'a work-in-progress', a piece of wax to be formed or a vessel to be filled.<sup>11</sup> Andrea Crow refers to the child actor as 'a theatrical agent defined by change', as 'his growing body constantly alters his performance capabilities'.<sup>12</sup> A major element of this capability was the act of imitation, a popular pedagogical technique that moved onto the professional children's stage in order to showcase the players' potential for virtuosic talents.

The boy player in *Poetaster* demonstrates skills of racial impersonation through aping of adult company practices and impersonation of celebrity figures. In this

scene the obstreperous Captain Tucca stages a mock audition for his servant boys to join the actor Histrio's playing company. Tucca has two pages called the Pyrgi, derived from the Greek *pyrgus* or tower, what Tom Cain assumes is an 'ironic reference to the size of the boy actors'.<sup>13</sup> The Pyrgi for their audition perform a kind of impression parade, moving from 'king Darius' doleful strain' to the roles of lover, soldier, lady, and finally, 'the Moor' (3.4.212). Jonson takes direct quotations, though the speeches are sometimes mixed up or rewritten, from mostly *The Spanish Tragedy* and *The Battle of Alcazar*, both property at this time of the Lord Admiral's Men. Edward Alleyn's return to the stage in 1600 after a few years' retirement to help the company promote their new playhouse, the Fortune, most likely inspired this reference to him in Jonson's play. Revivals of Alleyn's most famous roles (including Muly in *Alcazar*) must have captured public interest, given that Peele's play itself was old news by this time.<sup>14</sup> The attention given in *Poetaster* to Alleyn and his role as 'the Moor' (not named in the scene, but clearly from *Alcazar* given the speech recited) shows the potent intertheatrical resonances of a repertory system. This imitation of Alleyn also proves the actor's status as a recognizable and celebrated figure in his day, just as elegies praised him after his death as one of the finest actors seen on England's stages.

While Alleyn's roles as Doctor Faustus, Edward II, or Hieronimo all drew acclaim, it was his personations of foreign and racialized characters such as Muly, Barabas in *Jew of Malta*, and Tamburlaine that showcased his virtuosity and towering skill.<sup>15</sup> Ambereen Dadabhoy notes *Alcazar's* contribution to early modern racecraft in 'its coupling of racial formation to fantasies of imperial expansion and the strategic geopolitical location of Morocco'.<sup>16</sup> In putting these non-European cultures and characters on display, companies like the Admiral's Men developed a store of recycled props, costumes, and gestures that gave audiences a shorthand for recognizing racialized figures in the dramatic repertory. Modern critics sometimes recognize Peele's play as indebted to *Tamburlaine* in structure and characterization, though Tom Rutter disagrees with the prevailing opinion that it is 'an inferior rehash'; he calls it 'a more intelligent response to Marlowe than is usually supposed'.<sup>17</sup> Whatever the merit of the play itself, Alleyn's performance as Muly was likely haunted for repeat audiences by memories of his powerful Tamburlaine. As Virginia Mason Vaughan writes, 'from the spectacular chariot-driving entrance to his final lines, the audience's gaze would focus on Edward Alleyn' as the 'blackface and flamboyant Muly'.<sup>18</sup> That of all Alleyn's famous roles Jonson chose Muly, not Tamburlaine, for the boys to imitate shows that 'doing the Moor' provides a specific and recognizable sign of performance prowess and expertise.

Not unlike the scene at the slave market in *The Jew of Malta*, this scene in *Poetaster* is set up as a potential economic transaction, where Tucca's 'goods' (his boy players) are on display for Histrio's potential investment. Histrio's request to see one of them 'play the lady' is rebuffed by the second Pyrgus: 'No, you shall see me do the Moor' (3.4.263, 270). This sudden refusal is significant given that the boy was happy up until this point to present a soldier and a ghost, as well as to spout off speeches from *The Spanish Tragedy*. He does show a hint of this rebellious spirit previously when he refuses to stop these declarations and Tucca has to tell him 'enough' (259). Neither Tucca nor Histrio object to the boy's demand to play the Moor, and the boy commands the captain even further: 'Master, lend me your scarf a little' (270). Cain glosses the scarf as a badge of an English officer and a symbol of military rank. He does not note that a scarf is also used by Alleyn in Robert Greene's *Orlando Furioso* for a disguise as a mercenary who is later referred to as both an Indian and a Moor: '*Enter Orlando with a scarf before his face*' (5.1.1224).<sup>19</sup> No reference to how the boy uses the scarf appears in *Poetaster*; we do not know what colour it is or whether it serves directly as a 'racial prosthesis', to use Ian Smith's term, to aid in his portrayal of the Moor.<sup>20</sup> By insisting on playing the Moor here the young page is flipping the script, not only in his refusal to play a woman, as boys in companies like Histrio's were wont to do, but the use of Tucca's scarf to be 'at his service', given that the young boy's life is defined by his service to Tucca, and potentially to other exploiting figures, even the very managers of the Blackfriars children themselves. 'Doing the Moor' in this case becomes a moment of defiance and agency, however brief, in which the child (within the fiction of the drama) gets to choose what role he might play.

This second pyrgus and the apothecary Minos then '*withdraw to make themselves ready*' and they remain offstage for roughly seventy lines (273 sd). When they reenter, '*the boy comes in on Mino's shoulders, who stalks, as he acts*' (343 sd). (This stage direction only appears in Jonson's folio; the quarto does not specify how they enter.) Jonson uses the verb 'stalking' to describe an actor's movement in reference to Histrio's earlier entrance, where Tucca twice calls him a 'stalker' (127, 279). While 'stalking' is often associated with the character Tamburlaine, Edward Guilpin's 1598 epigram also links Alleyn's 'gate' (or gait) to 'stalking'.<sup>21</sup> Given that in *Poetaster*, we have this impression of another character of Alleyn's besides Tamburlaine who stalks, this imitation serves as a potential example of Alleyn's own signature movement and physicality across his roles. While the second Pyrgus delivers the speech from *Alcazar* from atop his fellow's shoulders, Minos's movement below is what attracts Tucca's praise, as well as a reference to his diminutive size: "Twas well done, *little* Minos, thou didst stalk well' (359,

emphasis mine). This brief interlude is rich with possibilities of spectacle left open by the printed play text. Why does the boy leave the stage for approximately five minutes (a substantial amount of theatrical time) in order to prepare for the role? Is his exit just to execute getting on the other actor's shoulders, or does he take a moment to add any other material signifier, such as a cosmetic to darken his skin? How does he wear the scarf? And why does he enter on Minos's shoulders in the first place? The double labour of these two actors in presenting one character presents a possible theory for the absence of these types of characters in the children's repertory: were the child actors perceived as simply too small and underdeveloped to present characters like Alleyn's stalking Moor?

Unlike most characters in the children's repertory, the figure of the Moor in *Alcazar* is seen as 'oversized', not only in literal size but in manner of speaking and moving. Urvashi Chakravarty points to the common pun on Moor and more, used by Aaron in *Titus Andronicus*, that 'always already articulat[es] the Moor' as 'superfluous and excessive'.<sup>22</sup> Othello's characterization as an 'extravagant and wheeling stranger / Of here and everywhere' likewise plays on this theme (1.1.151–2).<sup>23</sup> The stage directions of *Alcazar* only refer to Muly Hamet as 'the Moor', but unlike Othello and Aaron he is not the only Moor depicted in this play. There are others like Abdelmelec, known as the 'brave Barbarian', but Muly is the only one associated with blackness and referred to as 'negro' (1.Prologue.6–7).<sup>24</sup> The boy speaks Muly's words, which are inflected with imagery of blackness and sound akin to the roaring of a medieval stage-devil. He speaks of 'hellish shades', 'foul contagion', 'cursed [tree]tops', and 'dismal night-ravens' (3.4.347–50). These words are among those like 'black' and 'foul' that Kim F. Hall writes are 'push[ed] ... into the realm of racial discourse' by their 'insistent association' with 'negative signifier[s]'.<sup>25</sup> Despite this colour specification, *Poetaster* does not suggest that the boy player has blackened his visage to parody the role. Instead, an oversized language, physicality, and acting style here produce racial difference.

The image of the boy riding on Minos's shoulders in order to appear taller therefore makes reference to Alleyn's stature (he was known to be taller than average) as well as Muly's prominence in the play.<sup>26</sup> Muly's large size is emphasized through his accompaniment by younger characters, like his son, who shadow him throughout the action. In Muly's first appearance in the prologue's bloody dumb-show, he is with his son as well as two pages and his 'young brethren', whom he then murders (1.Prologue.20). Muly refers to his son repeatedly as 'boy', a word that we hear echoed in the lines that Tucca's page recites: 'Where art thou, boy?' (*Poetaster* 3.4.345; *Alcazar* 2.3.1). Later in *Alcazar* a stage direction reads, 'Then

*enter the Moor and his boy, flying*' (5.1.70.3 sd). *Titus* likewise often flanks Aaron onstage with the two Goth brothers, their youth, size, and whiteness accentuating the difference in his age, stature, and blackness. The consistent pairing of the Moor in *Alcazar* with what we can imagine to be younger and smaller actors emphasizes his own larger size, just as Edel Lamb notes how the adult gallants seated on the Blackfriars stage must have provided a 'visual contrast' with the smaller child players.<sup>27</sup> Such staging is also reminiscent of Falstaff's line in *Henry IV, Part 2* where he grumbles that the prince has given him the small page to 'set him off', or make Falstaff look bigger by comparison (1.2.14).<sup>28</sup> The linkage here to 'the Moor' not only as a copy of Alleyn but also classified as adult-sized echoes later critiques of the boy's company style made by R.A. Foakes, who characterized this action as 'child-actors consciously ranting in oversize parts'.<sup>29</sup> Here the Moor is literally 'oversize' and must be performed by one player on top of another. While use of black cosmetics and cloth is key to imagining racial impersonation on the early modern stage, the scene here suggests that other factors marked these characters as racially different from the white majority: size, age, movement, and linguistic style mattered as well.

Not only does riding on Minos's shoulders increase the page's height, but there are also multiple instances of a performer (both human and animal) being conveyed across the stage in early modern drama that evoke racialized images. Muly's first entrance riding in a chariot aligns with other representations, such as the Moors riding 'exotic beasts' in Lord Mayor's Pageants discussed by Anthony Barthelemy as well as Tamburlaine's entrances in the second part of his play '*drawn in his chariot*' by captive kings '*with bits in their mouths*' (4.3.1 sd).<sup>30</sup> Perhaps the conveyance of the child actor on the other's shoulders serves a dual purpose, both to make him taller and give the impression that he is riding something that accords him higher status. Players rode other players before in the repertory of medieval morality plays, notably when the Vice would sometimes ride on the devil's back.<sup>31</sup> In another play filled with devils *Doctor Faustus* (the B text) we see the servant Dick 'for apish deeds transformed to an ape' by Mephistopheles (3.3.42).<sup>32</sup> His fellow Robin is delighted by the change and asks for 'the carrying of him / about to show some tricks' (43–4). Mephistopheles responds by turning Robin into a dog and suggests that he 'carry [Dick] upon [his] back' (46). The exit of the ape riding the dog puts the ape in the position of the boy riding atop Minos's shoulders as he impersonates the Moor. Shakespeare also refers to a boy as performing ape in *Richard III* where the young prince compares himself to 'an ape' because he is 'little' and thus should be able to ride on Richard's shoulders (3.1.132).<sup>33</sup> Ndiaye's work on apes and dance in Philip Massinger's *The*

*Spanish Gypsie* similarly recognizes ‘the animalizing discourse wielded against racial others’ as well as ‘movement’ as a ‘hitherto understudied dimension of racial impersonation onstage’.<sup>34</sup> Conveyance, this method of movement across the stage, can therefore be used as a racializing tool that denotes high status and larger size just as it recalls other spectacles of human and animal performers in the repertory.

The performing ape is a figure that yokes together the child and the foreign in a way that the children’s repertory both resists and attracts. Early modern England associated the ape with foreign places, sexuality, humour, and, most importantly for this study, children. Edward Topsell noted that apes are foreign creatures to the English, coming from ‘*Lybia* and all that desert Woods betwixt *Egypt*, *Aethiopia* and *Lybia*’, a characterization that tied them irrevocably to English perceptions of African people.<sup>35</sup> In India, Topsell wrote that some ‘go up and down the streets so boldly and civilly, as if they were Children’.<sup>36</sup> Topsell also calls apes creatures ‘made for laughter ... much given to imitation and derision’ and that penchant for both mimicry and humour that the comparison to children is most invoked.<sup>37</sup> The spectacle of the ape as a small imitative foreign figure leads naturally to comparison with boy players in plays themselves. Nano the dwarf in Jonson’s *Volpone* is compared to a ‘pretty little ape ... for pleasing imitation / Of greater men’s actions, in a ridiculous fashion’ (3.2.13–14).<sup>38</sup> In the Children of Paul’s play *Jack Drum’s Entertainment* Sir Edward uses the same word in an extremely self-referential moment: ‘I saw the Children of Paul’s last night, / And troth they pleased me pretty, pretty well: / The Apes in time will do it handsomely’.<sup>39</sup> The casting of the boy players as apes who will ‘in time’ prove to be quite formidable performers shows an awareness of (and an optimism for) their potential and room for growth.

The seeming deficiency in a single child player’s body alone to mimic the role (and imitate Alleyne) might offer one reason for the lack of these types of characters in the children’s repertory. Perhaps Jonson’s inclusion of ‘doing the Moor’ in *Poetaster* was a test of their potential, a failed experiment not to be repeated. Perhaps he used this moment to simultaneously poke fun at the histrionics of the adults while also showing off the virtuosic skill of the young performers. It certainly takes skill to act while atop another player’s shoulders, even if the one “stalking” on the bottom gets all the credit from Tucca. This child in his choosing to ‘do the Moor’ clearly seems more drawn to the highly emotional and physical action that Pandulpho in *Antonio’s Revenge* calls ‘player-like’, namely to ‘stamp, curse, weep’ and ‘rage’ (1.2.315–6). The popularity of this supposedly overblown style which Jonathan Gil Harris terms ‘acting up’ has a genealogy dating back to



depictions of the tyrant king Herod in medieval drama and remains in reports of Alleyn's Tamburlaine.<sup>40</sup> Harris posits that Shakespeare offers his own parodies of Alleyn like Pistol and Bottom as an attempt at a 'theatrical exorcism' of an antiquated 'artisanal tradition'.<sup>41</sup> In other words, by imitating and evoking the undesirable techniques of past acting styles, the playwright could direct his audiences towards what he believed was a superior more restrained method. (Of course, the revival of Alleyn's roles at this time suggests an enduring popularity of his style.) It is possible that Jonson having his child actors 'do the Moor' in this manner is also the reason that this role does not appear again at the Blackfriars. The performers' inability to embody the role on their own exorcises it from the repertory. I do not want to put any value judgment on the acting style of the boys in comparison to the men here. While acknowledging that the boys were known for their imitative skills, I do not imply that their skills are lesser. I am more interested in the types of skills that the play scripts themselves show they demonstrated and what skills, such as racial impersonation, they are not asked to demonstrate as often. Playwrights like Marston and Jonson draw attention to the actions of the player, like stalking, stamping, and raging, in self-conscious moments that seem to comment on what plays asked the boy players to do normally, but what they did do remains more of a mystery.<sup>42</sup>

Despite this self-conscious depiction of 'the Moor' in *Poetaster*, this scene has not been read (to my knowledge) with an eye towards its racial impersonation. Roslyn Knutson notes how Jonson's borrowed 'play-scrap' of 'old offerings newly current' work as a commercial marketing strategy.<sup>43</sup> Michael Witmore calls it 'a tribute to childish mimicry', and Julie Ackroyd categorizes the scene as a 'bravura acting demonstration'.<sup>44</sup> Jeanne McCarthy recognizes how 'the adult actor's reduction of boys to the "lady's" part alone contrasts with what Jonson's play overall strives to demonstrate: boys trained in the more educative grammar and choir school system could do it all'.<sup>45</sup> But clearly, as the later repertory shows us, the company and playwrights did not employ them to 'do it all', namely to personate racially othered characters, even if they 'could'. This demonstration in *Poetaster* therefore shows the boys at their most 'apish', where they demonstrate tremendous physical skill and agility to imitate a character and a type of actor that is almost completely absent from their repertoire. The child on top of the other's shoulders in this scene simultaneously emulates 'the Moor' and Edward Alleyn by doubling his size and appearing larger and therefore older. The absence of raced characters in their repertory might be explained by the contrast between the figure of the little (white) child capable of growth and transformation and the theatrical image of the fully developed oversized (and black) Moor. In this act of

imitation, the children put their bodies in circulation with images of animals like apes and cast themselves as imitators of foreign roles in the adult repertory. Jonson uses racial impersonation in a self-conscious parodic way to highlight the remarkable skill of the Blackfriars Children and foreshadow the absence of characters like ‘the Moor’ in their own repertory.

## Notes

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Material in this essay builds on my PhD dissertation, ‘Race Tricks: Skill and Spectacle in the Blackfriars Boys’ Repertory, 1600–1608’, PhD thesis (The George Washington University, 2022), which explores this role of race in the boys’ repertory more broadly.

- 1 See Virginia M. Vaughan, *Performing Blackness on English Stages, 1500–1800* (Cambridge, 2005); A. Gerard Barthelemy, *Black Face, Maligned Race: The Representation of blacks in English drama from Shakespeare to Southerne* (Baton Rouge, 1987); Jack D’Amico, *The Moor in English Renaissance Drama* (Tampa, 1991).
- 2 Noémie Ndiaye, “Come Aloft, Jack-little-ape!”: Race and Dance in *The Spanish Gypsy*, *English Literary Renaissance* 51.1 (2021), 121–51, <https://doi.org/10.1086/711604>.
- 3 See Mary Bly, *Queer Virgins and Virgin Queans on the Early Modern Stage* (Oxford, 2000); Lucy Munro, *Children of the Queen’s Revels: A Jacobean Theatre Repertory* (Cambridge, 2005), <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511486067>; Edel Lamb, *Performing Childhood in the Early Modern Theatre: The Children’s Playing Companies 1599–1613* (London, 2009), <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230594739>; Simone Chess, *Male-to-Female Crossdressing in Early Modern English Literature: Gender, Performance, and Queer Relations* (London, 2016), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315668352>. Harry McCarthy’s recent monograph *Boy Actors in Early Modern England: Skill, Stagecraft, and the Theatre* (Cambridge, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009106658>, will also undoubtedly shed new light on this topic.
- 4 For further exploration of this topic, see David Sterling Brown, ‘Code Black: Whiteness and Unmanliness in *Hamlet*’, in *Hamlet: The State of Play*, ed. Sonia Massai and Lucy Munro (London, 2021), 101–28, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781350117754.ch-004>.
- 5 Ben Jonson, *Poetaster*, ed. Tom Cain (Manchester, 1995), 61.
- 6 Roslyn Knutson argues that scholarship on the so-called war has mischaracterized the conflict and focused on personal rivalries rather than commercial and collaborative relationships between companies that showed mutual support. See Roslyn

- L. Knutson, *Playing Companies and Commerce in Shakespeare's Time* (Cambridge, 2001), 15, <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511486043>.
- 7 Quoted from *Discoveries* in Jeanne H. McCarthy, *The Children's Troupes and the Transformation of English Theatre 1509–1608* (New York, 2017), 84, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315390826>.
- 8 The later Whitefriars children's company featured two tragedies, John Mason's *The Turk* (1610) and William Daborne's *A Christian Turn'd Turk* (1612), that depicted foreign characters and settings.
- 9 Munro, *Children of the Queen's Revels*, 43.
- 10 John Marston, *Antonio's Revenge*, ed. G.K. Hunter (Lincoln, 1965).
- 11 Evelyn Tribble, 'Pretty and Apt: Boy Actors, Skill, and Embodiment', in *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare and Embodiment*, ed. Valerie Traub (Oxford, 2016), 627–40, 631, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199663408.013.35>.
- 12 Andrea Crow, 'Mediating Boys: *Two Angry Women* and the Boy Actor's Shaping of 1590s Theatrical Culture', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 65.2 (2014), 180–98, 191, <https://doi.org/10.1353/shq.2014.0019>.
- 13 Jonson, *Poetaster*, 66.
- 14 McCarthy, *The Children's Troupes*, 85.
- 15 S.P. Cerasano, 'Edward Alleyn, the New Model Actor, and the Rise of the Celebrity in the 1590s', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 18 (2005), 47–58. For analysis of Edward Alleyn's protean abilities as they relate to racial impersonation, see Ayanna Thompson, *Blackface* (New York, 2021), 39, <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781501374043>.
- 16 Ambereen Dadabhoy, 'Barbarian Moors: Documenting Racial Formation in Early Modern England', in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Race*, ed. Ayanna Thompson (Cambridge, 2021), 30–46, 33, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108684750.003>.
- 17 Tom Rutter, *Shakespeare and the Admiral's Men: Reading Across Repertories on the London Stage, 1594–1600* (Cambridge, 2017), 98, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781139924870>.
- 18 Vaughan, *Performing Blackness*, 43.
- 19 Robert Greene, *Orlando Furioso*, in *The Plays & Poems of Robert Greene*, ed. J. Churton Collins (Oxford, 1905).
- 20 Ian Smith, 'White Skin, Black Masks: Racial Cross-dressing on the Early Modern Stage', *Renaissance Drama* 32 (2003), 44.
- 21 Jeremy Lopez, 'Alleyn Resurrected', *Marlowe Studies* 1 (2011), 169. See also Andrew Bozio, 'Timur the Lame: Marlowe, Disability, and Form', *Modern Philology* 119.3

- (2022), 354–76, <https://doi.org/10.1086/717772>. Many thanks to Andrew for his insight on this topic.
- 22 Urvashi Chakravarty, “‘I Had Peopled Else’: Shakespeare’s Queer Natalities and the Reproduction of Race”, in *Queering Childhood in Early Modern English Drama and Culture*, ed. Jennifer Higginbotham and Mark Albert Johnston (Cham, 2018), 57–78, 64, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-72769-1\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-72769-1_3).
- 23 William Shakespeare, *Othello*, ed. E.A.J. Honigmann (London, 2001).
- 24 George Peele, *The Battle of Alcazar*, in *The Stukeley Plays*, ed. Charles Edelman (Manchester, 2005).
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