

Issues in Review

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Reading the Elizabethan Acting Companies

The issue at hand is the Elizabethan acting companies and how to read them. We have been trained to read playwrights, not acting companies, probably because playwrights are easier. They come along one at a time, they have identities for the same reason we assume we do, and they write plays. Yet every playwright who had work staged in the early commercial playhouses would have known that reading the author alone stops well short of reading the drama of the time. I can think of some authors who would have approved of stopping short in just that way, but in an age when 'performance' and 'material culture' rank among our critical concerns, we should recognize a need to see the drama through to production, and that means seeing the drama into the hands of the organizations that copied it, rehearsed it, costumed and staged it, tried to profit from it, and sold some of it to the publishers. My vote for the most important advance that could be made just now in Elizabethan drama studies is for taking the companies as the organizing units of dramatic production. That does not mean neglecting the playwrights. It means reading their plays more fully than we have been trained to do, taking them not as authorial texts but as performed texts, seeing them as collaborative endeavours which involve the writers and dozens of other theatre people, and placing the staged plays in a social network to which both the players and their audiences – perhaps even the playwrights – belonged.

The ground has been solidly laid for this approach. The basic information about the acting companies has been set forth and examined in Andrew Gurr's stunning *Shakespearian Playing Companies* (Oxford, 1996), which in effect revises major parts of Chambers' *Elizabethan Stage* and Bentley's *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*. William Ingram is in the process of assembling all the documentary evidence uncovered to date for individual Elizabethan actors, in what

will be a computerized revision of Nungezer's *Dictionary of Elizabethan Actors*. The REED project continues to publish the complete extant record of the visits of the companies throughout the country (among much else). The foundations of two of the playhouses the companies used have been laid bare, at least in part. We are in position to build new histories of Elizabethan drama based on the acting companies and their playhouses – if we can learn how to read them.

We have a body of textual criticism for Shakespeare, source studies for Shakespeare, dramaturgy for Shakespeare, versification for Shakespeare, reception theory for Shakespeare, not to mention Jonson, Marlowe, and Webster, but we do not have textual criticism for the Chamberlain's Men, source studies for the Admiral's Men, dramaturgy for Strange's Men, versification for the King's Men, reception theory for Queen Anne's Men (a special case of which will be seen below). It seems to me evident *at a glance* that the textual problems which have tantalized Shakespeareans since the eighteenth century could be opened to new solutions if the field were widened to include all the texts of the Chamberlain's/King's Men, where the good work that has been done on the Beaumont and Fletcher quartos could be joined to that done on the *Sir John van Olden Barnavel*t manuscript, or to a dozen or so other isolated textual issues that involve the company, forming a context for seeing the Shakespeare texts anew. That is just one of the advances that could be made.

The papers that follow by Lawrence Manley, Roslyn Knutson, and Mark Bayer do not take up the textual questions, but they do read acting companies in challenging ways. They were presented at the Shakespeare Association of America seminar on Acting Companies in Miami this past March. Sally-Beth MacLean and I had been asked to organize the seminar because we had just published a book on an acting company everyone hears about and no one reads, the Queen's Men of 1583–1603. We wanted to see how many theatre historians would take up the Acting Companies topic (nineteen did – it was one of the largest seminars) and what kinds of work in progress would emerge. We were not asking for imitations of our study. We were asking for work that would have been in progress anyhow, work that was knowledgeable about acting companies in some way. The majority of the papers were documentary – half of them derived from REED projects, for example, the kind of archival research without which there would be no 'issues in review' in the first place. The others, represented by the three papers that follow, either crossed over from the documentary record to the plays themselves or looked into the social networks in which the acting companies and their theatres took part. These are two ways of reading the companies – by sorting out and interpreting the play texts

company by company, or by studying the sociology of the scene in which the companies and their plays took part. (I am thinking of London as that scene, although in fact some of the REED-oriented papers touched on the society of towns and great houses in the countryside.)

Lawrence Manley shows that one must read acting companies for stage effects among other things. The repertory of Strange's Men in the early 1590s repeatedly called upon pyrotechnics and fireworks – sensational bits of staging which sharpen the impression that this was a flamboyant, risk-taking company. There were real fires in London at the time Strange's Men were staging these special effects at the Rose, Manley notes. Punishments for heresy and witchcraft formed a serious issue in the early 1590s, and the 'apparent preoccupation in the Strange's repertory with human immolation' was alert to this controversy.

Roslyn Knutson looks into the plays of Pembroke's Men, who acted in these same years and bore a relationship we do not yet grasp to Strange's Men. For Pembroke's Men it was not fire but the severed head that makes the staging stand out – six heads are put on display in *The First Part of the Contention* and *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York*. To read Pembroke's Men is to think about stage representation from a grisly angle. The Earl of Suffolk in *1 Contention*, for example, would be represented first by an actor who is embraced by Queen Margaret, then by a property head that is still embraced by the queen (4.4 in the *2 Henry VI* division), while the actor in question goes on to double one of the late-appearing characters in this crowded play. Would all severed heads have looked alike in the Pembroke's staging? Then the queen would fondle something that looks just like Jack Cade's head in 5.1. Or would the heads have been individualized if there were to be six in all? Knutson has no reason to take up these macabre questions, but once she points out the severed-head device in the Pembroke repertory, the questions are there to be asked, preferably in a full study of the dramaturgy that also called for heavy doubling among its actors. (Doubling roles and using property heads are concomitant matters to an acting company.)

As for the impact the companies made on their audiences and the neighbourhoods of their theatres, the challenge in the London of the early 1590s was to draw playgoers to one playhouse day after day, getting them not just to attend, but to *return*. By now the largest companies were in 'permanent' playhouses, places they could aim to remain in for years to come, but the drawing power of those theatres over the workaday week had to be developed. Changing the play every afternoon was the obvious method, but connecting several by theme or subject-matter was sometimes tried for the sake of

continuity and the return visit. Knutson spots Strange's Men playing *The Jew of Malta*, *Tamar Cham*, Part I, and *Muly Mollocco* on successive days in January, 1593, a trio on the exotic East at the playhouse that would soon bring Londoners the two-part *Tamburlaine* if it had not already done so. At about the same time Shakespeare was building up his first series of connected English history plays, at least two of which were played by Pembroke's Men. Knutson's *The Repertory of Shakespeare's Company* (Fayetteville, Arkansas, 1991) is a basic study of repertory-building in the commercial theatres, and Gurr's *Shakespearean Playing Companies* mentions a number of trends in passing (the Admiral's Men specialized in religious plays in the later 1590s, for example, unlike the Chamberlain's Men). Shakespeare's history plays were an amazing venture for their time, but they were an inspired variation on these efforts to run threads of continuity through a varied repertory.

Mark Bayer's paper passes beyond the reception of any one play to argue that there was an 'implicit social contract' between the acting companies and the neighbourhoods where the theatres stood. Bayer takes a fresh look at the apprentice riots of March 1617, in which the playhouse (and alehouse) in Drury Lane to which Queen Anne's Men had just moved were severely damaged by apprentices who marched from the Clerkenwell neighbourhood the company had just left. This was not the 'boys will be boys' Shrove Tuesday outbreak that it is usually assumed to have been, Bayer insists. Christopher Beeston's decision to leave the Red Bull and move his company 'upmarket' to Drury Lane and a new indoor theatre left a residue of anger in Clerkenwell. So this time the Shrove Tuesday rampage had a target – the Cockpit in Drury Lane, along with Beeston's dwelling, which was also damaged. Queen Anne's Men had provided entertainment at prices ordinary people could afford, they had contributed to poor relief, and made a sizeable contribution to highway funds in Clerkenwell, and some of them had resided there – including, to his death in 1612, the famous clown Thomas Greene, whose antics had built up the drawing power of the Red Bull. The company at the Red Bull was part of the 'moral economy' (E.P. Thompson's phrase) of the neighbourhood, an economy which the model of the marketplace does not encompass, and it is this broader social network that Bayer wants to bring to the centre of theatre history.

There are more ways of reading acting companies than three papers can show, of course. I have mentioned textual criticism above. Casting and doubling practices are another topic – Sally-Beth MacLean and I found that the casting practices of the Queen's Men, about which there is no direct evidence, were implied by the patterns of role-distribution in their published

plays, and this may be true of other companies. The staging practices of the Admiral's Men and Strange's Men can now be tested against the configuration of the Rose stage-and-tiring-house uncovered in the Bankside excavation. The sociological theory which Bayer applies to the 1617 disturbances can be carried across to other well-documented occasions of playhouse and acting-company involvement in their neighbourhoods, and the plays themselves can be brought into this picture as the most specific form of impact actors have on their neighbourhoods. In that regard, Mary Bly, in *Queer Virgins and Virgin Queans on the Early Modern Stage* (Oxford, 2000) has recently read the plays of the King's Revels company of the early Jacobean years and has found an abundance of sexual humour running through them that seems designed to appeal to trendy audiences at the Whitefriars. This same company will soon be the subject of a major paper by Richard Dutton in *ELR*.

Things are moving along. For the moment, here are the latest three provocative acting-company papers, different in origin but converging on what may become the centre of attention for early theatre history in the years to come. Read on.

SCOTT MCMILLIN

Playing with Fire: Immolation in the Repertory of Strange's Men

In the study of acting companies and their repertories, Strange's Men must loom large. By name an older company that was reinvigorated by actors taken from other companies in the late 1580s, and dissolved by the end of 1593, this unusually large and successful company helped to transform the drama of its time. In the records associated with Strange's Men are found the names of the principal actors – George Bryan, Thomas Pope, Augustine Phillips, William Kemp, John Heminges, and Richard Burbage – who became partners with Shakespeare in the newly-formed Lord Chamberlain's Men in 1594.¹ Aside from the Lord Admiral's Men's, Strange's is the best-documented repertory in our single best source of evidence about repertory companies, the diary of the theatre impresario Philip Henslowe. Henslowe's diary documents two periods of daily activity by Strange's Men: an extended period from 1 February – 22 June 1592, during which they offered 105 performances (24 different plays) at the Rose theatre, and a shorter run of 29 performances at the Rose between 29 December 1592 and 1 February 1593.²

In what it tells us about Strange's repertory, Henslowe's diary enables us to reflect upon the ways in which this innovative and politically daring company addressed itself to the public mood and events of its time. One of the ways in which it did so, I suggest, is by playing with fire. A striking feature of the company's repertory, in so far as we can reconstruct it and differentiate it from that of other companies, is that it was remarkably pyrotechnical, if not pyromaniac. Fire, fireworks, the threat of fire, and above all the threat and the actual simulation of burning people alive are astonishingly prominent in the company's repertory. Pyrotechnics were a familiar feature of traditional drama-turgy; they were associated especially with conjuring scenes or with appearances of the devil, which were often accompanied by the effects of squibs. In the repertory of Strange's Men, old-fashioned plays like *A Knack to Know a Knave* and *John of Bordeaux* contain implicit opportunities for these kinds of traditional pyrotechnical effects.³ But there are more spectacular examples as well. If *The Battle of Alcazar* is the 'muly mulucco' referred to in Henslowe's diary, then on at least fourteen occasions between 19 February 1592 and 1 February 1593 London audiences witnessed a show in which the fifth act chorus narrated to thunder and lightning as an angel hung the crowns of the play's combatants on a tree:

Heere the blazing Starre.

Now fire stares and streaming comets blaze,
That threat the earth and princes of the same.

Fire workes.

Fire, Fire about the axiltree of heaven,
Whorles round, and from the foot of Casyopa
In fatal houre consumes those fatal crownes.

One fals.

Downe fals the diademe of Portugall,

The other fals.

The crowne of Barbary and kingdomes fal.⁴

In our risk-averse present, such a scene would result in an emergency call, revocation of the theatre's insurance, and prompt investigation by the fire marshal. The explicit detail of the stage directions here, however, reminds us that we cannot apply our own notions of risk and liability to a period in which theatregoers apparently brought their own fires with them to the theatre in cold seasons. Elaborate pyrotechnics can be found in another play performed

by Strange's Men, the *Looking-Glass for London and England*, where the proud queen Remilia is struck by lightning while putting on her make-up in her tent ('*Lightning and thunder wherewith REMILLA is stroken*'. '*He draws the curtain and finds her stroken with thunder, black*', 1.2. 90, 111) and again when stage directions declare that '*A hand from out a cloud threateneth a burning sword*' (4.3.114).⁵

That we are dealing with a company specializing not just in fireworks but in uses of fire more generally is evident from an implicit stage direction in *The Battle of Alcazar*, where the ambassador from Muly Mahamet to King Sebastian offers a pledge of allegiance by holding his hand in a flame:

Beholde my Lord, this binds our faith to thee
 We offer heere our hand into this flame,
 And as this flame doth fasten on this flesh,
 So from our soules we wish it may consume
 The heart of our great Lord and soveraigne ...
 If his intent agree not with his wordes. (ll. 601–6)

A variation on this trick can again be found in the *Looking-Glass for London and England*, which calls for an entry by sages '*with the miters on their heads, carrying fire in their hands*' (4.3.99).

Philip Butterworth's recent study, *Theatre of Fire*, assembles all the technical information that is needed to convince us that Strange's Men could indeed have been playing with fire. From Thomas Hyll's *Naturall and Artificial Conclusions* (1586), for example, Butterworth reproduces the following recipe:

How to make a man appeare on a flame burning without any harme.

To doo this, take Brimstone, Orpiment, and common Oyle, of these make an ointment, with the which anoint thy garment all about, & thy head and handes, and after light the same & it wil burne all at once without harme. Also take iuice of Adders tongue, ye iuice of March Mallowes, & the white of an Egge, these mix together, annointing therewith all about thy body, and then cast the fine powder of Brimston on the same, setting it ouer a fire, & it wil strangely burne, and neither harme handes nor garment anointed therewith.⁶

It seems likely that the ambassador of *The Battle of Alcazar* and the priests of the sun in the *Looking-Glass* would have found such an ointment helpful; larger quantities might have been useful to the actor playing the evil son Radagon in the *Looking-Glass* when '*a flame of fire appeareth from beneath, and RADAGON is swallowed*' (3.2.166).

We arrive here at an apparent preoccupation in the Strange's repertory with human immolation. Like Radagon, another character in a play performed by Strange's Men was apparently immolated on the stage. I say apparently because in this case we have no text, only the precious and puzzling 'Platt of the Secounde Parte of the Seuen Deadlie Sinns', a stage-house document that contains the names of the same actors who identify themselves as Strange's Men in a letter to the privy council, usually dated to later 1592. *The Second Part of the Seven Deadly Sins* is a three-in-one play that represents the sin of Sloth in the story of the Assyrian prince Sardanapalus. Standard sources for the story may suggest to us the gist of what the plot's entrances and exits are enacting.

According to *Cooper's Chronicle* (1560; *STC*: 15219), Sardanapalus was an effeminate sybarite who, defeated by the Mede captain Arbaces, 'bovrned hym selfe with all his delicacies, (which he esteemed more then all his empire) in a great fyre, onely in that shewynge hym selfe to be a man' (33v). George Whetstone's *English Mirror* (1586; *STC*: 25336) likewise reports that 'the effeminate Sardanapalus ... fired his pallace, and in the same burned himselfe and his concubines' (211).

In the 'plat' itself, the final appearance of Sardanapalus (played by Richard Burbage) is marked by the instruction 'Enter Arbactus pursuing Sardanapalus and the Ladies fly. After Enter Sarda^{wth} as many Jewels robes and Gold as he can cary'.⁷ Perhaps in this performance Sardanapalus was merely running with the loot, though Cooper's claim that 'he bovrned hym selfe *with all his delicacies*' (a 1654 English translation of Justinus has it that 'he threw himself and his riches into the fire', sig. B4) provides a clue to the action Burbage may have performed with the 'Jewels robes and Gold'. That Sardanapalus was not just running toward an *off*-stage immolation but possibly burning himself *on*-stage is tantalizingly suggested by Thomas Beard's account of the story in his *Theatre of Gods Iudgements* (1597; *STC*: 1659). Beard, whose work is late enough to be drawing its account *from* the play rather than providing the source *for* it, reports that Sardanapalus 'returned to a tower in his pallace, which ... he set on fire and was consumed therein' (359–60). In defence of a possible onstage immolation we might note the possible precedent for such a spectacular scene in the apparent on-stage immolation of Marlowe's Dido by the Children of the Chapel Royal just a few years before. Marlowe became prominent in Strange's repertory, and we will be encountering him again.

The more interesting and plentiful immolations in the Strange's repertory – whether enacted or merely threatened – are not the suicides or divine retribu-

tions mentioned so far, but those inflicted by human beings on others in the course of tyranny or treachery. It is here that in playing with fire Strange's Men were practising dangerously by touching more directly on the spectacular violence of the contemporary Elizabethan world.

I would like to include among my examples the concluding moment of *The Jew of Malta*, when Ferneze opens the trap door that plunges Barabas into the boiling cauldron. Not immolation, exactly, but certainly a 'hot death':

now begins the extremity of heat
To pinch me with intolerable pangs. (5.5.87–8)

A later list of properties belonging to Henslowe includes "Item, I cauderm for the Jewe."⁸ If Henslowe already possessed a cauldron while Strange's Men were at the Rose, it would have been well used, and not just because *The Jew of Malta* was among the company's most frequently performed plays. The company had a second play, called 'Bendo and Richardo', that almost certainly required a cauldron. No known playtext survives, but Greg identified the source as the tale of 'Bindo and Ricciardo', a novella translated from *Il Pecorone* in William Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*.⁹ In the story, Bindo, a Florentine architect, builds a treasure-house for the duke of Venice, conveniently designing into the plan a secret passageway through which he crawls nightly to steal from the duke. Noting the depletion of his treasure, the duke discovers the passageway by having his men burn straw in the treasure-house and follow the draft of the smoke to the passageway. He then

caused to be brought into the chamber a caldron of pitche, and placed it directly under the hole, commaunding that a fyre should be kept day and night under the caldron, that the same might continually boyle ... It came to pass that ... remouing the stone, [Bindo] went in as he did before, and fell into the caldron of pitche (which continually was boyling there) vp to the waste.¹⁰

Like the death of Barabas, this again is 'hot death' rather than immolation; but our sense of the pyrotechnical possibilities ought to be informed by Butterworth's account of the use of pyrotechnics and red smoke to simulate boiling cauldrons in plays like the *Croxton Play of the Sacrament* and the Mondane play of *Antichrist*. In the latter, the players are instructed in a note to 'make water boil in the cauldron ... and do it with fireworks ("fusées") without heating the water in the best possible way' (Butterworth, 51).

With these cauldron deaths, neither self-imposed nor divinely sanctioned but resulting from the tyranny or treachery of rulers, we come closer to the

scenes of real or threatened judicial execution by fire that seem to have figured prominently in Strange's repertory. In Greene's *Orlando Furioso*, staged at the Rose in the spring of 1592, Angelica is threatened with immolation:

We will have her punisht by the lawes of France,
 To end her lust in flames of fire ...
 [Her] soul shall vanish vp in fire,
 As Semele, when Iuno will'd the trull
 To entertain the glory of her love. (ll. 1451–2, 1470–4)¹¹

Only the last-minute intervention of Orlando spares her from the stake. A similar situation occurs at the end of *John of Bordeaux*, when Rossaline, the long-suffering wife of the exiled John of Bordeaux, is accused along with Friar Bacon of conjuring against the life of the Emperor and sentenced to death by fire:

you seek my death by spells and maiecke force
 but burning fageets shall inchaunt yo^r lines; (ll. 1029–30)¹²

Only the appearance of a champion can save her from the fire, a point several times reiterated in a protracted execution scene that waits melodramatically upon the last-minute arrival of John of Bordeaux: 'rossalin prepayer fo^r thou shalt die ... yf no one com to patranage her casae [sic] / then let her die' (ll. 1236, 1305–6). There are no stage directions in either *Orlando* or *John of Bordeaux* calling for stake or flame to be present, but a lighted torch or two would have given urgency to these melodramatic situations, which derive ultimately from works like the *Romans de Claris et Laris*, where Sagramors saves a lady from the stake, or the *Perceval* of Chrétien de Troyes, where Gawain does the same.¹³ A slightly different melodramatic scenario occurs in Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy*, when the Portuguese counsellor Alexandro, falsely accused of slaying Prince Balthasar, is brought on-stage under guard and ordered to execution by the Viceroy:

Bring forth that daring fiend
 And let him die for his accursed deed ...
 No more, I say! to the tortures! when!
 Bind him, and burn his body in those flames
They bind him to the stake.

That shall prefigure those unquenchèd fires
Of Phlegeton preparèd for his soul

Enter AMBASSADOR.

AMB: Stay, hold a while ... (3.1.47–58)

Another cliffhanger, this one explicitly near calamity in the stage directions, which declare, once the ambassador delivers his exonerating news: '*They unbind him.*'

For reasons about which it is interesting to speculate, on-stage judicial executions are not all that common in the period, and judicial executions by fire are even rarer still. It would seem, then, that by the standards of the general norm Strange's Men were edging right up to, if not past, the limits of acceptability. The unfortunate Pedringano is hanged on-stage in *The Spanish Tragedy* (the stage direction says, '*They turn him off*'), and so is John Lincoln in *The Book of Sir Thomas More*, a play which also takes the saint himself right up onto the scaffold and face-to-face with the executioner before the play abruptly ends.

If Strange's Men were being controversial in their spectacular uses of fire, immolation, and judicial executions,¹⁴ it is fair to ask what the particular valences of stage immolations would have been in the early 1590s. The most vivid association of such scenes would surely have been with the mythical images and narratives of John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*, the foundational account of the dark age of tyranny and religious persecution from which the better days of the Elizabethan reign and church had emerged. In the awesome scenes recorded in Foxe's 'Book of Martyrs', a Catholic theatre of punishment and purgation did battle with a Protestant theatre of spiritual commitment. The fiery scenes staged by Strange's Men may well have recalled specific scenes in Foxe's book: – Rogers washing his hands in the fire 'as if it had been colde water' (1583, f 1037); the persecution of Rose Allin, as the pursuivant Edmund Tyrrel, taking a 'candle from her, held her wrist and the burning candle under her hand, burning cross-wise over the back thereof, till the very sinews cracked asunder' (1583, f 2006); or the Lollard craftsman who in 1410 was 'caried into a market place without the city to be included in a pipe or tunne, for so much as Cherillus Bul was not then in ure amongst the bishops' (1583, f 172). That Shakespeare actually cast his eyes over the gruesome illustrations of these events is evident in Prince Hal's referring to Falstaff as 'that roasted Manningtree ox' (*1 Henry IV*, 2.4.452). While there is nothing in Foxe's prose that likens Oldcastle's execution to the roasting of an ox, the unusual manner of his death as represented in the accompanying illustration

(1583, f 277), as Paul White has suggested,¹⁵ may have given the analogy to Shakespeare.

In the early 1590s such scenes might only have seemed like something from a darker age, or the sort of things that happened in ‘another country’, at the hands of crazed tyrants like Ferneze or the Portuguese viceroy. According to the Elizabethan Act of Supremacy, the anti-Lollard heresy laws were repealed; ‘only those who brought the authority of the crown in question by refusing to accept the royal supremacy were liable to suffer death, and they not as heretics but as traitors, whose punishment did not belong to the church courts.’ Cases of religious deviance were no longer tried under the old heresy laws, but referred to an ecclesiastical court of High Commission, whose powers were only vaguely specified and whose use of penalties only included death as a remote theoretical possibility.¹⁶

But there were important catches and exceptions. Foxe himself had attempted to intervene with the queen and privy council when five London Anabaptists were condemned to the stake in 1575; his plea that burning heretics was a popish practice and that the heretics might instead be branded, banished, or sent to the gallows failed to prevent the burning of two of them in Smithfield.¹⁷ Four heretics were burned in Norwich between 1579 and 1589; the burning of the last of these, the ‘Arian’ Francis Kett, in January 1589 was recounted in a 1590 treatise detailing how Kett clapped his hands and ‘cried nothing but blessed be God ... until the fire had consumed all his neather partes, and untill he was stifled with smoke’.¹⁸

In addition to its continuing use in heresy cases against Anabaptists and anti-Trinitarians, burning also remained the standard punishment for women convicted of a capital offence of treason. It was considered a mitigation of the standard punishment for men, which involved being drawn on a hurdle, hanged, castrated, and disembowelled while still alive, having one’s entrails thrown in the fire, one’s body quartered, and the pieces boiled in a cauldron and hung up on public display. The punishment of death by fire applied as well to women convicted of capital offences of ‘petty treason’, ie, women convicted of killing their husbands, and witches convicted of designs against the lives of men. At least five condemned women were burned alive in London in 1590–4. As it happens, a fire was awaiting a convicted woman during the spring of 1592, when Strange’s Men were playing at the Rose. Anne Brewen, the wife of a London goldsmith, had confessed to conspiring with her lover to poison her husband. After her confession, she was sent ‘into the countrey to be deliuered of her childe’ and was then subsequently returned to London and

sentenced to be burned in Smithfield. The sentence was carried out on 28 June 1592, five days after the closing of the London theatres. The sensational case provoked at least three popular ballads, as well as a pamphlet whose title page made use of a woodcut of the martyrdom of Cecily Orme from the pages of Foxe. On the basis of a handwritten name entered at the end of the pamphlet, F.S. Boas attributed the pamphlet to Thomas Kyd.¹⁹ If Kyd was writing for *Strange's Men* when the theatres closed on 23 June, he would have been looking for other ways to use his literary talent.

But perhaps more important than the treatment of crime was the treatment of dissent. In addition to its continuing use of fire against heretics, the Elizabethan regime was quite vigorous in the 1580's and early 1590s in its pursuit of religious minorities under the capital treason laws. The execution of the Jesuit missionaries that began in the 1580s produced its own spectacular literature of martyrdom, including Richard Verstegan's *Theatrum Crudelitatem Haereticorum Nostri Temporis* (1587; reissued 1592), where woodcuts showed entrails being burned, and cauldrons boiling down the quartered pieces of the bodies. Stow mentions that executions of seminary priests had actually been staged 'at the Theater' and 'nigh the Theater' in 1588. Audiences not attending 'Muly Mulocco' at the Rose on 20 February 1592 might have instead attended the execution of Robert Pormorte in the west end of Paul's churchyard.

Catholics, of course, were not the only victims of the authorities, and the pursuit of Puritans under treason law in the 1590s was perhaps the best reason for thinking that the days of Foxe had returned, and that once again the religious enemies of the bishops would become victims of the state. On 28 July 1591, a Protestant fanatic named William Hacket was executed in Cheapside, just two weeks after he had mounted a cart on the same spot and declared himself the Messiah and king of Europe. Earlier in Elizabeth's reign, self-proclaimed Messiahs like Hacket were usually treated as 'brainsick and frantic'. But in 1591 the case was different, as fear of the Puritan movement and the triumphs of Martin Marprelate – along with a more general fear of conspiracies and conventicles – had produced an atmosphere of crisis and paranoia; the significance of Hacket's case was 'probably inflated by the bishops in an effort to discredit the Puritan movement as a whole'.²⁰ In the spring months before Hacket's execution, as the result of an investigation launched in the religious court of High Commission, three of the accused Marprelate conspirators were sentenced to execution; two later recanted and were reprieved, and a third died in prison. That same spring, amid controversy about its potentially abusive powers, the court of High Commission turned over to the Star Chamber its investigation of leading Presbyterians in the hope that they would receive 'an

exemplary punishment to the terror of others'.²¹ When *Strange's Men* were performing at the Rose in 1592 and 1593, the fate of the imprisoned Presbyterians, already crushed and cowed, had yet to be determined. The Separatists Henry Barrow and John Greenwood, not so lucky as the Presbyterians (all of whom were eventually released), were executed in April 1593, as was John Penry, the alleged creator of Martin Marprelate and the first Puritan martyr, the following spring.²² Though created specifically to deal with religious offences, and to demonstrate that the state was not in the business of persecuting religious minorities or applying capital sentences, the court of High Commission, by turning religious cases over to the Star Chamber, may have looked in 1592–3 like the sign of a return to the terrible days recounted in the pages and plates of Foxe.

Without insisting on any single topical reference, I have tried to sketch in general terms an atmosphere of repression and paranoia that was part of what *Strange's Men* were living with in the early 1590s – and not just an atmosphere, since the repression appears to have finally reached out and touched two of *Strange's* best playwrights, Kyd and Marlowe, quite directly in the spring of 1593. It is possible that the pyrotechnical effects of *Strange's Men* were simply the reflection of an older kind of theatre focused on spectacle or that they were the coincidental result of the company's having a pyrotechnician among its personnel. There are signs that some of the plays I have mentioned – Greene's *Orlando Furioso*, *The Looking Glass for London*, and possibly the Sardanapalus play – had earlier been in the repertory of the Queen's Men, and there are other plays in the Queen's Men's repertory, such as *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, *The Old Wive's Tale*, and *The Cobbler's Prophecy* that also call for spectacular pyrotechnical effects.

But that *Strange's Men* were consciously encouraging reflection on the pyrotechnical features of their repertory is perhaps confirmed in the newer and more daring plays of Marlowe and Shakespeare, where the issue of audience response to spectacles of violence is most explicitly foregrounded. The language of pyromania and the threat of immolation pervades *The Jew of Malta*, from the prologue's mention of the brazen bull in which the tyrant Phalaris roasted his victims alive to Barabas' threat to sacrifice his daughter 'on a pile of wood'. The first irony of the death of Barabas is that the intended executioner becomes the victim; but a deeper irony follows, as Marlowe catches the audience up short in what must have been their enthusiastic cheers by having the dying Jew address both his on-stage audience and the theatregoers at the Rose: 'help me, Christians! / Governor, why *stand you all so pitiless?*' (5.5.69–70; italics mine).

Shakespeare includes sacrificial immolation as the originary act of cruelty in the endlessly cruel *Titus Andronicus*, a play that the 1594 quarto assigns in the first instance to ‘Derby’s Men’, the new name of Strange’s when Ferdinando Stanley became the fifth earl of Derby in September 1593. But there is a surprising decency in this play’s suppression of spectacle in favour of the grim report: ‘Alarbus’ limbs are lopt, / And intrals feede the sacrificing fire, / Whose smoke like incense, doth perfume the sky.’ There is decency too, in the offstage immolation of Shakespeare’s Joan of Arc in *1 Henry VI*, where Shakespeare suppresses the spectacle but gives the audience all the grim detail it needs to know about the gruesome fate of Joan – and about the procedures used in the Marian persecutions – when he has the noble Warwick suggest a mitigation to her penalty:

... hark ye, sirs: because she is a maid,
Spare for no faggots, let there be enow.
Place barrels of pitch upon the fatal stake,
So that her torture may be shortened. (5.4.55–8)

Even as Shakespeare moves Joan’s immolation off the stage, his emphasis on Warwick’s act of mitigation reflects a contemporary ambivalence about the cruel disfigurement of women’s bodies on the scaffold. Joan’s off-stage immolation extends the logic of mitigation that made fire itself a veil drawn over a gruesome deed: ‘for as decency due to the sex forbids the exposing and publicly mangling their bodies, their sentence is to be drawn to the gallows, and there to be burnt alive.’²³ Yet Warwick’s call for faggots and barrels of pitch is horrid enough, perhaps especially to those who had turned the pages of Foxe; Joan’s plea for mercy on the grounds that she is pregnant wins her no reprieve, and her parting curse on England is a stunning reminder of what the executioners perpetrate upon themselves:

Darkness and the gloomy shade of death
Environ *you*, till mischief and despair
Drive you to break your necks or *hang yourselves!* (5.4.89–91; italics mine)

In the innovative work of Marlowe and Shakespeare we see a more deliberate reflection on the barbarities with which Strange’s Men were playing, even as those barbarities were moved off-stage. Marlowe’s *The Massacre at Paris* was a new play when Strange’s Men made what appears to have been their final appearance at the Rose in the winter of 1592–3. The play spares few barbarities in its spectacle of suicidal civil war, martyrdom, and fanatical religious perse-

cution. All manners of torture and death are depicted. But as in *1 Henry VI*, immolation is a possibility quite specifically averted. Two members of the Catholic mob debate what to do with the Lord Admiral's body:

1. Why, let us burn him for a heretic.
2. O no, his body will infect the fire, and the fire the air, and so we shall be poison'd with him.

A very Marlovian moment, as the purest hatred coincides with the truest revelation: we breathe the smoke of those we burn. It would appear that Marlowe and Shakespeare, making the political meaning of fire all the more apparent while removing it from the stage, were beginning to transform the spectacular pyrotechnics of *Strange's Men* into a different kind of drama, one at once artistically more subtle and politically more sophisticated.

LAWRENCE MANLEY

Notes

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- 1 Five of the ten 'principall Comedians' listed in the 1616 folio edition of Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour* as belonging to 'the then Lord Chamberlain his Servants' in 1598 (Kemp, Pope, Heminges, Phillips, and Bryan) are also named as five of the six members of Lord Strange's Men (the sixth being Edward Alleyn) in a privy council minute of 6 May 1593 authorizing the company to perform outside London (E.K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, vol 4 (Oxford, 1923), 314); four of the six names in the 1593 minute (Kemp, Pope, Heminges, and Bryan) also appear among the five named payees (the fifth was Shakespeare) for court performances by the Lord Chamberlain's Men 1594–9; at least six of those named in the 1616 Jonson folio (Pope, Phillips, Bryan, Burbage, Duke and Sly) can be found in the plot of *2 Seven Deadly Sins*, discussed below. See Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, vol 2, 198, and Scott McMillin, 'Building Stories: Greg, Fleay, and the Plot of *2 Seven Deadly Sins*', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 4 (1989), 53–62.
 - 2 *Henslowe's Diary*, R.A. Foakes and R.T. Rickert (eds) (Cambridge, 1961), 16–20.
 - 3 Among the obstacles to studies of company repertories is the problem of attribution that arises from the vagueness of a document like Henslowe's diary. Henslowe's 'fryer bacvne' may have been Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, but in view of the 1594 title page attributing that play to the Queen's

- Men, it is perhaps more likely that *John of Bordeaux*, possibly belonging to Strange's Men and/or to Henslowe, is the play referred to in the diary.
- 4 *The Battle of Alcazar*, John Yoklavich (ed), *The Life and Works of George Peele*, Charles Tyler Prouty (ed), vol 2 (New Haven, 1961), ll. 1175–81.
 - 5 I cite from the edition of Russell Fraser and Norman Rabkin in *Drama of The English Renaissance*, Volume 1: *The Tudor Period* (New York, 1976).
 - 6 Thomas Hyll, *A Briefe and pleasaunt Treatise, Intituled: Naturall and Artificiall Conclusions* (1586), sig. Dv., quoted in Philip Butterworth, *Theatre of Fire: Special Effects in Early English and Scottish Theatre* (London, 1998), 29. Butterworth also quotes a recipe from *The Book of Secrets of Albertus Magnus* (trans c 1550): 'When thou wilt that thou seem all inflamed, or set on fire from thy head unto thy feet and not be hurt. Take white Great Mallows or Hollyhock, mix them with the white of eggs; after, anoint thy body with it and let it be until it be dried up, and after anoint thee with Alum, and afterward cast on it small Brimstone beaten unto powder, for the fire is inflamed on it, and hurteth not, and if thou do thus upon the palm of thy hand thou shalt be able to hold the fire without hurt' (30).
 - 7 I quote from the transcription of T.J. King, *Casting Shakespeare's Plays: London Actors and their Roles 1590–1642* (Cambridge, 1992), 259.
 - 8 *Henslowe's Diary*, 321.
 - 9 Walter Greg (ed), *Henslowe's Diary*. Part 2. Commentary (London, 1908), 12; Greg does not address the content of the tale or its possible relation to Henslowe's 'cavderne'.
 - 10 *The Palace of Pleasure*, Joseph Jacobs (ed), vol 2 (London, 1890), 10.
 - 11 I cite from the edition in *The Life and Complete Works ... of Robert Greene, M.A.*, Alexander B. Grosart (ed) (London, 1881–6), vol 13.
 - 12 *John of Bordeaux or the Second Part of Friar Bacon*, W.L. Renwick (ed) (Oxford, 1935).
 - 13 See Camille Naish, *Death Comes to the Maiden: Sex and Execution 1431–1933* (London, 1991), 9–10.
 - 14 We know from the evidence of the censor's hand that *The Booke of Sir Thomas More* was a dangerous play, and there is other evidence that the company courted controversy. At the height of the Marprelate controversy, in November 1589, the lord mayor of London complained to Burghley that when he instructed 'the L. Admeralles and the L. Straunge's players ... to forbere playinge ... the L. Admeralles players very dutifullie obeyed, but the others in very Contemptuous manner departing from me, went to the Crosse keys and played that afternoon, to the greate offence of the better sorte that knewe they were prohibited by order' (Sir John Harte, lord mayor, to Burghley, 6 Novem-

ber 1589, quoted in Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, vol 4, 305). McMillin has suggested that after anti-alien riots had led to the closing of the theatres in June 1592, the Rose was kept closed longer than the other theatres and Strange's Men were deliberately restricted to three performances a week in the distant theatre at Newington Butts. In this he follows Chambers' inferences from the privy council minute closing all London theaters on 23 June 1592; the petition of Strange's Men to 'return to our plaiehowse on Banckside' c July 1592; a petition of the Watermen of the Bankside from about the same date petitioning that Henslowe 'have playinge at his saide howse **during suche tyme as others have**' (thus possibly implying that other theaters had been allowed to reopen); and the absence of any record of Strange's Men playing in London until their court appearances in December 1592. See McMillin, *The Elizabethan Theater and 'The Booke of Sir Thomas More'* (Ithaca, 1987), 68–72, and Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, vol 4, 310–12.

- 15 Paul White, 'Shakespeare's Oldcastle: Religion, Polemic, and the Dynamics of Theatre Patronage in Late Elizabethan England', at the REED conference on 'Elizabethans in Crisis: Drama, Art, and Politics in the 1590s', Toronto, October 1999. On the 'theatricality' of the martyrdoms as represented by Foxe and their possible impact on the *protestant* nature of Elizabethan drama, see Huston Diehl, *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage: Protestantism and the Popular Theater in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, 1997).
- 16 Ralph Houlbrooke, *Church Courts and the People during the English Reformation, 1520–1570* (Oxford, 1979), 214–15; Roland G. Usher, *The Rise and Fall of the Court of High Commission* (1913; rpt Oxford, 1968), 94–6.
- 17 John Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England, 1558–1689* (London, 2000), 100.
- 18 William Burton, *David's Evidence* (1590), 125, cited in Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration*, 102; see also Dewey D. Wallace, Jr, 'From Eschatology to Arian Heresy: The Case of Francis Kett (d. 1589)', *Harvard Theological Review* 67.4 (1974), 459–74.
- 19 *The trueth of the most wicked and secret murthering of Iohn Brewen, Goldsmith of London, committed by his owne wife* (John Kidd, 1590), in F.S. Boas (ed), *The Works of Thomas Kyd* (1901; rpt Oxford, 1955), 285–93; the reasons for suspecting that the handwritten name of Thomas Kyd may be a Payne Collier forgery are set forth in Robert Gorrell, 'John Payne Collier and *The Murder of Iohn Brewen*', *Modern Language Quarterly* (June 1942), 441–4.
- 20 Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York, 1971), 134.
- 21 Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Berkeley, 1967), 418.

- 22 Leland H. Carlson, *Martin Marprelate, Gentleman: Master Job Throckmorton Laid Open in his Colours* (San Marino: Huntington Library, 1981), 72–81; Donald J. McGinn, *John Penry and the Marprelate Controversy* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1966), 134.
- 23 John Laurence, *A History of Capital Punishment* (New York, 1963), 9; see also Naish, *Death Comes to the Maiden*, 9, and Frances E. Dolan, “‘Gentlemen, I have one more thing to say’: Women on Scaffolds in England, 1563–1680”, *Modern Philology* 92 (1994), 166.

Pembroke’s Men in 1592–3, Their Repertory and Touring Schedule

Some years ago, during a seminar on theatre history at the annual meeting of the Shakespeare Association of America, someone asked plaintively, ‘What did bad companies play in the provinces?’ and Leeds Barroll quipped, ‘Bad quartos’. The belief behind the joke – that ‘bad’ quartos and failing companies went together – has seemed specifically true of the earl of Pembroke’s players in 1592–3. Pembroke’s Men played in the provinces, and plays later published that advertised their ownership have been assigned to the category of texts known as ‘bad’ quartos. Even so, the company had reasons to be considered ‘good’. They enjoyed the patronage of Henry Herbert, the earl of Pembroke, and gave two of the five performances at court during Christmas, 1592–3 (26 December, 6 January). Their players, though probably young, were talented and committed to the profession: Richard Burbage, who would become a star with the Chamberlain’s/King’s Men, was still acting within a year of his death in 1619; William Sly acted with the Chamberlain’s/King’s Men until his death in 1608; Humphrey Jeffes acted with the Admiral’s/Prince’s/Palsgrave’s Men, 1597–1615; Robert Pallant and Robert Lee, who played with Worcester’s/Queen Anne’s Men, were still active in the 1610s.

Yet something happened to Pembroke’s Men in the summer of 1593 that did not happen to Strange’s Men, who had played at court also the previous winter. In a letter to Edward Alleyn dated 28 September 1593, Philip Henslowe said that Pembroke’s Men were ‘all at home and hauffe ben t<his> v or sixe weackes for they cane not saue ther carges <w>th trauell ... & weare fayne to pane the<r> parell for ther carge’.¹ Theatre historians, taking Henslowe literally, have assumed that Pembroke’s Men could not make enough money on the road to support their operation. In a time when scholars believed that the very act of touring marked a company as financially desperate,

it was unnecessary to look further than touring itself to identify the villain in the collapse of Pembroke's fortunes. However, times have changed. Scholars in the Records of Early English Drama project (REED) have demonstrated unequivocally that touring was a routine aspect of theatrical commerce, that some companies sustained themselves for decades in the provinces solely by touring, and that companies continued to tour even after they had secured a playhouse in London.

What, then, was the cause of Pembroke's return to London in mid-July 1593, reportedly short of money? If there wasn't a problem with patronage, or the quality of acting, what might the culpable factor or factors have been? Plausible villains are the repertory and the company's specific touring circuit, but I suggest that neither was demonstrably a commercial liability. As I will argue below, the four plays generally agreed to belong to Pembroke's Men in 1592–3 – *Edward II*, *The First Part of the Contention of the Two Famous Houses of Yorke & Lancaster (1 Contention)*, *The True Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke (The True Tragedy)*, and *The Taming of A Shrew (A Shrew)* – fulfil the commercial and theatrical criteria of a profitable repertory, whether in London or the provinces, as I understand those criteria to be. Furthermore, the payments made by provincial officials in 1592–3 suggest that touring stops by Pembroke's Men were sufficiently frequent, conventional, and lucrative for them to have supported themselves by playing.

According to Scott McMillin, the 'sudden appearance [of Pembroke's Men] in about 1592 resulted from shifts of personnel from other companies'.² McMillin proposes that Shakespeare's *Henry VI*, parts 2 and 3, 'were designed for an organization of ample resources and were then abridged into Q form because those resources, in the reorganization of London companies, were somewhat curtailed in all components: fewer principal actors, a leading boy of lesser range, fewer supernumeraries'.³ He constructs doubling charts for the history quartos and determines that 'Pembroke's men seem to have consisted of eleven principal adults, four boys, and approximately five supernumeraries'.⁴ David Bevington suggests a similar number for *Edward II*: 'ten or so company members, additional hired actors, and two to four boys'.⁵ *A Shrew*, by McMillin's count, requires only fifteen players.⁶ When McMillin speaks of a company 'somewhat curtailed', however, he is not thinking necessarily of a touring company. As he points out, the costumes required for twenty players would not be easy to haul around, and the number of supernumeraries remains high. He thus invites consideration of the London phase of the company's

existence, that is, the months on either side of the performance dates at court in the winter of 1592–3.

As it happens, Philip Henslowe provided a playlist in his book of accounts for Strange's Men during that very winter. The list is short (twelve play titles over twenty-nine playing dates, 29 December 1592 through 1 February 1593), but perhaps it may provide a commercial context for Pembroke's Men at that time. There are some bases for comparison. McMillin suggests that Strange's Men supplied Pembroke's Men with players.⁷ Like Pembroke's, Strange's Men appeared at court in the winter of 1592–3; their three shows completed the holiday schedule of performances. Both companies acquired plays by Marlowe and Shakespeare. Conjecturally, then, the offerings of Strange's Men may suggest patterns in the slim repertory of Pembroke's Men.

According to Henslowe's list, Strange's Men had plays that represented many of the popular generic forms of the times. They had both the heroic and villain kinds of revenge play with *The Spanish Tragedy* and *The Jew of Malta*. They had two kinds of English history play: the chronicle history, in *Henry VI*; and the moral play, in *A Knack to Know a Knave*. Also, they had a variety of foreign histories: the classical play, in 'Titus and Vespasian'; the struggle for Mediterranean empire in part one of 'Tamar Cham' and 'Muly Mollocco'; and the European history, in Marlowe's newest contribution, *The Massacre at Paris*.⁸ The comedies were equally diverse, including *Friar Bacon*, a magician play; 'Sir John Mandeville', a 'wonders' narrative; and possibly two romantic stories in 'The Jealous Comedy' and 'The Comedy of Cosmo'. Further, the offerings of Strange's Men illustrate several commercial strategies that would become standard business practice throughout the 1590s. For example, several of their plays are duplicates in some sense of successful plays in the repertories of other companies: *Friar Bacon*, of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* in the repertory of the Queen's Men; and 'Tamar Cham', of *Tamburlaine* in the repertory of the Admiral's Men. *The Spanish Tragedy*, even though its prequel is not in evidence in the 1592–3 winter repertory, nonetheless represents the popular taste for serial drama, as does part one of 'Tamar Cham'. Likewise the scheduling of *The Jew of Malta*, part one of 'Tamar Cham', and 'Muly Mollocco' on the consecutive afternoons of 18–20 January suggests that Strange's Men were exploring the marketing value of performing plays with similar topical appeal as if they were related parts.⁹

On the issues of popular types and commercial strategies, the repertory of Pembroke's Men looks very competitive. Control of the English throne is the presiding theme of *Edward II*, *1 Contention*, and *The True Tragedy*, but the plays have rival plots that expand the definition of the generic chronicle play.

Acts of rebellion imperil the kingdom at every level: a king and his lover (Edward and Gaveston), a queen and hers (Margaret and Suffolk), ambitious barons (Mortimer et al; York et al), a duchess and her flirtation with the spirit world, and treasonous commoners. Revenge increasingly drives characterization, and even children grow up to be revengers. Young Edward, little more than a mute in his early appearances in *Edward II*, commits his mother to the tower for conspiracy in the final scene and sentences Mortimer to be hanged and quartered. Young Clifford in *1 Contention* is a bloodthirsty adult in *The True Tragedy*; he kills the son of his father's killer and regrets that he has not more at swordpoint: 'Had I thy brethren here, their liues and thine / Were not reuenge sufficient for me' (A8).¹⁰ *A Shrew* illustrates the inclination of companies to clone popular materials in the repertoires of other companies. Whatever the nature of that duplication, it seems clear that more than one 'shrew' play existed, and Pembroke's Men played one of them.¹¹ Pembroke's two plays about the Wars of the Roses illustrate as well the commercial appeal of serials. Literally separated from its part one, part two of the sequence was retitled as the first part: *The First Part of the Contention of the Two Famous Houses of Yorke & Lancaster*. Its second part capitalized on another recent fashion in the language of titles when it became known as *The 'True Tragedie' of Richard Duke of Yorke* (quotes added for emphasis). Thus the first part of Pembroke's serial play advertised itself as a competitor with the *Henry VI* in the repertory of Strange's/Derby's Men, and its second part with *The 'True Tragedie' of Richard the Third* (quotes added for emphasis) in the repertory of the Queen's Men.

With so few texts as evidence, it is risky to conjecture about the theatrical appeal of plays in the repertory of Pembroke's Men. Nonetheless, certain stage moments are obvious: for example, the confrontational scenes between the king and his adversaries at court and on the battlefield, scenes of illicit love, the onstage smothering of Duke Humphrey and impalement of Edward II, the conjured spirits, the duchess's public penance, and the vision of the three suns. In *1 Contention* an additional appeal is the number of episodes in which commoners and noblemen are contrasted. The Jack Cade rebellion is the most extended instance, but there is also the exposed con game of the blind man, who is whipped until he can see, then 'whipt through euery Market Towne til he come at Barwicke where he was borne' (C2).¹² A reversal of this theme is the fight-to-the-death between Peter and his master, the armourer. Drunken supporters of each combatant watch this spectacle, but equally interested on-lookers are King Henry VI, Queen Margaret, Suffolk, Buckingham, Cardinal Beauford, York, Salisbury, and Warwick. Unlike the blind man, whose

serendipitous encounter with his betters (Duke Humphrey) is ruinous, Peter, the armourer's apprentice, succeeds beyond expectation. He delivers a fatal blow to his master, who then confesses his treason; thus doubly exonerated, Peter leaves the stage with the royal party at the invitation of the king himself: 'Come fellow, follow vs for thy reward' (D2).

Another theatrical feature of Pembroke's history plays is the number of heads on pikes. The audience does not see Gaveston's head but hears of it from Mortimer, who taunts Gaveston that his head will be sent to Edward; Arundel brings the actual report of the murder: 'Warwick in ambush lay, / ... and in a trench / Strake off his head' (3.2.111–20).¹³ Edward promises to 'have heads and lives' in revenge (3.2.132). Such a beheading is the fate of Lancaster and Warwick, but it is Mortimer's head on the order of Edward III that the audience finally sees, part of the funeral decor with the hearse of Edward II attended by the young king in mourning robes as the play ends. In *1 Contention* and *The True Tragedy* the audience sees six heads onstage. While the Cade rebellion rages outside, Queen Margaret carries Suffolk's head around the castle, to the consternation of the king: 'How now Madam, still lamenting and mourning for Suffolkes death' (G). After one battle, Cade's Men come onstage with a pair of heads, those of Lord Say and Sir James Cromer. Cade's head is itself soon displayed, and the king relishes a close look: 'Oh let me see that head ... / A visage sterne, cole blacke his curled locks. / Deepe trenched furrowes in his frowning brow' (H). *The True Tragedy* has two heads. Crookeback Richard, addressing his fellow Yorkists, holds Somerset's head aloft and derisively asks it to report his successes in the field: 'Speake thou for me and tell them what I did' (A3v). When the audience sees the head of York, it is a 'piteous spectacle' on the gates of his own city (B4). The sight of this head is in fact closure to a confrontation between Queen Margaret and the duke of York that has been building since York declared his ambition in a soliloquy at the end of scene 1 of *1 Contention* ('A day will come when Yorke shall claime his owne' [A4]). York rehearses his 'right and title' for Salisbury, Warwick, and the audience in scene 7 (C4), and his eldest and youngest sons enter in scene 22 to add muscle to their father's cause. But in scene 4 of *The True Tragedy* Queen Margaret and her troops disarm York in the field. The exchange of insults that follows, the humiliating gestures of the bloody handkerchief and paper crown, and the gang stabbing turn this severed head into something more powerful than gruesome decoration.¹⁴

Before and after their court appearances in the winter of 1592–3, Pembroke's Men gave performances in provincial towns. The chronological order of these visits is unclear, but Sally-Beth MacLean offers a geographical order

that enables the company's provincial visits to be understood in a given time frame.¹⁵ Therefore, with the caveat that the chart below organizes performances according to MacLean's circuits but not according to the calendar, I offer the following as evidence of Pembroke's business on tour in 1592–3:¹⁶

Circuit	Town	Date of Payment	Players' Reward
East Anglia	King's Lynn	1592–3	20s
	Ipswich	1592–3	13s 4d
Southeast	Rye	July 1593	13s 4d
Southwest	Bath	June–Aug, 1592	16s
Midlands	Coventry	Nov 1593	30s
West Midlands	Ludlow	1592–3	20s
	Shrewsbury	1592–3	40s
	Bewdley	1593–4	20s
Northeast	Leicester	1592–3	14s 'more than was gaythered'
Northwest	York	June 1593	40s

Configured in this way, the touring stops by Pembroke's Men reflect several normative aspects of provincial behaviour. For one, the players were highly visible in the western region where their patron resided.¹⁷ A second is the payments the players received: the sums of 20s or more at performances in the patron's area of influence compares favourably with rewards given to companies with royal patronage, namely the Queen's Men. A third is evident in a comparison of Pembroke's touring with that of Strange's Men. At some time during the 1592–3 stretch, both companies visited towns in the circuits of East Anglia (Ipswich), the southeast (Rye), the southwest (Bath), the Midlands (Coventry), and West Midlands (Shrewsbury). For the most part, the companies received the same rewards.¹⁸ Pembroke's Men travelled to the north, to York, while Strange's Men apparently did not; on the other hand, Strange's Men performed at Oxford and Bristol (twice) in the southwest, and at four towns on the southeastern circuit: Maidstone, Faversham, and Canterbury, in addition to Rye.¹⁹ On balance, therefore, nothing is out of the ordinary in the towns visited or payments received to suggest why Pembroke's Men might have run out of money during their 1593 summer tour.²⁰

In discussing the repertory of Pembroke's Men, I have said very little about its one known comedy, *The Taming of A Shrew*. The stagecraft of the play is

familiar, even if through the Shakespearean version, and the appeal to audiences of its frame story and taming plot is not in question. Should any be needed, additional evidence of stage-worthiness is the fact that it or the Shakespearean *Shrew* play was among the first offerings scheduled at Newington in June 1594 when the Admiral's Men and the Chamberlain's Men were organizing themselves for what was to become a lifetime of playing. I have also resisted conjectural repertorial lists such as that constructed by Karl P. Wentersdorf, which includes *Soliman and Perseda*, *Arden of Faversham*, *The Massacre at Paris*, *Richard III*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Doctor Faustus*, and *Romeo and Juliet*.²¹

But whether the commerce of Pembroke's Men is considered on the basis of a list of plays certainly theirs in the winter of 1592–3 or a list expanded with plays possibly theirs, the striking feature of either list is the absence of comedies. Elizabethan companies had comedies in abundance. Where are Pembroke's Men's comedies? Scott McMillin proposes a title to fill one blank space: 'The Dead Man's Fortune'.²² Only the plot survives, and it reveals a story about two pairs of lovers, a magician, wicked rivals to the suitors, a subplot of cuckoldry, multiple disguisings, prison scenes, reported poisonings, a magical looking glass, 'satires plainge on ther Instruments', a mad scene, a near execution with 'sworde & blocke', and dancing 'antique' fairies.²³ There must have been more comedies in the company's repertory, probably with some of the plays attributed by Wentersdorf and others; to vindicate the repertory, I would like to know what those comedies were. Nevertheless, the few plays that do survive suggest to me that the repertory of Pembroke's Men had generic variety, serial drama, their own version of popular stories, and theatrics such as onstage violence, sexually provocative moments, traffic with the supernatural, and challenges to hierarchical structures with which to entertain London and provincial audiences. Their provincial stops took them to towns where their patron was influential, where players had traditionally been welcomed, and where their rewards were the average or higher. Whatever the cause of the company's reported collapse, then, the fault does not appear to lie with its repertory or touring schedule.

ROSLYN L. KNUTSON

Notes

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- 1 R.A. Foakes and R.T. Rickert (eds), *Henslowe's Diary* (Cambridge, 1962), 280.
 - 2 Scott McMillin, 'Casting for Pembroke's Men: the *Henry VI* Quartos and *The Taming of A Shrew*', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 23 (1972), 154. McMillin is

- confuting the belief that the quartos of *Henry VI*, parts 2 and 3, were ‘memorial reconstructions of the corresponding folio texts’, that is, ‘bad’ quartos (141).
- 3 McMillin, ‘Casting for Pembroke’s Men’, 154.
 - 4 McMillin, ‘Casting for Pembroke’s Men’, 153.
 - 5 David Bevington, *From Mankind to Marlowe* (Cambridge, 1962), 236.
 - 6 McMillin, ‘Casting for Pembroke’s Men’, 153 n27.
 - 7 McMillin, ‘Casting for Pembroke’s Men’, 158.
 - 8 I indicate lost plays by quotation marks; extant plays are in italics.
 - 9 Strange’s Men had done some similar scheduling in the spring of 1592: for example, ‘Muly Mollocco’ and *The Jew of Malta* were paired on 17 and 18 March, 17 and 18 April, 30 and 31 May, and 13 and 14 June. Once (3 and 4 April) ‘Machiavel’ was paired with *The Jew of Malta*; and once (29 May) it made a threesome with ‘Muly Mollocco’ and *The Jew of Malta*.
 - 10 Michael J.B. Allen and Kenneth Muir (eds), *The True Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke, Shakespeare’s Plays in Quarto* (Berkeley, 1981); all quotations from this play are taken from this edition and citations are given in the text.

@NOTE = 11 In the 1998 Malone Society edition of *The Taming of A Shrew* (used here as text), editor Stephen Roy Miller summarizes the scholars’ positions on the duplicate ‘Shrew’ texts: (1) that *A Shrew* is a ‘bad’ quarto of Shakespeare’s *Taming of the Shrew*; (2) that *A Shrew* is a descendant of an ‘Ur’ play to which Shakespeare’s play also responds, and (3) that *A Shrew* is something more ‘creative’ than a memorial reconstruction of Shakespeare’s play (xiv).
 - 12 Michael J.B. Allen and Kenneth Muir (eds), *The First Part of the Contention of the Two Famous Houses of Yorke & Lancaster, Shakespeare’s Plays in Quarto* (Berkeley, 1981); all quotations from this play are taken from this edition and citations are given in the text.
 - 13 Roma Gill (ed), *Edward II, The Plays of Christopher Marlowe* (Oxford, 1971); all quotations from this play are taken from this edition and citations are given in the text.
 - 14 How many heads did Pembroke’s Men need in inventory? The scene with Cromer and Lord Say required two; and the question then becomes whether audiences were expected to recognize a beheaded Suffolk, Cade, or York or whether any head could ‘double’ for theirs. According to the inventory taken by Philip Henslowe in 1598, the Admiral’s Men had four Turks’ heads available. Foakes and Rickert credit Greg with the attribution of the heads to *The Battle of Alcazar* (*Henslowe’s Diary*, 318 n5); Greg does mention the Moor’s limbs, the four janizaries’ gowns, and the Moor’s coat, but I found no

- mention of the head (*Two Elizabethan Stage Abridgements* (Oxford, 1922), 91–92, 118).
- 15 Sally-Beth MacLean, 'Players on Tour: New Evidence From Records of Early English Drama', *The Elizabethan Theatre X* (Port Credit, 1988), 55–72; see also Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen's Men and their Plays* (Cambridge, 1998), 39–40 and 55–60.
 - 16 Records of these payments are found in the following sources: King's Lynn, David Galloway and John M. Wasson (eds), 'Records of Plays and Players in Norfolk and Suffolk, 1330–1642', *Malone Society Collections* 11, (Oxford, 1980/1), 65; Ipswich, E.K. Chambers (ed), 'Players at Ipswich', *Malone Society Collections*, 2.3 (Oxford, 1931), 277; Rye, Cameron Louis (ed), *Sussex*, REED (Toronto, 2001), 136; Bath, James Stokes with Robert J. Alexander (eds), *Somerset, including Bath*, REED, vol 1 (Toronto, 1996), 15; Leicester, Chamberlains' Accounts, Leicester Record Office: BR11.2/62, mb 2 (Alice B. Hamilton (ed), transcripts for the Leicestershire collection, forthcoming title in the REED series); Ludlow and Shrewsbury, J. Alan B. Somerset (ed), *Shropshire*, REED, vol 1 (Toronto, 1994), 89 and 277; York, Alexandra F. Johnston and Margaret Rogerson (eds), *York*, REED, vol 1 (Toronto, 1979), 455; Coventry, R.W. Ingram (ed), *Coventry*, REED (Toronto, 1981), 338; Bewdley, David Klausner (ed), *Herefordshire/Worcestershire*, REED (Toronto, 1990), 362.
 - 17 J.A.B. Somerset points out that the earl of Pembroke, as lord president of the Council in the Marches of Wales, spent considerable time at his residence, Ludlow Castle; he points out further that companies attendant on the lords president had customarily spent considerable time in their patron's home territory ('The Lords President, Their Activities and Companies: Evidence from Shropshire', *Elizabethan Theatre X* (Port Credit, 1988), 94, 110). Peter Greenfield argues that companies in general tended to give more performances in their patron's territories than elsewhere ('Touring', *A New History of Early English Drama*, John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (eds) (New York, 1997), 262–3); see also 256–63 for additional effects of the patron's influence on touring company business.
 - 18 The companies received identical rewards at Rye (13s 4d) and Shrewsbury (40s); Strange's Men received 3d more at Bath (16s 3d vs. 16s for Pembroke's Men), 6s 8d more at Ipswich (20s vs. 13s 4d for Pembroke's Men), and 10s less at Coventry (two visits, each at 20s vs. one visit at 30s for Pembroke's Men).
 - 19 The following sources document the touring of Strange's Men, 1592–3: Bristol, Mark C. Pilkinton (ed), *Bristol*, REED (Toronto, 1997), 142; Bath,

- Stokes (ed), *Somerset*, 15; Coventry, Ingram (ed), *Coventry*, 336, 341; Canterbury, Faversham, and Maidstone, Giles E. Dawson, 'Records of Plays and Players in Kent, 1450–1642', Malone Society *Collections* 7 (London, 1965), 17, 63, 116; Ipswich and Sudbury, Galloway and Wasson (eds), *Collections*, 2.3, 277; Leicester, Hamilton (ed), Leicestershire transcripts; Oxford, Oxford Audited Corporation Accounts, Oxford City Archives: P.5.2, f 14 (transcribed in the Oxford University and City collection forthcoming in the REED series, John Elliott, Alexandra F. Johnston, and Diana Wyatt eds); Rye, Louis (ed), *Sussex*, 136; and Shrewsbury, Somerset (ed), *Shropshire*, 277.
- 20 In 'The Lords President', Somerset suggests two reasons why Pembroke's Men might have discontinued their tour: (1) the prevalence of plague in the countryside, as well as in London (102–6), and (2) the possibility that their company was over-large (106–9).
- 21 Karl P. Wentersdorf, 'The Repertory and Size of Pembroke's Company', *Theater Annual* 33 (1977), 85. Wentersdorf is building on arguments by Alfred Hart in *Stolne and Surreptitious Copies* (1942) and, particularly for *Romeo and Juliet*, by A.S. Cairncross, 'Pembroke's Men and Some Shakespearian Piracies', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 11 (1960), 335–49.
- 22 Scott McMillin, 'The Plots of *The Dead Man's Fortune* and *2 Seven Deadly Sins*: Inferences for Theatre Historians', *Studies in Bibliography* 26 (1973), 235–43.
- 23 W.W. Greg (ed), *Henslowe Papers* (London, 1907), 133–5, esp. 134 and 135.

Moving UpMarket: Queen Anne's Men at the Cockpit in Drury Lane, 1617

In 1616, in a move designed to emulate the financial prosperity of their better known rivals, the King's Men, Queen Anne's Men, under the management of Christopher Beeston, moved theatrical operations from the Red Bull, a large public playhouse in Clerkenwell, to the Cockpit, an indoor private hall theatre on the increasingly fashionable Drury Lane.¹ The success of this move was not, however, immediately apparent. The local apprentices who formed their audience base at the Red Bull took matters into their own hands and rioted to protest the theatrical troupe's abandonment of the neighbourhood. Narratives of this event tend to characterize the riot either as an indiscriminate episode of civil unrest,² or, more cogently, as demonstrating a specific animosity toward Queen Anne's Men because they were now playing the Red Bull repertory at

a prohibitively expensive venue.³ In an effort to revise these received interpretations, I argue that the reasons for the riot go well beyond the release of aggression and issues of cost. The actions of the rioters force us to consider the operations of this company not only as those of an autonomous firm in a competitive marketplace but as an important community institution. I suggest that the moral economy of the Queen Anne's Men's previous Clerkenwell constituency conflicted with the commercial goals of the company and the material economy that constitutes the supply side of cultural products. Failing to consider this principle in framing the company's business model, Beeston crucially misjudged the reciprocal social and economic relationships forged between actors and their audiences in this theatrical environment.

The events of 4 March 1617 dramatically illustrate the civic responsibility demanded of the theatrical troupe by its local audience in Clerkenwell. A letter of 5 March from the privy council to the lord mayor and aldermen reports that the previous day, Shrove Tuesday, 'a Rowte of lewde and loose p[er]sons Apprentices, and others' committed 'tumultuous outrages ... in attempting to pull down a Playhowse belonging to the Queenes Ma^{ty} Servants'. Their attempts were not unsuccessful, as a letter of 8 March confirms:

Though the fellows defended themselves as well as they could, and slew three of them with shot, and hurt divers, yet they entered the house and defaced it, cutting the players' apparel into pieces, and all their furniture, and burnt their play-books, and did what other mischief they could.⁴

Apparently the rioters gathered at the Fortune in nearby Finsbury and moved to the Cockpit with a clear design to cause damage to the newly occupied playhouse. The group was large, homogeneous, organized, and intent on achieving their goals. In the aftermath of the event a contemporary writes:

the prentizes ... to the number of 3. or 4000 comitted extreame insolencies ... a Justice of the Peace coming to appease them, while he was reading a Proclamation, had his head broken with a brick batt. Th'other part, making for Drury Lane, where lately a newe playhouse is erected, they besett the house round, broke in, wounded divers of the players, broke open their trunckes & what apparrell, bookes, and other things they found, they burnt & cutt in peeces.⁵

The sheer number of apprentices involved in this altercation proved a force too large for either the players or the municipal authorities to deter and the fact that plays were not presented at the Cockpit for several months suggests

that the attack sufficiently registered their grievances; it was, at least from the rioters' perspective, a resounding success.

More light is shed upon the intent of the protestors by an event that never happened a year following this first altercation. By that time Beeston and his company had repaired the new house and again moved from the Red Bull to resume playing at the Phoenix. But the apprentices appeared unwilling to grant this particular Phoenix the long life accorded to its mythical namesake. Even despite the fact that 'such of [the rioters] as were taken his Majestie hath commaunded shal be executed for example sake',⁶ the apprentices organized a second riot the following year. This time, the authorities had warning of their plans. A letter of 12 February 1618 from the privy council to the lieutenants of Middlesex cautioned that a large number of apprentices planned 'to meete at the ffortune', which they would use as a staging ground, 'and after that to goe to the Playhouses the Redd Bull, and the Cock Pitt, w^{ch} they have designed to rase, and pull downe'.⁷ This year the rioters sought to guarantee that Queen Anne's Men would be unable to play anywhere by destroying both of their available performance spaces, effectively eliminating all sources of revenue. Apparently adequate preventative measures were taken to ensure that these plans did not come to fruition.

The disgruntled residents of Clerkenwell did not confine expressions of their anger to damage against playhouses. Beeston himself became a target. On 20 March 1617, two weeks after the riots at the playhouses, Henry Baldwin and Christopher Longe, both of Clerkenwell (occupations not specified), along with several unnamed accomplices, were arraigned 'for a riotous assalte and spoyle done upon the dwelling house of Christopher Beeston'. Baldwin pled not guilty but was 'taken in irons for a year' and forced to pay a fine of £6 13s 4d. Longe, who pled guilty, was delivered a lesser sentence of three months in irons and a fine of 40s.⁸ Several citations for recusancy against Beeston and his wife Jane may already have made him and his family conspicuous members of the community. Absconding with the local theatrical troupe would have only incensed local residents even more, perhaps marking the beginnings of a private vendetta against the hapless impresario.

It is possible to interpret the actions of these rioters in several different ways. One could argue, with Alfred Harbage, that the strike against the Phoenix, like attacks on playhouses generally, has 'no especial place in dramatic history'. He argues that, because playhouses were 'conspicuous and public', they became frequent targets upon which young apprentices might simply vent their aggressions: 'riotous collegians now de-trolley street cars and destroy goal posts,

expressing thus no general pique against public transit or the game of football.⁹ Harbage is correct in insisting that all acts of destructive behaviour and civil disobedience need not profitably be read as evidence of organized hostility directed at strategic targets.¹⁰ London's mayor and alderman consistently expressed anxiety over riots, not because of concern over harm to specific individuals and institutions, but because any act that might be construed as evidence of civil disobedience posed a threat to the general law, order, and peace of the city. The civic authorities' frequent paranoia over acts of civil unrest, I suspect, has led to the reluctance of later historians to label a certain conflict a riot, in the modern understanding of that term. The misleading nomenclature is illustrated by one manuscript, entitled 'What a Justice of the Peace May Do' (1627), which consists of a calendar of quasi-official statutes that form the basis for the execution of practical justice in local communities. The section on 'Riote, Route, and Unlawful Assembly' encourages the justice to exercise broad discretionary powers in determining what constitutes unlawful assembly and in punishing the perpetrators. It mandates that 'to make a riot, rout, or unlawful assembly, 3 persons at the least must be gathered together'. If the justice determines that this small group is gathered with 'the intent to do any unlawfull act with force or violence' he is under the obligation to deal with the offenders 'in that matter & form as is contained in the statute of forcible entries'. A subsequent offender, automatically, 'shallbe 3 months imprisoned'.¹¹ The manuscript demonstrates that, as a practical matter, all branches of the Jacobean civil justice system worked in concert and with severity to prevent riots regardless of their intent. From this, it would seem logical to infer, with Harbage, that, given the pervasiveness of riot, any disorderly act might be read as symptomatic of larger patterns of social behaviour rather than situation-specific protest against isolated targets.

There are several reasons, however, why this riot was exemplary and constituted a strategic rebuttal to the actions of Queen Anne's Men. Most of these other riots, especially those involving playhouses, did not result in serious loss of life or property, and the attack on the Cockpit is extraordinary for the amount of damage done to the theatre and the extent to which the players went to protect their livelihood, one of the apprentices 'being shott through the head with a pistol'.¹² Clearly, the rioters' actions were aimed directly at a single company. Although they gathered at the Fortune, no attempts were made to damage that theatre, nor was there any evidence of violence directed at any persons other than those belonging to Queen Anne's Men. That the apprentices did not damage the Fortune suggests that they were provoked not by a particular animus against theatres in general, but rather that, for one reason

or another, the Cockpit and the Red Bull were of special interest. Their actions might instead be read in terms of a particular kind of exchange that E.P. Thompson labels a 'moral economy'. Focusing his observations on bread and grain riots in the eighteenth century, Thompson argues that the frequent riots ensuing price inflations were specifically designed to display the crowd's displeasure over what they felt were unfair business practices. In this case, Thompson argues, the rioters were defending traditional rights and practices against the onset of an increasingly impersonal and mercantile means of exchange. The communal consensus of the crowd constituted a legitimate grievance that outweighed fear and deference to local authorities.¹³ I argue that it is this same dissatisfaction with the disruption of ordinary community-oriented theatrical operations and customary norms that culminated in the altercation on Shrove Tuesday: the moral economy of the Clerkenwell apprentices conflicted with the market-driven model followed by the troupe who were motivated by profitability, the accumulation of cultural capital, and increased social respectability.

Clerkenwell apprentices had numerous grounds to view the company's move upmarket as an affront to communal principles of fair-dealing. The most obvious was that residents could no longer enjoy dramatic entertainment in their own neighbourhood. The new playhouse was only about twenty minutes walk from the Red Bull, but most apprentices could hardly afford the drastically higher price of admission: instead of paying a penny or two, playgoers would now have to relinquish sixpence for a seat in the top gallery, one or two shillings for a better vantage in the middle and lower galleries respectively, and a veritable fortune – two and a half shillings – for a vaunted seat on the stage or a private box.¹⁴ For many apprentices as well as tradesmen, this sum would be prohibitively expensive, representing a significant sum of their weekly earnings, many of whom brought home as little as 1s 2d in a week.¹⁵

Cost and distance, however, were not the only factors that angered local apprentices. Even despite the short geographical distance, the new venue was socially distant from the familiar confines of Clerkenwell. Steven Mullaney argues that London's public theatres – both those in the northern suburbs and those on the bankside – were at a symbolic remove from the city proper and the increasingly affluent areas in the west end.¹⁶ The liberties in which theatres were prominent enhanced the licentiousness and subversive potential of the theatrical experience for the working-class audiences to which they regularly catered. It is this licentiousness, he argues, that contributed to frequent denunciations and concerns over both the substance of dramatic works and

the practice of playgoing among civic authorities, religious ideologues, and those among the upper classes concerned with the declining morality of the general populace. It is possible, however, to theorize concerns over the social space of the theatre in the reverse. It is likely that the Clerkenwell apprentices refused to attend performances of their former troupe at the Phoenix precisely because of the different theatrical atmosphere and the location of the new private theatre in London's increasingly elite west end. Despite the obstreperous contentions of the theatre's detractors, theatre historians generally agree that it was not the theatre itself that was the source of their ire; it was the alehouse and not the theatre that led to riotous assembly and raucous audiences.¹⁷ Not only would the regular and harmonious alehouse crowd in Clerkenwell find themselves out of place in foreign taverns along Drury Lane, they would be unable to carry on their usual banter in the decorous confines of the Phoenix. This theatre was adjacent to Lincoln's Inn (one of the Inns of Court) amid the fashionable houses of the wealthy who would typically arrive at the theatre by coach, attired in finery.¹⁸ It is little wonder therefore, that a lone apprentice would feel intimidated arriving at the Cockpit's door on foot, fresh from the shop and a few refreshing beverages. Even with a familiar play, imported from the erstwhile Red Bull repertory, on stage at the Phoenix, the production values and general theatrical atmosphere would hardly be recognizable to those accustomed to the troupe's former venue. Because it was indoors, the Cockpit's artificial lighting would provide a radically different perspective on the stage action; the spectacular pyrotechnics that typify several popular Queen Anne's Men plays would be too dangerous; and the relatively diminutive size of the hall would not provide scope for the broad acting style of the 'terrible tear-throats' at the Red Bull.¹⁹ Finally, our hypothetical apprentice would almost certainly be the victim of the ridicule of both the elite crowd at the Phoenix and his mates upon his return to Clerkenwell. What Mullaney labels the 'liminal' space in the liberties outside the city walls provided a comfortable home for its residents who would view the 'civilized' west end with the same apprehension that Londoners travelling to Clerkenwell, Finsbury, or Southwark for dramatic performances would view these unfamiliar neighbourhoods.

The actions of the company also violated communal principles of fair-dealing in more easily quantifiable ways. Upon commencing their tenure at the Red Bull, Queen Anne's Men made a number of lucrative concessions to the Clerkenwell community. Sometime shortly before June of 1605, an attendant of the duke of Holstein, who had been selected to assemble a company of players to perform under the duke's patronage, wrote to James I, asking that

prohibitions on renovations and new buildings in Clerkenwell be contravened so that construction of a permanent house for the company that would become Queen Anne's Men could be completed. In support of this application was a petition giving the 'consent of the parish' to the players, many of whom were already parishioners at St James', Clerkenwell, in exchange for contributions of 20s a month towards poor relief, and an astonishing £500 for highway maintenance.²⁰ This £500 for highway repair would have injected a sizable amount of money into the local economy and provided work for many of Clerkenwell's un-and-underemployed. These payments ceased when the company resumed their tenure at the Phoenix. In October of 1617 Christopher Beeston was charged before the sessions of peace for Middlesex for being in arrears on his highway contributions.²¹ It can reasonably be assumed that without capital underwriting from Queen Anne's Men, the road work would be terminated along with the employment of many local residents, many of whom were likely regular visitors to the Red Bull. In addition, the regular payments to relieve the poor, mandated of all theatrical companies, were transferred to the new parish in Westminster forcing the congregation of St James, Clerkenwell, to seek other means to attend to local poverty. Not only were Queen Anne's Men ceasing to provide regular entertainment in an otherwise bleak neighbourhood, they were abandoning this community in a very real sense by washing their hands of all charitable endeavours.

Finally, personal animosities may have arisen out of disputes among company members and contributed to the crowd's outrage. Whether Beeston genuinely wished to rescue his company from its escalating debt or, as Andrew Gurr puts it, to 'siphon its cash' for his other enterprises, Beeston, in 1614, secured for the troupe £95 in loans from the widow of Thomas Greene, formerly an actor-sharer in the concern.²² Far from ameliorating their financial crisis, Beeston's excessive borrowing from Greene and his estate opened new antagonisms between company members, their families, and their constituent community which landed them in court. Greene, who was buried at St James' on 7 August 1612, was a long-standing Clerkenwell resident and his will enumerates a number of close contacts and friendships among local clergy and businessmen. His popularity as a clown, attested by the enormously successful *Greene's Tu Quoque* (1611), written expressly for the troupe's leading comic actor, was largely responsible for the rapid growth of the Queen Anne's Men during their tenure in Clerkenwell. It is not surprising then that Susan, Greene's widow, who now controlled her husband's stake in the company, felt betrayed upon realizing that Beeston's chronic borrowing was being used to

renovate the Cockpit and move the troupe to Drury Lane against the apparent wishes of her dead husband. In a Chancery suit of 1623, an action which finally broke the company, she again sued Beeston and two other remaining sharers from the 1617 settlement for arrears in the various loan payments and pensions payable according to the terms of the will.²³ It is this sense of personal grievance against the Greene family that leads C.J. Sisson to contend that the Queen Anne's Men's violation of their contract with Susan Baskerville (formerly Susan Greene) animated grievances in the neighbourhood against Christopher Beeston and his projects and that the Shrove Tuesday riot was a calculated 'gesture of resentment by Clerkenwell for ... the injustice done to Susan in a matter of local notoriety.'²⁴ The same might be said for the disservice done to Aaron Holland, the landlord of the Red Bull, who found himself without tenants and without prospects of swiftly finding resident players to replace them due to restrictions placed on patents granted to acting companies under James.²⁵

The vehement reaction of the Clerkenwell apprentices proves instructive for scholars interested in the sociological and economic dimensions of playgoing as well as those concerned with the vicissitudes of company operations. The company's choice to target a particular demographic over another, thereby breaking an implicit social contract with its local community, proved a dilemma not usually present in a normal competitive marketplace where an appeal to one target group does not actively dissuade another group of consumers. Playgoing is often theorized as a type of exchange and, concomitantly, the theatrical experience and theatrical productions are seen as commodities. Although this model successfully captures the essential mercantile elements of this economy, the difficulty is in determining what precisely is being exchanged. For players and theatrical companies the unit of exchange – the benefit – would seem to be cash proceeds leading, in many cases, to immense financial gain for sharers and impresarios. But defining the unit of exchange for the theatre's various consumers is more problematic still. It is often argued that the common value that all of these market segments seek for paying the price of admission is entertainment, difficult as this is to quantify. But Lars Engle notes that, due to a 'plurality of value systems' existing among these diverse playgoers, the concept of entertainment during this period is exceedingly difficult to delimit. In terms of the plays themselves, one commentator argues that what's at stake are various views of the world, 'to celebrate what the play celebrates and reject what it rejects'.²⁶ My preceding arguments suggest, however, that playgoing must be construed in terms of a wide-ranging experience that incorporates more than the play itself. The difficulties of the

Queen Anne's Men seem to suggest, for instance, that the venue at which a play is staged would seem to have a differential effect on its perceived entertainment value, depending on the market segment in question. The value of the same play would, for an apprentice, be higher if staged at the Red Bull than at the Phoenix, despite its lower monetary cost. An accurate sociological reconstruction and economic understanding of London playgoing, therefore, would consider a number of converging economies that account not only for the company's need to compete for its consumer's money, but also playgoers' demands for the kinds of productions and theatrical experience that they value most.

MARK BAYER

Notes

- 1 The Cockpit also became known as the Phoenix, owing to the number of times it was rebuilt and refurbished.
- 2 Alfred Harbage, *Shakespeare's Audience* (New York, 1941), 107.
- 3 Andrew Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (Cambridge, 1987), 175–82.
- 4 Gerald Eades Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, vol 1 (Oxford, 1941), 1: 161–2.
- 5 Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, vol 6, 54.
- 6 Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, vol 6, 54.
- 7 Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, vol 1, 163.
- 8 William Hardy (ed), *Middlesex Session Records* (London, 1935), 220.
- 9 Harbage, *Shakespeare's Audience*, 107.
- 10 Riots, if not a particularly grave threat to social stability, were frequent in early modern London and were especially conspicuous on Shrove Tuesday, the traditional day of licence for apprentices in the city. There are twenty-four Shrove Tuesday riots recorded in Elizabethan and Jacobean England, many of them involving damage to theatres. See Edmund Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (Oxford, 1923), vol 1, 264–5.
- 11 San Marino, CA, Huntington Library: HM 17298, f 132.
- 12 Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, vol 6, 54.
- 13 E.P. Thompson, 'The Moral Economy of the Crowd in the Eighteenth Century', *Past and Present* 50 (1971), 78.
- 14 Keith Sturges, *Jacobean Private Theatre* (New York, 1987), 15.

- 15 Anne-Jenaline Cook, *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London, 1576–1642* (Princeton, 1981), 277–9. It is possible, if not likely, that the Cockpit remained an option for the Red Bull regulars. Apprentices, after all, were better off than the large segment of the population who were prohibited from earning a livelihood by practising a trade because they lacked an apprentice's credentials. Many apprentices, despite the social stigma attached to their occupations, came from families of decent pedigree who supplied them with modest amounts of spending money. Moreover, with 'meat, drink, lodging, and all other necessaries' supplied by their masters, apprentices were inclined to spend whatever disposable income they had on personal entertainment, including playgoing. Some too, were roundly criticized for their unseemly social pretensions. Quicksilver, in *Eastward Ho!*, declares that he is 'entertained among gallants', and, because he frequently brokers loans for his master Touchstone, 'may use his recreation with his master's profit' (1.1.16–17, 31–2). It is even possible, if *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* is an accurate indication, that masters would occasionally treat their apprentices to a play. In this play a citizen grocer, George, and his wife provide running commentary throughout the play, alluding to their 'man' Rafe whom they have seated amongst the spectators and who eventually plays a major role in the action of the play. Although the role of the citizens and their apprentices in this play is largely satirical, it is certainly plausible that, like the vast majority of satire written for the London stage, Beaumont was sending up what many viewed as indecorous yet frequent practices at these upscale private houses. For the financial status of tradesmen and apprentices, see J.C.F. Harrison, *The English Common People* (London, 1984); and Olive Dunlop and Richard Denman, *English Apprenticeship and Child Labour, A History* (London, 1912).
- 16 Steven Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage* (Chicago, 1988). He suggests that the geographical location of the stage represented a 'culturally and ideologically removed vantage point' that contributed to its effectiveness in commenting on contemporary politics and social mores. 30–1.
- 17 Harbage, *Shakespeare's Audience*, 95–6.
- 18 Sturges, *Jacobean Private Theatre* 16. Many plays in the Red Bull repertory comment upon the long-standing antagonism between city gallants and apprentices. Particular animosity existed between the gentlemen-scholars of Lincoln's Inn and apprentices and journeyman dating from the 1590s when a curfew was placed on the former group to prevent escalation of tensions and further riot. See Steven Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds: Structures of Life in Sixteenth century London* (Cambridge, 1989), 11.

- 19 Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, vol 6, 218. For the distinctive house style at the Red Bull, see Alexander Leggatt, *Jacobean Public Theatre* (New York, 1992), 20–3.
- 20 Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, 215–16.
- 21 John Cordy Jeafferson (ed), *Middlesex County Records* (Clerkenwell, 1886), 235.
- 22 Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Playing Companies* (Oxford, 1996), 324. Unable to purchase Greene's share through a single lump-sum payment, Beeston and the company agreed on a large amortized payment to Greene's widow (now remarried to James Baskerville) of 1s 8d a day, six days a week, as long as the company was playing and Susan and James lived. The company did not, and probably could not afford to live up to its end of the bargain, and a further arrangement was made whereby in exchange for a further investment of £38, the Queen Anne's Men would pay a pension of 2s to either Susan or her son from a former marriage, Francis Browne. The company again defaulted, and was also behind in payment of wages to several of its hired actors, including William Browne, another of Susan's sons.
- 23 E.A.J. Honigmann and Susan Brock (eds), *Playhouse Wills: 1558–1642* (Manchester, 1993), 90–2; Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, vol 2, 238.
- 24 C.J. Sisson, 'The Red Bull Company and the Importunate Widow', *Shakespeare Survey* 7 (1954), 68.
- 25 Holland was easily duped. George F. Reynolds suggests that because he was 'utterly unlearned and illiterate', he was easily and routinely taken advantage of in business transactions. *The Staging of Elizabethan Plays at the Red Bull* (New York, 1940), 6.
- 26 Lars Engle, *Shakespearean Pragmatism* (Chicago, 1993), 2; Janette Dillon, *Theatre, Court, and City: 1595–1610* (Cambridge, 2000), 43–4.