

Early Theatre

A Journal Associated with the Records of Early English Drama

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Submissions

Early Theatre welcomes research in medieval or early modern drama and theatre history, rooted in the records and documents of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. We likewise encourage articles or notes on related materials either in Europe or in parts of the world where English or European travellers, traders, and colonizers observed performances by other peoples. Although we are primarily interested in the performance history of any art, entertainment, or festive occasion of the period, we also invite submissions of interpretive or literary discussions relating to the performances themselves.

Contributions should be sent to our website <http://earlytheatre.org>. Manuscripts of **articles** (preferably 6000–7500 words, although longer articles will be considered) and **notes** (300–5000 words) should be double-spaced throughout and conform to ET/REED house style (see the Style Sheet on the *Early Theatre* website). Style guides for manuscript documents in early modern English or Latin are also available online.

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We will not consider articles being simultaneously submitted elsewhere, nor will we print essays which are to appear in a book published within a year of scheduled publication by ET/REED.

Early Theatre uses double-blind peer review. We request that all authors remove identifying information from their manuscripts prior to submission. The website requires your email and postal addresses, abstract, and short biographical statement. All editorial correspondence should be addressed to the editors Helen Ostovich (ostovich@mcmaster.ca) and Melinda Gough (goughm@mcmaster.ca).

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Editorial

This June 2016 issue of *Early Theatre* is the first to appear in electronic format only. Distributing the journal solely online means that we are again able to publish content that includes high-quality colour images, a feature that had become financially impossible as part of our previous print distribution model. This *Early Theatre* issue is also the first to be made available immediately upon publication through our new partnership with Project Muse. Dissemination through this database — in addition to other channels such as ITER, EBSCO, and JSTOR — makes our authors' work more accessible than ever before to readers worldwide. *Early Theatre's* continued participation in Cross-Ref's digital referencing system also provides our authors with persistent, reliable links to their peer-reviewed scholarly work in the form of Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs). DOI citations by other scholars direct more traffic to our contributors' work by leading straight to articles on the *Early Theatre* site (and hence avoiding problems with broken URL links). Recent evidence of the international impact achieved by our contributors includes this year's honourable mention Renaissance Society of America RSA-TCP Article Prize in Digital Renaissance Research awarded to Misha Teramura for his essay 'The Admiral's "Vayvode" of 1598'. Readers will find this outstanding piece in *Early Theatre* 18.1, June 2015 (<http://dx.doi.org/10.12745/et.18.1.1168>).

This current issue begins with Emma Maggie Solberg's witty interrogation of the term 'mystery' in its theatrical sense. Ever since the Victorian scholar (and forger) J.P. Collier asserted this term's illegitimacy, the notion of 'mystery' plays has seemed bankrupt, yet for the field of medieval studies, Solberg shows, 'mystery' offers more critical utility than scholarly consensus has tended to allow. Brett Hirsch similarly challenges received notions, investigating how Jews were portrayed on stage in early modern English drama. Paying particular attention to Robert Wilson's *The Three Ladies of London*, Hirsch asks how Elizabethans would have recognized Wilson's character Gerontus as a Jew and, by extension, what Gerontus can teach us about traditions of portraying Jewishness that continue in later plays.

Articles by John Warrick and David Nicol take up the religious and political subtexts of two secular history plays. Warrick's analysis of Shakespeare's *I Henry VI* reveals traces of Christ's crucifixion, harrowing of hell, and resurrection as depicted in late medieval drama. Talbot's secular martyrdom reads quite

differently, he shows, once we recognize its imbrication with Catholic devotional practices that had been subject to attack and reform in Elizabethan England. Nicol's essay suggests that like Shakespeare's *2 Henry VI*, the anonymously authored lost play *The Peaceable King, or the Lord Mendall* centres on tensions between peace-loving monarchs and their rebellious subjects; its revival in 1623 may have been an attempt to stage the gap between James I's pacific foreign policy and the views of his more bellicose subjects.

Two articles focused on early Shakespearean comedy and tragedy round out the issue. Boldly 'outing' the 'generic skeleton' in 'Petruccio's closet', Philip Collington's essay on *Taming of the Shrew* reveals this play's participation in a subgenre of 'braggart courtship' that harkens back to Plautus and continues in sixteenth-century English plays by Udall, Lyly, and Peele. Collington's reading of Petruccio raises new questions not only about this braggart soldier-lover but also about the range of comic cultural resonances made possible by his marriage to another well-known character type, the shrew. Lovers also form the central focus of Rachel Prusko's essay on youth, privacy, and the language of 'teen-speak' in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. Defined by passion, secrecy, and guarded interiority, Romeo and Juliet present an uncannily familiar, almost modern picture of adolescence, Prusko contends; private spaces and private languages made possible through the play's early modern staging practices, however, troubled the ways that Shakespeare's own contemporaries understood the subjectivity of young people.

This issue's book reviews include coverage of two major new resources for book and theatre historians: Anne Lancashire and David J. Parkinson's long-awaited REED volumes on Civic London until 1558, and a two-volume edition of early modern dramatic paratexts edited by Sonia Massai and the late Thomas L. Berger. The latter work is a fitting testament to Tom Berger's illustrious career as a critic and editor of early modern drama, and we are pleased to honour his memory. The other works reviewed in this issue represent a wide range of approaches to early performance cultures, covering topics as diverse as medieval staging conventions, the politics of the court masque, manuscript cultures of extracting, and the figure of the stage clown.

Finally, we welcome two new members of the board: Paul Budra and David Dean.

THE EDITORS

EMMA MAGGIE SOLBERG

A History of ‘The Mysteries’

This study explores the history of the term ‘mystery’ in its theatrical sense. Victorian scholar (and forger) J.P. Collier was the first to question the term’s legitimacy, accusing the eighteenth-century publisher Robert Dodsley of having invented it. Collier’s condemnation has held sway ever since; ‘mystery’ is nearly bankrupt in the field of early English drama studies. I reconsider the authenticity, utility, etymology, and history of ‘mystery’, fact-checking the arguments made for and against it by Collier, E.K. Chambers, J.M. Salter, and Meg Twycross (amongst others) to show that reports of the term’s illegitimacy have been greatly exaggerated.

The study of early English drama suffers from a self-acknowledged problem with terminology that extends even to the titles of the texts themselves.¹ For example ‘Hegge’, ‘Cotton’, ‘Coventry’, and ‘N-Town’ all refer to one compilation of plays; the manuscript in question has had at least seven names, the most current of which has been standard only since the 1980s.² One of the most widely read early English plays suffers from a similar crisis of identity: while specialists now refer to the *Towneley Second Shepherds Play*, anthologies and encyclopedias still call it the *Wakefield Second Shepherds Play*.³ The terms for early English dramatic genres are likewise subject to rather frequent change: texts like the York and N-Town plays have been called amongst other things the mysteries (or mystery plays or cycles), Corpus Christi plays (or cycles), and miracles (or miracle plays or cycles). The task of choosing which label to use is tricky: the field now frowns on the terms cycle (because it implies a high standard of artistic coherence met by only one or perhaps two texts), Corpus Christi (a category which, some argue, ‘does not exist’), mystery, and many more besides (medieval, biblical, English).⁴ The field of early English drama studies seems to thrive on remarkably frequent disruptions of its taxonomy — some recent scholarly work dismantles the categories of theatre and drama.⁵

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The problem stems from the source material, which does not offer its own system of user-friendly classification.⁶ The massive archives of the Records of Early English Drama and the Middle English Compendium offer myriad fuzzy synonyms for theatrical representation, including pageant, procession, miracle, interlude, play, and game. In this terminological fog, scholars struggle to determine what distinguishes drama or theatre from a wide array of performative phenomena including parades, contests, banquets, jokes, tales, acrobatics, tableaux, banners, meditations, treatises, and mechanical devices. What seems clear is, as Carol Symes puts it, that ‘the generic definition of a play as such was in flux for most of the Middle Ages’.⁷

Distinguishing discrete genres within this fluctuation proves distinctly challenging (if not foolhardy): the archives suggest nothing remotely resembling Aristotle’s content-based organization of ancient Greek drama into the categories of comedy and tragedy. Early English records make no coherent generic distinction between sacred and profane themes, nor between dramatic representations of canonical scripture as opposed to apocryphal hagiography or local history. And these records do not label plays with helpfully consistent or catchy titles. This absence forced the manuscripts’ post-medieval caretakers — scholars and antiquarians of the Renaissance and Enlightenment — to come up with new names. Their ‘not very happy’ choices, as W.W. Greg put it,⁸ tended to name texts after manuscripts’ owners or supposed places of origin — attributions they often got wrong, resulting in a canon of early English drama that relies upon nomenclature based on their mistakes. Even worse, some of these antiquarians (most infamously John Walker, whom Barbara Palmer barely restrains herself from calling ‘a blackguard’) were prone to fraud.⁹ To quote Symes again, our current taxonomy ‘derive[s] from the capricious tastes of seventeenth-century antiquaries, eighteenth-century bibliophiles, [and] nineteenth-century philologists’.¹⁰

Their caprices, errors, and forgeries ensured that the future study of early drama would need to police its vocabulary. The field has eagerly exiled allegedly corrupt terms and concepts. But accusations of error have sometimes been accepted too readily, perhaps even uncritically. This study attempts to rebalance the scales by subjecting an accusation of inaccurate terminology to intense critical scrutiny and thorough historical contextualization. The history of taxonomic reformations within the field of early English drama studies reveals just as much about our anachronistic and distorting post-medieval biases and preconceptions as does the better-known history of our errors. As the field turns to the task of rethinking the categories of drama and theatre, now seems the right time to pause and look back on the history of one of our oldest taxonomical controversies.

Let us reconsider the value of a discarded label: the mysteries. The term mystery play is rarely used in early English drama studies because of longstanding, internecine controversy over its legitimacy. The debate within the field about 'the mysteries' can be summarized as such: while hardliners insist that the term is an eighteenth-century invention with little academic value (a position first articulated by J.P. Collier in the early nineteenth century), others (repeating an argument first made by F.M. Salter in 1955) use complex etymological evidence to defend its authenticity. In order to avoid the crossfire between these two camps, most specialists have dropped the term, but no satisfactory alternative has taken its place. Descriptive mouthfuls like 'civic-sponsored, processional, biblical drama' or 'episodic sacramental pageantry presenting salvation history from Creation to Doomsday' replace references to 'the mysteries' with definitions, not titles.

Despite its bankruptcy within the field, 'the mysteries' retains no small measure of popularity: you will find reference to 'the mysteries' in Norton and Blackwell anthologies, Cambridge Companions, Stephen Greenblatt's bestsellers, encyclopedia entries, off-off Broadway plays, curatorial captions and catalogues, and *Guardian* and *New York Times* articles. Of all the myriad titles promulgated by amateurs and experts over the centuries, this one has stuck. Perhaps Collier's critique of the term has failed to circulate as widely as Salter's defense. Perhaps even the term's nay-sayers rely on it to communicate with non-specialists. In either case, even the term's harshest critics admit that they find it fascinating. Karl Young acknowledged in 1933 that although he believed the term to be 'a modern invention' he nevertheless found it, of all the available options, 'the most instructive in its relationships'.¹¹ More recently Meg Twycross expressed her admiration for the term, confessing that she finds it 'temptingly ambiguous' despite its bad reputation.¹² The evocative label 'the mysteries' invites exegesis, an invitation that philologists find hard to resist. So why resist?

John Payne Collier provided a persuasive reason, arguing in 1831 that the term had been 'unknown in England...until a comparatively recent period', specifically until it was invented by Robert Dodsley in 1744.¹³ Let us return to the scene of this alleged crime. Dodsley — self-made man of letters and 'the most important bookseller of his age' — brought pre-Shakespearean drama to the attention of the reading public with his publication of *Select Collection of Old Plays* in 1744, the first volume of which contained several Tudor interludes prefaced by a scholarly overview of the history of English drama from the Middle Ages to the present day.¹⁴ Dodsley intended for this anthology to 'snatch' old plays 'from total Neglect and Oblivion'.¹⁵ No vain boast: Dodsley was the first Englishman of the Enlightenment to attempt to use the power of the printing press to educate 'the

Publick' about pre-Shakespearean English theatre history.¹⁶ Only after Dodsley reawakened interest in 'old plays' did Thomas Hawkins publish *Everyman* and the Digby *Killing of the Children*, perhaps the earliest English plays to appear in print in more than two hundred years.¹⁷

The time was ripe for their return. During and immediately after the Reformation, many English Protestants longed to forget the idolatrous ways of medieval Catholics, particularly their old plays. An antiquarian who came across the Chester plays in 1609 prayed to God that 'neither wee nor oure posterities after us maye nevar see the like abomination' again.¹⁸ For a while he got his wish, at least in part: until Dodsley, the manuscripts of early English drama circulated only amongst small circles of aristocrats and their librarians.¹⁹ Dodsley, in contrast, sought to share what he considered an important chapter of English literary history with the entire 'Generality of Readers', an ever-increasing portion of the population.²⁰ He advertised that he would sell 'at so cheap a rate that they shall not exceed six-pence each Play', and he successfully secured nearly five hundred subscribers and eight hundred sets.²¹ Dodsley rightly considered himself a pioneer: 'It is enough for me that I have led the Way, and been the first, however imperfect, Discoverer'.²²

The field of early English drama studies sadly does not remember Dodsley for his discoveries so much as for his imperfections.²³ He is perhaps most infamous for having put forth an inauthentic organizational system of content-based genres for medieval drama that differentiated biblical 'mysteries' from allegorical 'moralities'. Dodsley implied that these terms could be found in medieval English manuscripts. As we know, they cannot: there is no evidence that medieval English, French, or Latin records distinguish between biblical and allegorical content. As Graham Runnalls has demonstrated in his in-depth study of French theatrical taxonomy, a play that we would call a *moralité* is as likely to identify itself as a *mystère* (as in the case of the *Mystère de l'homme pécheur*) as a play that we would call a *mystère* is to identify itself as something else entirely (like a *miracle* or *jeu*).²⁴ Yet Dodsley claimed that 'mysteries' represented 'some miraculous history from the Old or New Testament' while 'moralities' employed allegorical figures ('Virtues, Vices, and other Affections of the Mind') to represent 'a fable and a Moral'.²⁵ In short, Dodsley got it wrong.

Let us consider the utility of that error. If Dodsley wanted his readers to appreciate early English plays, he faced a seemingly insurmountable obstacle: seething anti-papism. Dodsley himself found the idea of medieval Catholic drama unpalatable. He condemned the mysteries' dramatization of sacred scripture as not only 'stupid and ridiculous' but also morally pernicious.²⁶ Dodsley rather ingeniously

circumnavigated this problem by separating the less distasteful allegorical plays into their own discrete category, the so-called moralities. He came up with a very soothing Whig progress narrative, arguing that when England produced the mysteries the muses had been in a 'dead sleep'; the moralities were their 'morning dream', the first stirrings of the Shakespearean greatness to come.²⁷

Dodsley's strategy worked wonders. When the newly classified morality *Everyman* appeared in print some years later, readers heralded the play as the English *Oedipus* whereas the mysteries provoked horror.²⁸ After reading Dodsley's history of English theatre, Thomas Warton expressed his astonishment that the medieval masses,

who were forbidden to read the events of the sacred history in the bible, in which they were faithfully and beautifully related, should at the same time be permitted to see them represented on the stage, disgraced with the grossest improprieties, corrupted with inventions and additions of the most ridiculous kind, sullied with impurities, and expressed in the language and gesticulations of the lowest farce.²⁹

Many shared these sentiments. The poet Thomas Chatterton felt such antipathy towards the mysteries that he was inspired to risk his reputation by forging an antidote: he invented a Middle English historical tragedy (entitled *The Tragedy of Ælla*) — the most correct and proper dramatic subgenre, as he felt — prefaced by a scathing takedown of the mysteries. Posing as the fifteenth-century poet Thomas Rowley, Chatterton writes:

Plaies made from HALLIE TALES I hold unmete;
Let some great story of a man be songe;
Whanne, as a man, we Godde and Jesus trete,
Ynne mie poore mynde we doe the godhead wronge.³⁰

Unfortunately for Chatterton, this 'censure of the mysteries' gave him away: his critics observed that these lines demonstrated 'taste and discrimination, which could only belong to a more advanced period of society'.³¹

Dodsley knew his audience well, telling them what they wanted to hear. Perhaps we still want to hear it: we continue to employ Dodsley's inauthentic generic categories today, though with caveats and disclaimers. His generic categories fostered appreciation for and interest in early English plays, especially but not exclusively the moralities. In a less obvious way, Dodsley sold the mysteries too. His grotesque, gothic portrait of medieval biblical drama captured the fancy of none other than Lord Byron, inspiring him to write a provocative biblical play

of his own, *Cain*, published in 1821. Byron slyly leveraged the profanity of the mysteries to excuse his own: 'The author has by no means taken the same liberties with his subject which were common formerly, as may be seen by any reader curious enough to refer to those very profane productions'.³² Byron was perhaps the first reader to admire the mysteries for their shock value, a tradition carried on by (amongst others) E.K. Chambers, A.P. Rossiter, and Jody Enders.³³

English intellectuals, poets, and actors (most notably David Garrick) promulgated Dodsley's terms of art — especially the evocative term 'the mysteries'. (Byron even used it in the title of his play; the full title is *Cain, A Mystery*.) Yet almost from the very beginning, careful readers could not help but note Dodsley's 'imperfections' and 'faults'.³⁴ The second editor of *Dodsley's Old Plays*, Isaac Reed, dealt gently with his predecessor's mistakes:

It hath been customary with those who have given new editions of works which have exercised the abilities of other persons, to be very diffuse in pointing out the defects of their predecessors, and to dwell with great satisfaction on mistakes, which the most careful editors cannot avoid falling into. This practice is the more to be condemned, as every person who has had any concern in undertakings of this kind, must be convinced of the fallibility of all claims to unerring perfection.³⁵

Having said that, however, Reed frankly acknowledged Dodsley took liberties that could not 'be defended or excused'.³⁶ The next editor of *Dodsley's Old Plays*, John Payne Collier, was not so temperate in his critique.

Collier (1789–1883) would become his generation's most important and infamous expert on early English drama.³⁷ In 1825 his career had only just begun; *Dodsley's Old Plays* was his first editorial project. Unlike his more amateurish predecessors (Dodsley, Reed, and Hawkins), Collier wanted 'to treat [his] subject as a science' in order to methodically disprove 'Dryden's re-echoed assertion, that Shakespeare 'created first the stage'.³⁸ These methods and motivations still characterize the field. Although Dodsley claimed to be 'the first Discoverer', Collier is the true forefather of the discipline of early English drama studies. Unfortunately, in addition to being a reformer and a pioneer, Collier was also a master forger and seemingly compulsive liar who inextricably tangled discoveries of facts with inventions of fictions across the span of his long and fascinating 'double career'.³⁹

Collier accused Dodsley (and Reed) of many errors, but most importantly of having invented the term 'the mysteries'. In his *History of English Dramatic Poetry and Annals of the Stage* (1831), Collier claimed that he could find no evidence that mystery had ever been used to describe theatre in Middle English:

Warton, Percy, Hawkins, Malone and others have concurred in calling them 'mysteries', a term at a very early date adopted in France, but in any similar sense, I apprehend, (until a comparatively recent period) unknown in England. Dodsley, in the preface to the *Collection of Old Plays* he published in 1744, seems to have been the first to use the word 'mystery' to denote one of our most ancient dramatic representations.⁴⁰

Collier urged his English peers to replace this inauthentic, imported title with the legitimate, homegrown term 'miracle-plays': the 'proper designation' for biblical and hagiographic drama.⁴¹ (Note that Collier failed to myth-bust Dodsley's false distinction between mysteries and moralities.) Collier's reformist zeal for scientific levels of accuracy manifested in fastidious attention to stylistic details of taxonomy: he not only renamed Dodsley's categories but also insisted upon certain (self-invented) patterns of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. Moralities, he specifies, are heretofore to be referred to as 'Moral-plays' and mysteries as 'Miracle-plays' — capitalized and hyphenated just so.⁴²

Several pillars of the field soon took up Collier's position against Dodsley and 'the mysteries'. In his monumental *The Medieval Stage* (1903), Chambers writes, "Mystere" or "mystery", is not English at all, in a dramatic sense'.⁴³ In his *Drama of the Medieval Church* (1933) Young concurs: 'The use of English *mystery* in a dramatic sense is a modern invention, being found first, apparently, in R. Dodsley'.⁴⁴ Collier's uncompromising position continued to be repeated throughout the twentieth century and into the new millennium. Quite recently Meg Twycross summed up the consensus on the matter:

Mystery and morality were first applied to medieval theatre in the eighteenth century, when English antiquarians with renewed interest in 'old plays' picked up the terms from scholars in France. They were not contemporary theatrical terms, and we are on shaky ground if we attempt to argue from them.⁴⁵

Until F.M. Salter (1895–1962), no one questioned Collier's claim that the semantic concept of mystery plays had been alien to premodern English culture. Then came 1955, a watershed year that marked the turn from the so-called 'evolutionary school' to the era of O.B. Hardison, Alan Nelson, and REED.⁴⁶ In 1955 Salter published *Medieval Drama in Chester*; his 'archival sensibility ... set the tone' for the study of early English drama for decades — not least of all by revising the field's taxonomy.⁴⁷ Salter made a case for the legitimacy of the term mystery plays grounded in etymology and archival records of staging practices:

The French word *mystere* (modern *métier*) signified a craft; and the word mystery as signifying a craft or occupation is common in English as early as 1375. When the religious plays have been taken over by the mystery or craft guilds, they are called mystery plays.⁴⁸

Salter's defense of 'the mysteries' has since then been widely disseminated. Across a range of reference works from the most widely read encyclopedias to more specialized anthologies and critical companions, scholars commonly justify the use of mystery plays by following Salter: because mystery can mean craft in Middle English and because medieval plays were sometimes produced by craft guilds, it is appropriate to refer to medieval plays as mysteries. Yet despite the popularity of Salter's argument, this logic has ultimately failed to persuade those who agree with Collier's case against Dodsley. Twycross dismisses Salter's argument as 'complete moonshine' and holds fast to Collier's original position.⁴⁹ This debate between Dodsley, Collier, and Salter has never been adequately resolved.

According to Salter (and Chambers before him) the solution to the problem lies in etymological evidence. (This approach continues: Symes grounds her expansion of the meaning of theatre and drama in Greek and Latin etymology.⁵⁰) So let us turn our attention to the root of the matter: the Greek word μυστήριον or *musterion* (derived from the verb *myein*, meaning 'to close' one's lips or eyes) signifies a 'sacred rite', 'secret doctrine', or 'divine secret'.⁵¹ The Greek *musterion* fathered the Classical Latin *mystērīum*, which like its Greek parent means 'secret service, rite, or worship'.⁵² During the Hellenistic period, both the Greek *musterion* and Latin *mystērīum* came to describe the so-called 'mystery religions', cults of initiates worshipping Mediterranean and Middle Eastern deities with elaborate, secret ceremonies.⁵³ The discourse of these mystery religions emphasizes visuality; the worshipper is called 'the beholder' (*epoptes*), the priest the 'one who shows sacred things' (*hierophantes*), and the climactic ceremony (which Clement of Alexandria called 'a mystic drama' or *drama mystikon*) the 'seeing' (*epopteia*).⁵⁴ Outsiders see nothing, their eyes closed to the nebulous *musterion* beyond their understanding.

It is no secret that early Christianity appropriated ideas and practices from these mystery cults — or, as Justin Martyr and Tertullian have it, vice versa.⁵⁵ In either case, the word *musterion* occurs dozens of times in the New Testament.⁵⁶ In perhaps the most important instance of its use, the disciples ask Jesus why he speaks to the people in enigmatic parables; he answers, 'Because it is given to you to know the mysteries (μυστήρια, *mysteria*) of the kingdom of heaven; but to them it is not given' (Mt 13:11).⁵⁷ Paul elaborated on these ideas, promising that Christian scripture would reveal the mystery to those initiated into the community

of the faithful. Over the centuries the words *musterion* and *mystērion* became associated with Christian initiation rituals like baptism and the Eucharist. This semantic shift seems to derive from Tertullian, who translated the Greek *musterion* with the Latin *sacramentum*, a multivalent term that meant both a military oath of allegiance and the oath sworn by the parties in a lawsuit when wagering a sum of money against the outcome of their trial.⁵⁸ Tertullian explained the concept of baptism to the Romans as a performative speech act signifying investment in the afterlife and incorporation into the army of Christ. Although *musterion* and *sacramentum* functioned as synonyms, Tertullian often made a polemical distinction between 'the divine sacraments' (*sacramentorum divinorum*) of Christianity and paganism's dark 'mysteries of the idols' (*idolorum mysteriis*).⁵⁹ Although Christianity assimilated the mysteries, the word *mystērion* kept a distinctly pagan semantic charge.

Augustine famously defined Christian sacrament as the *sacrum signum* (sacred sign) of an invisible divine mystery — a figure that, as he put it, resembles the thing that it represents.⁶⁰ Augustine's theology of mystery and sacrament seems ready to lend itself to performative expression: like an actor, the sacrament represents and resembles what it enacts. By the time of the high Middle Ages, scribes used *mystērion* to refer to spectacular liturgical rituals that bordered on the theatrical: the *Elevatio Christi* on Easter morning, the office of the presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and reenactments of the visit to the sepulchre.⁶¹ By the fifteenth century, letters exchanged between Charles VI of France and the *Confères de la Passion* explicitly use the phrase '*misterre* de la Passion' to refer to a theatrical representation. This series of linguistic events resembles the etymological genealogy we have been looking for: it begins with *μυστήριον* in its earliest pagan and Christian senses of ritual and spectacle, translates into the performative concepts of *mystērion* and *sacramentum*, and finally arrives in the medieval vernacular as an explicitly theatrical term. Yet the scholarly community has rejected this ontology as a red herring.

In the early twentieth century, E.K. Chambers nominated an alternative etymological forefather for *mystère*: the Latin *ministerium*. This word came into being when medieval writers mixed the Classical Latin *mystērion* with *minister* (meaning 'a servant' or 'assistant'), creating the medieval Latin neologism *ministerium*, meaning 'the office or functions of a minister' and also more broadly 'an office, occupation, work, labor, employment, administration'.⁶² Chambers argued that *ministerium* rather than *mystērion* explained the French theatrical sense of *mystère*. He furthermore declared that *mystère* should be rendered in English with the spelling *mistere* in order to clarify its derivation.⁶³ Following Chambers's lead,

some scholars prefer to refer to *ministerium* or ministry rather than to mystery plays.⁶⁴ When instructors introduce students to medieval drama, one of the first things they stress is that the mystery in mystery play does not mean what they think it means — it does not mean enigma or Agatha Christie.⁶⁵ The overwhelming consensus is that *mystērium* is irrelevant to the discussion.

Yet from a linguistic perspective this strategy of extricating *mystērium* from the family tree seems misguided. Philip Durkin, the principal etymologist of *The Oxford English Dictionary*, argues that attempting to pinpoint the exact parentage of any specific vernacular offshoot of *mystērium* as opposed to *ministerium* ‘may prove impossible.’⁶⁶ Medieval writers mixed and matched the Classical Latin *mystērium* with the medieval neologism *ministerium* willy-nilly.⁶⁷ As Durkin notes, the ecclesiastical service — referred to by myriad variations on *mystērium* and *ministerium* and combinations thereof — perfectly exemplifies the semantic marriage of these two terms: the mass is both a mystery in the Ancient Greek sense and a ministry in the medieval Latin sense. The marriage of *mystērium* and *ministerium* proved fruitful, breeding numerous interrelated cognates and cousins in Old French and Middle English — including *ministère*, *mystère*, *métier*, mystery, ministry, administration, mister, and minstrelsy.

The Middle English descendants of the Latin forefathers *mystērium* and *ministerium* include a wide variety of interrelated words ripe for punning; most importantly, two cognates identified by *The Middle English Dictionary* as ‘misterie 1’ and ‘misterie 2’. ‘Misterie 1’ resembles mystery as we use it today in the sense of

- 1a) Hidden symbolism, doctrine, or spiritual significance in matters of religion; mystical truth.
- 1b) A rite, happening, or feeling with religious or mystical significance; a sacrament, the eucharist; the performance of a sacramental rite.
- 2) A problem of meaning, a hidden import, an enigma; an inexplicable feat.⁶⁸

‘Misterie 2’, on the other hand, is now rare and antiquated. *MED* defines ‘misterie 2’ as ‘ministry, office, service’; in this sense, the misterie of a priest would be to perform the mass, of a blacksmith to shoe a horse, and of a minstrel to play music.⁶⁹ ‘Misterie 2’ can also mean ‘a handicraft, an art’; or ‘a guild’.⁷⁰ It is this sense of the word that Salter took up in 1955 to defend the authenticity of the ‘mystery’ plays. Whereas Chambers excluded *mystērium* from his etymology of *mystère*, Salter excluded ‘misterie 1’ (*mystērium*’s direct descendent) from his etymology of mystery.

Medieval scribes do not seem to have respected Salter's theory of exclusion any more than they respected Chambers's. For example 'misterie 1' in the sense of transubstantiation represents both a sacred, enigmatic rite (or *mystērium*) and the office (or *ministerium*) of the priest. Likewise 'misterie 2' in the sense of guild draws on *ministerium*'s sense of occupation and *mystērium*'s sense of secret: the guilds teach professional secrets to an exclusive group bound by tricks of the trade. For what it is worth, Durkin lists mystery play as yet another English offspring of *mystērium* and *ministerium*; he argues that *mystērium* and not *ministerium* is the most obvious root of the 'mystery' in mystery play, though he concedes that the alternative 'is at least possible'. By and large, Durkin holds to the philosophy that 'the word form mystery corresponds to a whole variety of meanings [that are] certainly not identifiable as showing two clearly differentiated words'.⁷¹ The study of early English drama has taken the opposite approach, focusing its energy on attempting to clearly distinguish between *mystērium* and *ministerium* and between 'misterie 1' and 'misterie 2'.

Yet there are at least half a dozen confusable cognates and cousins of 'misterie 2' that merit investigation. For example the words 'maistrie' (meaning amongst other things 'a miracle', 'a master skill', and 'cunning, deceit') and 'minstralsie' (meaning 'musical entertainment', 'dancing, miming', and 'the art of performing music or story-telling') seem pertinent to the context of medieval theatre. Thanks to the flexibility of medieval unstandardized spelling, these terms and meanings can be easily confused or exchanged. As David Mills puts it, the convergence of *mystērium* and *ministerium* in the English 'misterie' cognates and variations seems 'to reflect the convergence of the text of sacred mysteries and the players from the craft-mysteries' in early English dramatic practice.⁷² The supposedly modern label 'the mystery plays' encapsulates this medieval multivalence perfectly: the York plays represent sacred truths ('misterie 1', meaning 1a) by means of enigmatic theatrical trickery ('maistrie', sometimes spelled 'mistri', meanings 4a and 4d) produced by guilds ('misterie 2', meaning c) practicing the art of minstrelsy ('minstralsie', sometimes spelled 'minstrisie', meaning 1d). Yet this apparent semantic convergence has been rejected as an anachronistic projection, a trick of hindsight. Mills himself immediately after noting the 'convergence' rejects it as a mere 'coincidence'.

The academic question at hand is whether anyone used an English variation on mystery to refer to drama before 1744. Yet Chambers (following Collier's lead) set an oddly prescriptivist tone in his contribution to this descriptivist project. After all, correct orthography is not the purview of the etymologist or the historian. The vernacular offspring of *mystērium* and *ministerium*, like their parents,

tangle inextricably. (Contemporary accounts of the etymology of mystery also invariably begin to confuse what they attempt to separate.⁷³) Instead of trying to untangle this etymological knot, we might instead take up the opportunity to revel in ambiguity. As Gail Gibson advises, ‘all medievalists must eventually learn to accept linguistic confusion as evidence of divine providence — which, as medieval theologians and exegetes knew, loves nothing so much as a good Latin pun’.⁷⁴ An overview of the wide array of ‘misterie’ cognates and variations seems to reveal patterns of metatheatrical semantic possibilities. Yet Collier, Pollard, Chambers, and Young all agreed that ‘mystery’ never referred to drama until 1744, despite the evidence put forth by Salter.

Some scholars have certainly found Salter’s evidence wanting. The go-to proof text for Salter’s justification of ‘the mysteries’ is a line in the post-Reformation Chester Banns: ‘by xxiiiith occupations — artes, craftes, or misterye / these pagiantes should be played’ (58–9).⁷⁵ We can find dozens of similar examples in REED. For example, a record from Newcastle-Upon-Tyne (1545) uses the word mystery similarly:

And shall yerelie amyablie associat theym self [Armoreris, Curriers, and Hatters] in the ffeast of Corpus christi / And goo to hither in procession as other Misteries Doethe and sustein the charges of the Lightes pagiant and plaie on the same ffeast according to olde aunyent Customes.⁷⁶

These records use the word mystery to refer to theatrical representation: so far so good. Yet upon closer inspection, they actually distinguish between mysteries and drama: the word mystery means guilds while other terms (like pageant and play) refer to the theatrical representations mounted by those guilds. The Chester Banns only use ‘mistrye’ as a synonym for guild (‘occupations — artes, craftes, or misterye’), not in reference to theatre. For this reason, Salter’s argument has failed to persuade.

Other early English records confirm this distinction between ‘misteries’ and ‘pagiantes’ — a blurred distinction in Old French though sharp in Middle English.⁷⁷ One particular lexical variation between French and English accounts of a pageant performed by the guilds of London at the celebration of the coronation of Anne Boleyn on June 2, 1533 clearly illustrates this difference between *mystère* and mystery. A French eyewitness described the scene like this: ‘Par les carrefours il y avoit eschafaux ou jouoient quelques misteres, et fountains jettans vin et par les rues estoient tout les marcants arrangez sans bouger d’une place’ [In all open places were scaffolds, on which mysteries were played; and fountains

poured forth wine].⁷⁸ In the French source, *misteres* means plays. By contrast, an English account of the very same event uses the word pageants to refer to plays and the word mysteries to refer to guilds: marginalia in Holinshed's *Chronicles* notes that 'the pageant was beautified with representation of the mysteries of the cite'.⁷⁹ To paraphrase, the pageant's actors played allegorical figures symbolizing London's guilds ('the mysteries of the cite'). In English it seems that mysteries means guilds — not pageants.

Yet despite this evident difference between *mystère* and mystery it nevertheless seems hasty to conclude — as did Collier — that the French theatrical sense of the word had no impact on pre-eighteenth-century English. After all, Anne Bolyn spoke French as did countless late medieval and early modern English people. The English Channel is a permeable membrane, not an impenetrable barrier.⁸⁰ As many important studies of the past half-century have demonstrated, premodern England was profoundly multilingual.⁸¹ Glynne Wickham in 1959 protested the isolationism of early English drama studies, pointing out that 'we are dealing with conditions in Christendom, a form of internationalism beside which the United Nations or the old League seem sketchy ghosts'.⁸² It would be strange indeed if Latin and French usage was 'unknown in England', as Collier claims, during a period of such internationalism. The continuing influence of such arguments more likely demonstrates that we have inherited the nationalist myopia characteristic of much nineteenth-century medievalism.⁸³

Although evidence may seem wanting when the search is limited to 'misterie 2', a slight expansion of these terms yields much more promising results. Medieval use of the term 'minstralsie' (meaning 'musical entertainment', 'dancing, miming', and 'the art of performing music or story-telling') seems closely related to the two 'misterie' cognates, especially since orthographic variation renders them interchangeable. *Cursor Mundi* describes Salome's performance of the dance of the seven veils with the word mystery: 'Ho [Salome] daused & sange to tumble with-al; alle wonderred on hir in þat halle, for ho sa wele hir mystri coupe' [Salome danced and sang and tumbled as well; everyone in that hall wondered at her, for she knew her mystery so well].⁸⁴ Here 'mystri' represents Salome's mastery of the overlapping concepts of her ministry of minstrelsy, loosely defined as dancing, singing, and tumbling. Salome's 'mystri' even suggests some correspondence with 'misterie 1' (in the sense of secret): the spectators' wonder evokes a sense of *mystērium*'s enigma, Salome's 'mystri', in other words, is the secret art of entertainment, a broad concept that extensively overlaps with medieval concepts of drama. Records suggest that in at least one community (Baston in Lincolnshire) the guild of St John the Baptist sponsored an annual performance of Salome's

dance of the seven veils, a custom discussed by Catherine Sanok as an example of early English drama.⁸⁵

We could take this possibility even further: *MED* notes that the Göttingen manuscript of *Cursor Mundi* replaces ‘mystri’ with the closely related (and, thanks to medieval spelling, interchangeable) term ‘maistrie’, meaning ‘mastery of a subject or an art’. This intimacy between ‘misterie’ and ‘maistrie’ sheds light on a couplet from Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*. In ‘The Miller’s Tale’, Chaucer describes jolly Absolon’s penchant for playing the role of Herod in what we would call the mystery plays: ‘Sometime to shew his lightnesse and maistrie / He plaieth Herode on a scaffold hie’.⁸⁶ Chaucer seems to be punning on the orthographic interchangeability of ‘maistrie’ and the many English, French, and Latin variations on *mystērium* and *ministerium*, especially those with a theatrical sense: Absolon shows his ‘maistrie’ by putting on a mystery play. The joke depends on an association between ‘maistrie’ and the interrelated concepts of theatricality and superficiality: Chaucer pairs ‘maistrie’ with ‘lightnesse’, which can mean ‘ability or skill’ as well as ‘frivolousness’ or ‘wantonness’.⁸⁷ Absolon intends to demonstrate his skillfulness and dexterity, yet he exposes himself: the only mystery he has mastered is the vain art of empty show. This dig would fit in nicely with what Seth Lerer has identified as Chaucer’s penchant for anti-theatricality, motivated by the rivalry between poetry and drama in late medieval England.⁸⁸

More than a little evidence supports Durkin’s theory that *mystērium* and ‘misterie 1’ provide ample opportunity for theatrical application. As Gail Gibson points out, the fifteenth-century poet John Lydgate describes his *Procession of Corpus Christi* as a representation of ‘mysteryes’:

For now this day al derkenesse t’enlumyne,
In youre presence fette out of fygure,
Schal beo declared by many unkouth signe
Gracyous *mysteryes* grounded in scripture. (5–8)⁸⁹

Lydgate uses the noun ‘mysteryes’ as the object of the verb-phrase ‘schal beo declared by many unkouth signe’: ‘mysteryes’ stands for what is represented (declared by signs) by the actors (or figures) in ‘youre presence’ (for an audience of spectators). Although we have been led to expect *ministerium* to dominate the semantics in such instances, Lydgate emphasizes a theatrical interpretation of the concept of *mystērium*: the play illuminates the darkness of scriptural truth with symbols (figures) and secret (uncouth) signs. Lydgate’s pageant embodies Augustine’s theory of the symbiosis of mystery and sacrament by representing sacred truths with theatrical signs.

This use of the word is not a unique example; Lydgate uses the term again in his *Mumming for the Goldsmiths of London*, in which he exhorts his actors to perform 'the gret mysterye':

O yee Levytes, which bere this lordes arke,
 Doothe youre devoyre with hevenly armonye
 The gret mysterye devoutly for to marke,
 With laude and prys the Lord to magnefy. (29–32)⁹⁰

Here the play's herald (an allegorical representation of fortune) addresses the Levites who were appointed to minister (*ministro*) before the Ark (1 Chr 16:4). In this pageant the Goldsmiths of London represent David and the twelve tribes of Israel. Thus the herald's speech works on several levels: he voices the bible's command that the Levites 'minister before the Ark' and he metatheatrically prompts the guildsmen to administer their performance of the pageant. The word 'mysterye' encapsulates this doubling meaning, representing both the sacred mystery of the Ark of the Covenant and the ministry or function of both the Levites and the guildsmen (as both actors and craftsmen). As in the previous example, mystery stands in as a representative of the play itself: the play is 'the gret mysterye' in many senses of the word. Even in the context of early English drama, Lydgate's 'performance pieces' (to use Claire Sponsler's nomenclature) have proven difficult to classify: ever since their fifteenth-century scribe John Shirley described them as 'ballades', 'letters', 'bills', 'ordinances', and 'devices' but never once as plays, scholarship has tended to perceive these texts as poetic rather than dramatic.⁹¹ Yet Lydgate's use of the richly multivalent and metatheatrical term mystery gives us yet another reason to, as Sponsler puts it, 'rethink what constitutes "drama" in late medieval England'.⁹²

Furthermore, as V.A. Kolve notes, 'mystery' also seems to appear in a comparable metatheatrical sense in one of early English drama's core texts: the N-Town plays. In the N-Town pageant of the Last Supper, Jesus refers to the Eucharist as a mystery:

This fygure shal sesse: anothyr shal folwe therby
 Weche shal be of my body that am youre hed,
 Weche shal be shewyd to yow be a mystery
 Of my flesch and blood in forme of bred. (27.361–4)⁹³

Drawing on the ancient association between *mystērīum* and *sacramentum*, Jesus refers to the Last Supper as it takes place on the stage as a 'figure' (meaning 'representation' or 'symbol') of a future 'mystery', thereby associating the theatrical

representation of the pageant with the sacramental ‘showing’ or ministration of the ‘mystery’ of transubstantiation. N-Town, like Lydgate, plays with the ambiguity of ‘mystery’, applying its many meanings to metatheatrical commentary. Across all three examples (N-Town’s ‘The Last Supper’ and Lydgate’s *Procession of Corpus Christi* and *Mumming for the Goldsmiths of London*), ‘mystery’ is the object of a verb-phrase that connotes theatrical representation in terms of Augustinian sacramental theology; in all three cases, mystery is the word that stands in as a figure for the pageant itself. Early English drama scholarship has long recognized the importance of Augustinian sacramental theology to medieval drama. In fact, one of the new names for ‘the mysteries’ is ‘sacramental drama’. Although the latter is intended as a corrective of the former, these terms are (in a late medieval context) synonyms. The search for a replacement for mystery has come full circle, albeit accidentally.

This medieval evidence at the very least calls into question Collier’s claim that the use of mystery to ‘denote ... our most ancient dramatic representations’ was ‘unknown’ in England until 1744. Evidence from the early modern period threatens his claim even more. The anti-papist polemic of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries built on pre-existing associations between drama and the interrelated French and English children of *mystērium* and *ministerium*, adapting mystery into a byword for what Protestants saw as the bankrupt theatricality — the hypocrisy (from the Greek ὑποκριτής, meaning actor) — of Catholicism.⁹⁴ ‘Mystery’ became the subject of intense controversy: reformist translators of the New Testament accused the Catholic church of having misled the people by mistranslating the Greek *mysterion* as *sacramentum*, thus creating the illusion of scriptural justification for the seven sacraments.⁹⁵ Protestantism understood the Christian mystery as an open secret revealed in the naked gospels — not as Catholicism’s mysterious allegory of images, rituals, and theatrics. In fact Catholicism’s mysteries seemed to reformers to fit the description in 2 Thes 2:7 of the Antichrist’s *mystērium iniquitatis* [mysteries of iniquity].

John Foxe discusses the distinction between Catholic and Protestant interpretations of the Christian mystery in his *Acts and Monuments*:

Because Christ called bread his body, therefore, say they [Catholics], he made it his body, and so of a wholesome Sacrament make a perilous Idol, and that which the old Church of Rome did ever take to be a mystery, they turn into a blind myste of mere accidentes to blear the peoples’ eyes, making them believe they see what they see not, and not to see that which they see, and to worship a thing made for their maker, a

creature for the creator, and that was threshed out of a sheaf of wheat they set up in the Church, and worship for a Savior.⁹⁶

Foxe turns Tertullian's anti-pagan polemical weaponry against Catholicism by distinguishing between the 'wholesome sacrament' of Protestantism and the idolatrous 'mystery' of papism. Foxe's learned series of puns on mystery makes use of Greek, Latin, and English etymology: he plays with the Greek root meaning to close one's eyes, ingeniously translated with the English phrase 'blind mist'. Foxe's linguistic acrobatics mock the Catholic clergy for not knowing their Greek, for mistranslating and misinterpreting the Pauline mystery as a shallow spectacle.

The best example of the polemical strategy of leveraging the polyvalence of mystery for anti-papist ends is Samuel Harsnett's *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (1605).⁹⁷ Harsnett reports the details of an infamous Catholic crime committed in Denham, Buckinghamshire between 1585 and 1586: a group of fugitive Jesuits performed spectacular quack exorcisms, thereby duping hundreds of spectators. Harsnett harps on the theatricality of these rituals throughout the text. In his preface, he begs the witnesses of the exorcism ('the seduced Catholics') to open their eyes to the truth:

[T]he Pope and his spirits he sendeth in here amongst you do play Almighty God, his Son, and Saints upon a stage, do make a pageant of the Church, the blessed Sacraments, the rites and ceremonies of religion, do cog and coin devils, spirits, and souls departed this life to countenance and grace — or face out — their desperate abominations.⁹⁸

This vitriol collapses Catholicism and the fake exorcisms into one immense theatrical trick orchestrated by the Antichrist. Harsnett's tirades against papist rites include numerous synonyms for Catholicism-as-theatre: he calls the exorcism 'this tragical comedy', 'this cunning juggling', 'this play of sacred miracles', 'this mystical play', 'these holy mysteries', and, in his grand finale, the 'mystery of iniquity' of the Antichrist and 'those reverend juggling priests, his disguised comedians'.⁹⁹ Harsnett's enormous arsenal of slurs draws on every possible meaning of mystery — mystery as pagan rite, mystery as sacrament, mystery as secret, mystery as occupation, mystery as ministry, mystery as minstrelsy — and, most importantly, mystery as theatre.

Shakespeare too deploys the word mystery in order to deride Catholicism for its theatricality. A passage in *Henry VIII* mocks the over-the-top affectations of Frenchified courtiers: an Englishman wonders, 'Is't possible the spells of France

should juggle / Men into such strange mysteries?’ (1.3.1–2).¹⁰⁰ Shakespeare portrays France as a Circean sorceress whose spells transform (‘juggle’) Englishmen into ‘unmanly’ and ‘ridiculous’ jokes. Reformist polemic often used the verb ‘juggle’ in its double sense of transform and trick to undermine the hocus-pocus of transubstantiation.¹⁰¹ Here Shakespeare makes use of an established association between theatricality, Catholicism, and witchcraft. Shakespeare did such an excellent job of collapsing theatricality and Catholicism that in the late eighteenth century Samuel Johnson glossed these lines as an explicit reference to medieval Catholic drama:

Mysteries were allegorical shows, which the mummers of those times exhibited in odd and fantastic habits. Mysteries are used, by an easy figure, for those that exhibited mysteries; and the sense is only, that the travelled Englishmen were metamorphosed, by foreign fashions, into such an uncouth appearance, that they looked like mummers in a mystery.¹⁰²

Johnson’s interpretation of these lines as Shakespeare’s critique of medieval drama became rather influential. The epitaph on the frontispiece of William Hone’s nineteenth-century *Ancient Mysteries Described* (an edition of several Mary plays from N-Town) reads, ‘Is it possible that Apocrypha should juggle men into such strange Mysteries?’¹⁰³ This frontispiece faces a satirical engraving entitled ‘An Idiot Holds His Bauble for a God’ picturing a representative medieval idiot cradling a fool’s scepter. Johnson and Hone both interpreted Shakespeare’s anti-papist jibe as a literary critique of medieval Catholic drama.

Perhaps such readings recur repeatedly because Englishmen of the Enlightenment seem to have had trouble distinguishing between Reformation polemic mocking papist rituals and historicist descriptions of medieval theatrical practices — a confusion that tended to converge on the word mystery. In 1794, Isaac Disraeli interpreted John Bale’s rants about the Pope’s ‘mystery of iniquity’ (by which Bale meant the sacraments and other Catholic ‘abominations of Idolatry’) as a reference to medieval drama:

It is justly observed by Bale, on these wretched representations, that while they prohibited the people from meditating on the sacred history, in the book which contains it in all its purity and truth, they permitted them to see it in the theatre, sullied with a thousand gross inventions, which were expressed in the most vulgar manner, and in a farcical style.¹⁰⁴

Collier was the first to call out this reading as anachronistic. While Collier rejected Disraeli's gloss on the word mystery, however, he allowed that Bale's 'Iniquity' might refer to an actor playing an allegorical figure in a theatrical representation — which might indeed have been the case.¹⁰⁵

These misreadings are easy to explain away. One could argue that after Dodsley coined 'the mysteries' in 1744, his readers (like Johnson and Disraeli) began to project his newfangled meaning onto early modern texts. Yet the ease with which the supposedly new meaning of mystery fit with old instances of the term suggests something more than anachronistic projection. In one sense, Enlightenment-era misinterpretations of vituperative early modern polemic as neutral observations mark the overlap between reformist hatred of Catholic ritual and Whiggish disdain for Catholic drama. In another sense, however, these seeming misunderstandings also document the very real and extensive overlap between Catholicism and theatricality, an overlap that for centuries was represented by variations on the word *mystērium*. For both reasons, mystery had by the early eighteenth century become so closely associated with both religion and drama that writers described Christian pageantry with the phrase 'mysteries of religion' even in neutral or even positive contexts. In a defense of passion plays published in 1691 (fifty-three years before Dodsley supposedly invented 'the mysteries'), Gerard Langbaine declared it 'lawful' to 'make a dramatic poem ... treating of the Mysteries of Religion'.¹⁰⁶ In 1710 (fourteen years before Dodsley), the actor Charles Gildon argued that the stage 'may properly be esteemed the handmaid of the pulpit' in 'dispensing the most holy mysteries of the Christian religion'.¹⁰⁷ Referring to religious plays as containers or dispensers of 'the mysteries of Christianity' seems only a short step from Dodsley's abbreviation. Although Collier and others have described Dodsley's use of the term mysteries to mean medieval religious plays as unprecedented, *Early English Books Online* and *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online* suggest that usage developed out of Reformation polemic, which itself exploited pre-existing associations between drama and the many interrelated vernacular offshoots of *mystērium* and *ministerium*.

Now that we have arrived back at the topic of Dodsley, it seems worth mentioning that Collier left out an important fact when he accused Dodsley of inventing 'the mysteries' — a fact that too often goes unsaid.¹⁰⁸ Three years before Dodsley published his *Collection of Old Plays* in 1744, he translated and published the Italian/French actor-author Luigi Riccoboni's pioneering comparative study of European theatre history *An Historical and Critical Account of the Theatres in Europe* (1741). In this text, Dodsley first uses 'mystery' to mean 'medieval religious play', and he is translating the term, not inventing it.

Riccoboni (1676–1753) was an Italian commedia dell’arte actor, naturalized French citizen, and Continental traveler.¹⁰⁹ In his original Francophone edition of 1728 (*Reflexions historiques et critiques sur les differens theatres de l’Europe*), he uses the term *mystères* to refer to medieval religious plays written in Italian, Spanish French, English, Dutch, Flemish, and German.¹¹⁰ Why should he not? As Chambers and Young have pointed out, the term had theatrical applications in French and Latin in the late Middle Ages — Riccoboni used a transnational term to describe a transnational phenomenon. Dodsley agreed with Riccoboni’s ‘view of the great similarity that appears in the rise and progress of the stage in all the principle countries of Europe’.¹¹¹ So where Riccoboni writes *mystères*, Dodsley writes ‘mysteries’, an apt translation.¹¹² Rather than pulling the term out of thin air, Dodsley merely disseminated a Continental polyglot’s term of art. In this light, Collier’s characterization of Dodsley’s enthusiastic participation in Riccoboni’s pan-European comparativism as some kind of combination of fraud, error, and unpatriotic outsourcing seems reductive, if not unfairly biased. In 1959 Wickham advised the discipline to reconsider its penchant for nationalist isolationism:

It seems logical to me ... to reverse the usual tendency to isolate the English Miracle Plays and to assume instead a common, European basis of stage procedure except where unimpeachable evidence exists to prove English practice exceptional.¹¹³

Collier’s critique of the term mystery has for quite some time been taken as an exemplar of justified English exceptionalism, yet I am not so sure that this particular case meets Wickham’s standard: the evidence supporting Collier’s position hardly seems ‘unimpeachable’.

Let me be clear: this is not to say that Dodsley was a beacon of high-minded, forward-thinking cosmopolitanism. In a prefatory epistle to his translation, he dedicates his labour to Charles Fleetwood, the manager of Drury Lane and pioneering Bardolater who in 1741 erected the monument to Shakespeare that still stands in the Poets’ Corner of Westminster Abbey.¹¹⁴ This dedication explains Dodsley’s motivation for translating Riccoboni’s work: Dodsley hints portentously that drama has a unique capacity to reveal ‘that Spirit which forms the true character of every people’.¹¹⁵ Thus the urgency of sussing out the competition, as Dodsley knew England’s premier Shakespearean revivalist would understand. While in 1741 Dodsley dutifully translates Riccoboni’s assertion that the Italians are right to ‘boast that their theatre is the Original and Model of all the others in Europe’, three years later in his own account of things he claims ‘that the English

stage rose' earlier rather than later 'than the rest of its Neighbors'.¹¹⁶ Dodsley thus proves that England possesses 'a merit superior to all others' — superior to the 'faint and feeble' Spanish and to the 'degenerated' Italians ('easy prey to every ambitious invader', he adds).¹¹⁷ Yet Collier still found Dodsley's patriotism insufficient. Nearly a century later Collier began his opus by chastising the English for their complacency, 'as if satisfied with our acknowledged preeminence'.¹¹⁸ Preeminence amongst rivals did not satisfy Collier. He felt that English drama 'demand[ed] to be separately and systemically examined'.¹¹⁹ In short, although Dodsley and Collier agreed in principle, they differed in their methods: while Dodsley engaged in competitive comparativism, Collier (standing on Dodsley's shoulders) achieved the higher standard of isolationism.

From the Reformation until the twentieth century, many (if not most) English readers considered medieval biblical drama to be idolatrous and blasphemous. The word 'mystery' with its rich polemical history suited their sectarian bias. In the twentieth century, however, the study of early English drama became professional, academic, and ostensibly neutral, so the word mystery lost its utility, and the term's heavy significance became burdensome. The field has tried to disburden itself in two ways: first, by declaring the term inauthentic and, second, by pruning its etymology (removing the *musterion* branch). Neither approach seems in keeping with the high standard of historical accuracy that the field has set for itself.

Ministerium and 'misterie 2' dominate current understanding of the term mystery play to such an extent that many assume that this is the way it has always been.¹²⁰ Yet post-Reformation to pre-twentieth century commentary on 'the mysteries' tends to focus on the semantic inheritance of *mysterium* — unsurprisingly, considering the extent to which reformers foregrounded the term's Greek root. As late as 1875, Adolphus William Ward introduced medieval English drama as the representation of 'the central mystery of the Christian faith' — not as the function of the craft guilds.¹²¹ Even Lucy Toulmin Smith — the ultimate nineteenth-century ambassador for the medieval guilds — seems relatively uninterested in the lexical connection between 'misteries' (meaning 'guilds') and the so-called mystery plays. In *York Plays: Plays Performed by the Crafts or Mysteries of York on the Day of Corpus Christi* (1885), Smith habitually refers to medieval guilds as mysteries and repeatedly asserts the strong bond between the guilds and medieval religious plays, which she also calls mysteries.¹²² Yet Smith does not definitely claim a causal connection between these cognates — she does not argue that the term mystery play is authentic because of the guilds. I can find little evidence of this exact idea in Smith's work or in any other eighteenth- or nineteenth-century

commentary on medieval drama. As far as I can tell, the ‘mystery’ in mystery plays began to refer primarily and exclusively to *ministerium* and ‘misterie 2’ only in the twentieth century. This is only the latest chapter in the term’s long history.

It seems understandable that the field of early English drama studies would want to escape the toxic sectarian polemical atmosphere in which these texts have subsisted for so long. ‘Mystery’ carries within itself the memory of conflicts between Christianity and paganism, Catholicism and Protestantism, and Whig amateur antiquarianism and modern professional academia. Calling the plays mysteries evokes this long history of conflict. Yet none of this unpleasant history makes the term inauthentic. The word is so charged with historical relevance that it still shocks, even after all these years. To my mind, energy of that voltage begs to be used, not avoided.

Notes

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Jewish Questions in Robert Wilson's *The Three Ladies of London*

*In the history of portraying Jews on the early modern stage, critics frequently cite Robert Wilson's *The Three Ladies of London* as an anomaly. The play's first modern editor, H.S.D. Mithal, went so far as to describe Gerontus as 'a character sui generis', quite unlike Marlowe's porridge-poisoning Machiavel, Shakespeare's knife-whetting usurer, and the devilish doctor in *Selimus*. This essay explores the questions raised by Wilson's portrayal of Gerontus, paying particular attention to their critical and theatrical implications. What was understood by the term 'Jew' and how might Elizabethan audiences have recognized Gerontus as a Jew? Is the play really an anomaly of early modern theatre history?*

Not yet discredited as a forger, John Payne Collier included in his important 1851 collection *Five Old Plays* an edition of Robert Wilson's *The Three Ladies of London*, the first to appear in over 250 years.¹ A year earlier, Collier sent a letter to *The Athenaeum*, dated 28 April 1850 and subsequently published in their 4 May issue, in which he describes how, having 'met with [the play] only recently', he discovered an earlier instance of the phrase 'to turn Turk' than hitherto had been noted. After touching briefly on the play's authorship, Collier outlines the Gerontus–Mercadorus subplot and describes the trial scene in detail, before offering the following remarks:

Here, we see the earliest known Jew on our stage — some years before the arrival of Shakespeare in London and of course long before he drew the character of Shylock — displaying the most disinterested generosity, and setting a most admirable example of Christian forbearance. It is not true, therefore, that the professors of the

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Hebrew faith were always exhibited on our early stage as monsters of unfeelingness and brutality as they were drawn by Shakespeare in his 'Merchant of Venice' and by Marlowe in his 'Rich Jew of Malta'.²

Since then, critics have followed Collier in treating *The Three Ladies of London* as an anomaly in the history of portraying Jews on the early modern stage.³ Gerontus is variously characterized as 'the virtuous Jew',⁴ 'an interesting lapse from the stage-Jew who had excited contempt for so long',⁵ 'a surprisingly accommodating and generous Jew',⁶ 'a man of honor'⁷ that 'stuns typical Elizabethan expectations by being virtuous as a Jewish man and moneylender',⁸ 'the most honest and admirable, one might even say "Christian", character in his play',⁹ and 'the single instance in the Elizabethan drama of an honourable Jew'.¹⁰ The play's first modern editor, H.S.D. Mithal, went so far as to describe Gerontus as 'a character *sui generis*',¹¹ quite unlike other Elizabethan stage Jews — Christopher Marlowe's porridge-poisoning Machiavel, William Shakespeare's knife-whetting usurer, the devilish doctor in the anonymous *Selimus*. Emma Smith has recently drawn attention to the paucity of historical evidence supporting a number of long-held critical assumptions about Elizabethan attitudes toward Jews in general, and the portrayal of Shakespeare's Shylock in particular.¹² In the same spirit, the present essay seeks to reassess Wilson's portrayal of Gerontus and to explore the various Jewish questions *The Three Ladies* raises.

Captious Words

Like Anthony Bale, I prefer the term 'antisemitism' to 'anti-Judaism' when discussing 'deprecatory non-Jewish ideas about Jews' as opposed to narratives designed to attack *real* Jews or Judaism on a practical level, and I purposefully avoid the hyphenated form 'anti-Semitism' because 'outside linguistics, there is no such thing as a Semite; it is only a negative category forced onto Jews, and others'.¹³ The same rationale governs my preference for 'philosemitism' over 'philo-Semitism'.

Whether *The Three Ladies* is antisemitic or philosemitic is a question that hinges on another important, but no less loaded, term: 'Jew'. Variouslly employed as an adjective, noun, and verb, a web of complex, contradictory, and shifting cultural, social, theological, and political associations informed the word 'Jew' in Elizabethan England.¹⁴ The Jews were held up as God's chosen people (and therefore a model for England's own providential identity), custodians of the languages and exegetical traditions essential to an understanding of scripture free from Catholic impurity and mistranslation, and a nation whose predestined and

immanent conversion would herald Christ's second coming.¹⁵ However, scripture also provided the foundation for centuries of stigmatization in England and across Europe: according to the gospel of John, the Jews were 'of [their] father the deuill',¹⁶ and the depiction of Jews as morally abject, physically monstrous, and socially aberrant in Christian sermons, literature, art, and popular culture perpetuated this diabolical association.¹⁷ Many of the medieval narratives about the Jews — such as their abduction and crucifixion of Christian children, their ritual use of Christian blood, their desecration of the eucharistic host, their poisoning of Christian wells and spreading of infectious disease, as well as acts of cannibalism and sorcery — survived in England long after their official expulsion in 1290 and into the seventeenth century, as did assumptions about their distinctive physical features. For example, belief in the existence of a characteristic Jewish stench or *foetor judaicus* was supposedly widespread enough for Thomas Browne to justify an entire chapter on the question whether 'Jews stinck naturally' in his *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (London, 1646).¹⁸

To capitalize on this symbolic potential, other national, social, and religious groups in early modern England variously aligned themselves — and maligned others — as Jews or 'judaizers'.¹⁹ Belief in their own divine election and a shared experience of persecution and survival in diaspora allowed Calvinists and other Protestant minorities to identify readily with the Jews, while Christians on all sides of the confessional divide pilloried one another in terms of perceived Judaic recidivism. English xenophobia also frequently expressed the economic and political threats posed by aliens in Jewish terms. The so-called Dutch Church Libel of 1593, for example, likened London's immigrant population to 'the Jewes' that 'eat us vp as bread' through 'vsery' and mercantilism.²⁰ Many perceived usury as a peculiarly Jewish crime,²¹ rendering the terms 'Jew' and 'usurer' synonymous in England long after the Jews were officially expelled, despite the fact that Christians had taken up the practice of moneylending in their absence — as Conscience laments in *The Three Ladies*, 'usury is made tolerable amongst Christians as a necessary thing' (10.25).²² The irony was not lost on early modern commentators: Thomas Wilson, for example, reminded readers in 1572 that usury was the reason Jews 'were hated in England, and so banyshed worthelye' before calling for their contemporary Christian counterparts — those 'Englishmen ... worse then Jewes' — to suffer a similar fate.²³

Staging a/the Jew in 1581

Where does *The Three Ladies* fit within this constellation of competing and contradictory Elizabethan attitudes toward Jews? With the exception of Stephen Gosson's description of a now lost alternative ending to *The Three Ladies*,²⁴ no accounts of the play in performance survive, leaving only the extant playbooks, printed in 1584 (Q1) and 1592 (Q2), as the basis for speculation. Unlike the early printed editions of both *The Jew of Malta* (Q 1633) and *The Merchant of Venice* (Q 1600; F1 1623), in which a number of speech headings for Barabas and Shylock respectively are replaced with the identity 'Jew' instead,²⁵ both Q1 and Q2 of *The Three Ladies* consistently mark Gerontus's speeches with the abbreviated form 'Geron.' The name 'Gerontus' itself is not demonstrably Jewish,²⁶ though its similarity to 'Gernutus', a Jewish usurer bearing little further resemblance and the subject of a broadside ballad — printed in the 1620s but of uncertain date of composition and relationship to *The Merchant of Venice* — has been noted.²⁷ In fact, the word 'Jew' and its derivatives 'Jews', 'Jewry', and 'Jewishness' occur a total of ten times throughout the play: eight times in dialogue (1.14, 9.7, 12.19, 12.22, 12.24, 14.49, 14.49, 14.59) and twice in stage directions (9 sd, 12 sd). The first of these instances appears in the stage direction opening scene 9, '*Enter Mercadorus, the Merchant, and Gerontus, a Jew*' (9 sd), a scene in which Gerontus identifies himself as a Jew when he admonishes Mercadorus to be more ethical in his business dealings: 'Surely, if we that be Jews should deal so one with another, / We should not be trusted again of our own brother' (7–8).

Whereas Mercadorus's appearance is prescribed as '*like an Italian Merchant*' (3.0 s.d.), '*the Merchant*' (9.0 s.d.) and later described as 'in Turkish weeds' (14.13), the text provides no descriptions of Gerontus — that is, unless the words '*a Jew*' (9.0 s.d.) and '*the Jew*' (12.0 s.d.) following his name in the stage directions are intended to convey the appearance of a stock character type.²⁸ The existence of such a traditional character type in the Elizabethan drama — in which Jews were costumed with prosthetic hooked noses, red hair, beards, and gabardines — has become axiomatic in modern scholarship, and Smith, like Charles Edelman before her, prudently advises that this is perhaps an 'invented tradition' with 'very little archival or historical basis.'²⁹ The lack of evidence cuts both ways, however, and absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. The dialogue has already established Gerontus is a Jew, so why is this detail necessary to repeat in the stage directions? There are later instances in the early modern drama where the word 'Jew' is used to indicate costuming in this way. Two Christian characters in John Webster's *The Devil's Law-Case* are disguised '*in the habit of a Jew*' (3.2.0 s.d.) and

'like a Jew' (5.3.32 s.d.) respectively, prompting the play's most recent editors to suggest that the directions call for 'an immediately recognizable stage costume', one that likely drew upon 'other stage Jews' to provide 'a model (and theatrical stock) of clothing and other features'.³⁰

Neither Edelman nor Smith considers *The Devil's Law-Case* in their analysis. Webster's play postdates the appearance of Gerontus, Barabas, and Shylock — as well as other Elizabethan and early Jacobean stage Jews — and therefore cannot be cited as evidence for any tradition that may have informed *The Three Ladies*. Nevertheless, it is not implausible to concede that insistence on Gerontus's Jewishness in the stage directions may suggest reliance upon an existing convention of costuming and perhaps also served as an actors' prompt.³¹ As Jean MacIntyre observes, *The Three Ladies* 'calls for multiple changes not only for doubling but also to show the characters' changing moral states as their social status changes', employing 'exotic attire' in the form of 'loose overgarments, headgear, and hand properties' to indicate the 'foreignness' of the Italian merchant, the Jew, and the Turkish judge — so-called "occupational" roles — and to allow 'the rapidly doubling actors to change'.³²

Unless new evidence is forthcoming, we may never know for sure how Jews were costumed on the early modern stage, whether a recognizable convention existed, or what 'loose overgarments, headgear, and hand properties' were necessary to distinguish Gerontus from non-Jewish characters in *The Three Ladies*. Biblical Jews aside,³³ Gerontus is the earliest extant Jewish role in the Elizabethan drama. Gosson describes an earlier play, *The Jew*, 'representing the greediness of worldly chusers, and bloody minds of Usurers' that was staged at the Bull in or before 1579,³⁴ but nothing is known about the identity of the titular character or how (presuming a male character) he was costumed. A blank theatrical history such as this allows for much speculation: how might Robert Wilson, Leicester's Men, or indeed, their Elizabethan audiences expect a Jewish merchant in Turkey to look?

By the time *The Three Ladies* was first staged in 1581, Nicolas de Nicolay's richly illustrated travel narrative was already a bestseller: first printed in French (Lyon, 1567–68; second edition Antwerp, 1576), two Italian editions followed (Antwerp, 1577; Venice, 1580), before an English translation was published as *The Navigations, peregrinations and voyages, made into Turkie* (London, 1585).³⁵ Nicolay dedicates a chapter to 'the Merchant Iewes dwelling in Constantinople and other places of Turkie and Grecia', in which he describes their number and wealth as 'a thing marueilous and incredible', multiplying at rates to rival the monetary interest gained through usury, with the result that 'at this present day

they haue in their handes the most and greatest trafique of merchandize and readie money' in the Levant.³⁶ He remarks upon the presence of *marranoes* or crypto-Jews 'of late banished and driuen out of Spaine & Portugale' in terms of the 'detriment and damage' this poses to Christendom, since these Jews, in addition to bringing 'workemen of all artes, and handicraftes moste excellent', have also passed information on to the Turks: 'diuers inuentions, craftes and engines of warre, as to make artillerie, harquebuses, gunne powder, shot, and other munitions'.³⁷ After rehearsing the standard litany of charges against 'this detestable nation of the Iewes', as 'men ful of all malice, fraude, deceit, and subtill dealing, exercising execrable vsuries amongst the Christians and other nations without any consciences or reprehention', Nicolay then describes their appearance:

The Iewes which dwell in Constanstinople [*sic*], Andrinpole, Bursia, Salonica, Gallipoli, & other places of the dominion of the great Turke, are all apparrelled with long garments, like vnto the Gretians, and other nations of Leuant, but for their mark and token to be knowen fro[m] others, they weare a yealow Turbant.³⁸

This description is accompanied by an illustration, captioned 'Marchant Juif', 'Mercante Giudeo', or 'A Merchant Iewe' in the French, Italian, and English editions respectively (see Figure 1), and referred to in the text as 'one of those [Jews] that carie cloath to sell through the citie of Constantinople'.³⁹

If Wilson and/or Leicester's Men were concerned with verisimilitude, a yellow turban as described by Nicolay may have served as suitably distinctive headgear for the actor playing Gerontus to don. After Nicolay — and possibly, as argued here, *The Three Ladies* — the description of Barabas' hat as a gift from the 'Great Cham' in *The Jew of Malta*, which strongly suggests it is a turban,⁴⁰ and the frontispiece to Thomas Coryate's travel narrative, *Coryate's Crudities* (London, 1611), which 'includes a picture of a Jew in a turban' chasing a Christian with a knife, provide further pictorial evidence to 'support the notion that Jews were known in England to wear turbans'.⁴¹ If not a turban, yellow garb of some kind was just as likely to signal Jewishness to an Elizabethan audience — even those unfamiliar with the restrictions in the Ottoman Empire — because the colour had become associated with the Jews ever since the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 compelled them to wear yellow badges throughout Christendom. After the Council of Vienna in 1267, Jews in Christian lands were also required to wear distinctive horned hats or 'pileum cornutum'. Representations of Jews, marked by yellow apparel and characteristic headgear, were readily available in early modern England: for example, a fragment of a fifteenth-century stained-glass



Fig. 1. A merchant Jew, from Nicolas de Nicolay, *Les quatre premiers livres des navigations et pérégrinations orientales* (Lyon, 1567–68). Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Cartes et plans, GE DD-2002 (RES).

shield at Great Malvern Priory Church in Malvern, Worcestershire, depicts a Jew wearing contemporary (that is, medieval) yellow garb spitting at Christ (Figure 2).⁴²

However, if the actor playing Gerontus wore a turban, we may assume that he was not alone: the trial scene calls for a ‘Judge of Turkey’ (14.0 s.d.), and the dialogue establishes that Mercadorus is dressed ‘in Turkish weeds’ (13) — presumably the same ‘Turk’s apparel’ mentioned earlier (12.23). How, then, might Gerontus’s costume have been distinguished from that of the Turkish Judge and/or Mercadorus? In a chapter devoted to ‘the Cadilesquers great Doctors of the lawe



Fig. 2. A Jew spitting at Christ. Stained glass at Great Malvern Priory, Malvern.
Photo by Rev. Gordon Plumb, Barton upon Humber.

Mahometicke and chiefe Iustices of the Turkes', Nicolay provides a description and illustration of Turkish judges. After likening their religious function to 'the Metropolitans' and 'Patriarches' in the Greek and Roman Churches, and their judicial function to 'Chauncellours or chiefe Presidentes', Nicolay relates how the *kadiaskers* (from the Arabic *qāḍī al-'askar*, literally 'judge of the army') are 'stately and honourable' men 'chosen of ripe age' to deter 'the heat of youth' and 'the fire of carnall loue' from swaying their decisions:

As for their apparrel, they loue to be cloathed in a chamblet, satten, or damaske, of sad colours, and more honest, as russet browne, tawny, or darke purple. The sleeues of their gownes be long and streit: vppon their heads they do weare a Tulbant of a marueilous wideness and bignesse, hauing the middest ... more lower and streight then the other ordinarie are: ... [and] wearing their beard long & fierce.⁴³

Lest readers misinterpret his description as praise or admiration, Nicolay concludes that the *kadiaskers* show ‘in the[m] a great grauitie, ioyned with a fained holiness, casting foorth but few words’, reflecting the ‘euident and meare hypocrisie’ of their ‘lawe and religion altogeather’.⁴⁴ The accompanying illustration depicts a bearded *kadiasker* on horseback with a fine robe and distinctively layered turban (see Figure 3).

As the play’s clown figure, Mercadorus likely wore an Italian costume that an Elizabethan audience presumably found risible to begin with; whether his adoption of ‘Turkish weeds’ in the trial scene was an opportunity for further amusement or not, we can probably assume that his new clothes were sufficiently different from those worn by Gerontus and the Judge.⁴⁵

Argument, Counter-argument, and Conclusions

The case for the play’s antisemitism requires establishing its deployment of derogatory Jewish stereotypes and beliefs. Though the terms were synonymous in Elizabethan England, casting Gerontus as both a usurer and a Jew is perhaps evidence enough — his Jewish identity is rendered unnecessary by the historical practice of moneylending at interest by Christians and Ottoman Muslims,⁴⁶ as referenced in the play itself: ‘interest is allowed amongst you Christians, as well as in Turkey’ (14.32). As detailed in the previous section, Gerontus’s costume (about which we may never be certain) may also have relied upon established conventions used to distinguish Jews from non-Jews, of which many derive from legal restrictions, such as the prescription of particular clothing. We may also infer that his name — from the Greek *gerōn*, or ‘old man’ — suggests Gerontus was bearded; however, as Elliott Horowitz has shown, changing fashions in Christendom and the emergence of a new cultural ‘other’ in the beardless peoples of the New World began to displace the medieval association between beards and non-Christians.⁴⁷

The Three Ladies contains echoes of other antisemitic narratives: when Mercadorus curses Gerontus as a ‘sitten, scald, drunken Jew!’ (12.19), this recalls an association between Jews and excrement — ‘sitten’ is an aphetic form of ‘beshit-ten’ — still current in early modern England, evidenced in the belief that Jews emitted a noxious scent and in the tale of the Jew of Tewkesbury, an event reported to have occurred in 1257 but frequently retold. John Foxe relates this story in his *Actes and Monuments* as follows:

A certain Jew ... fell into a priuy at Tewkesbury vpon a sabboth day, which for the great reuerence he had to his holy sabboth, would not suffer him selfe to be plucked



Fig. 3. A *kadiasker* or Turkish chief justice, from Nicolas de Nicolay, *Les quatre premiers livres des navigations et pérégrinations orientales* (Lyon, 1567–68). Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Cartes et plans, GE DD-2002 (RES).

out. And so Lord Richard Earle of Glocester, hearing therof, would not suffer him to be drawne out on Sundaye for reuerence of the holy day. And thus the wretched superstitious Jewe remayning there tyll mondaye, was found dead in the dounge.⁴⁸

This notion of the ‘excremental’ Jew, as Jonathan Gil Harris has argued, informs a number of literary, dramatic, and anecdotal materials linking the fear of Jewish infiltration with enemas and sodomy, such as Barabas’ betrayal of Malta by ‘gain[ing] entry to the body politic through apertures that are subtly coded as its anus’ and leading the Ottoman troops through the sewers.⁴⁹

Another antisemitic aspect of the play may be found in Gerontus’s invocation of Muhammed when he threatens Mercadorus with legal action: ‘Truly pay me my money, and that even now presently, / Or by mighty Mahomet I swear I will

forthwith arrest ye' (12.3–4). Late medieval and early modern Christian polemics routinely conflated Jews with other 'infidels' and 'enemies of Christ' in general, and with Muslims in particular.⁵⁰ One of the symptoms of this, as Michael Mark Chemers has shown, is that Jewish characters in early English drama 'seem to take a particular delight in the invocation of Muhammed specifically as a curse or to throw weight behind a threat'.⁵¹

Antisemitic belief in the inability of Jews to properly or sincerely shed their Hebrew faith after conversion — whether to Christianity or Islam — may also explain Gerontus's inappropriate oath: Peter the Venerable had proclaimed 'a Jew is not a Jew until he converts to Islam', after all.⁵² Although performed some thirty years after *The Three Ladies*, Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turk* provides a striking example in the character of Benwash, a Jewish merchant living in Tunis who has converted to Islam to safeguard his wife against the predations of the Turks: 'I bought my liberty, renounced my law / (The law of Moses), turned Turk — all to keep / My bed free from these Mahometan dogs' (6.74–6).⁵³ Despite his conversion, Benwash is never once referred to as a Muslim or Turk. Instead, other characters refer to him directly as 'Jew' throughout the play (5.37, 6.45, 6.63, 6.155, 6.192, 6.227, 6.259, 6.267, 6.293, 6.350, 6.345, 6.453, 10.44, 10.79, 11.3, 11.17, 13.45, 16.37, 16.48, 16.222, 16.238). He is mocked for 'speak[ing] in Hebrew' (6.411), and is made a cuckold whilst 'in the Synagogue' (373). Beyond the dialogue, Benwash's Jewish identity is emphatically confirmed in print: the 1612 Quarto consistently uses 'Jew' as his speech prefix. In fact, the only references to Benwash as a Turk are those made by Benwash himself, but these are either equivocal or contradictory: he warns an officer to 'know a Turk's wife from a Christian's' (428), threatens his adulterous wife with 'I swore as I was a Turk, and I will cut your throat as I am a Jew' (16.74–75) and, in his last words, 'Bear witness, though I lived a Turk, I die a Jew' (213).

The argument that *The Three Ladies of London* is not antisemitic and is perhaps even philosemitic in its treatment of Jews rests upon interpreting Gerontus as a virtuous character. To do so, critics typically draw attention to his apparent generosity in forgiving Mercadorus his debt, an act variously characterized as 'wildly unrealistic',⁵⁴ 'an example of moneylending conducted in an ethical manner',⁵⁵ and one driven by a desire not to witness him 'forsak[ing] his faith'.⁵⁶ Gerontus has even been described as taking Mercadorus to court 'reluctantly'.⁵⁷ But how selfless, generous, and reluctant is this act? When Gerontus first threatens Mercadorus with legal action, he dismisses the merchant's initial plea for an extension of 'tree or four days' to conduct 'much business in hand' (12.6) with 'Tush, this is not my matter; I have nothing therewith to do. / Pay me my money, or I'll make

you' (7–8), promising to post officers outside his lodgings 'so that you cannot pass by' and to take him to 'prison' should the debt remain unpaid (9–10). It is only after this exchange that Mercadorus announces his plan to turn Turk to avoid repayment of the loan — since 'if any man forsake his faith, king, country, and become a Mahomet, / All debts are paid' (14.15–16)⁵⁸ — to which Gerontus reacts with disbelief: 'This is but your words, because you would defeat me; / I cannot think you will forsake your faith so lightly' (12.15–16). This disbelief spurs Gerontus to take his leave to 'try [Mercadorus's] honesty' (17), arguably forcing Mercadorus's hand. It is only after this point that the audience is made aware of Lady Lucre's letter, requesting that Mercadorus 'cozen de Jew for love a her' (22), but this is irrelevant — can Gerontus's actions in this scene be said to be those of a patient, generous, reluctant, or ethical character?

Gerontus's motivation in forgiving the debt is equally questionable. He is not necessarily 'horrified at the thought that he has caused a man to repudiate the faith to which he was born',⁵⁹ or 'revealed to be more ethical and merciful than the Christian merchant',⁶⁰ but releases Mercadorus from the bond because he 'would be loath to hear the people say, it was 'long of me / Thou forsakes thy faith' (14.38–39). Conversion to one faith means apostasy from another, and, as Nabil Matar reports, 'the punishment for apostasy in Islam, as it was in Christianity, was death'.⁶¹ Death — even the threat of death — is not good for business, and, given that his clientele include Christian merchants, Gerontus's fears of being blamed for Mercadorus's apostasy may easily be read in an economic light.

Whereas Shylock relies upon the threat posed to legal precedent should his suit be denied — 'If you deny me, fie upon your law: / There is no force in the decrees of Venice' (4.1.100–01)⁶² — a further commercial incentive for Gerontus to forgive the debt may be to avoid the threat of establishing such a legal precedent for other potential customers to follow. To forgive Mercadorus his debt is thus rendered a shrewd fiscal maneuver: although he forfeits the principal and interest — but not, as in *The Merchant of Venice*, his livelihood — Gerontus secures his future business by ensuring that should 'the people say' anything, they, like the judge, might focus on his apparent act of kindness — his perceived ability to 'excel in Christianity' (14.49) — and not on the threat feigned or actual conversion poses to his contractual relationships. Tobias P. Graf has recently argued that conversion to Islam indeed voided such contractual relationships in the early modern period, evidenced 'by numerous cases of debtors who, after having embraced [Islam], often saw their debts reduced or written off entirely'.⁶³ To minimize the financial loss and contractual uncertainty posed by converts to Islam, a number of Christian states negotiated with the Ottoman Empire to establish formal procedures

for redress. For example, 'the regularity of such conversions' to Islam by Venetian merchants 'to avoid paying debts and returning goods', Eric R. Dursteler reports, 'led the baili' (the Venetian ambassador) to 'obtain a firman' (an Islamic royal mandate) 'stating that if Venetian agents turned to Islam, their goods were to be returned to their principals'.⁶⁴ The capitulations renewed in 1662 between Charles II and Mehmed IV introduced similar provisions for the English:

An Englishman turning Mahometan, & hauing goods, or estate in his hands belonging to his English Principalls, those goods or estate shall bee deliuered into the hands of the Embassadour, or Consul that they may conuey, & make them good to the true owners.⁶⁵

Whether to avoid the stigma of apostasy or setting a legal precedent, Gerontus's final admonishment to Mercadorus bears such economic readings out: rather than denounce Mercadorus's feigned conversion, he advises only that the merchant 'Seek to pay, and keep day with men, so a good name on you will go' (14.53). In other words, Gerontus is less concerned for Mercadorus's soul than for his 'good name', that is, his credit.

Critics also typically interpret the Judge's closing remark, 'Jews seek to excel in Christianity, and Christians in Jewishness' (14.49), as praise for Gerontus' morality set against Mercadorus's chicanery. To do so not only ignores the fact that the Judge 'reassuringly keeps the categories of Jew and Christian intact while scrambling their occupants',⁶⁶ but by equating Jewishness with falseness and economic trickery, the Judge also reinscribes antisemitic beliefs in the impossibility of sincere Jewish conversion and the economic threat Jews posed to Christendom through deceit.

What conclusions, if any, might be drawn from all this? If the preceding arguments and counter-arguments suggest anything, it is that *The Three Ladies* poses more Jewish questions than it answers. This is partly due to an absence of evidence — a critical lacunae too tantalizing to leave unfilled — and partly, I think, because on some level we want the play to stand as an exception to the antisemitism overwhelmingly present elsewhere in the early modern drama. The paucity of historical and theatrical evidence that has enabled critical assumptions about Elizabethan antisemitism in *The Merchant of Venice* to become axiomatic (as Edelman and Smith have shown) is the same that has allowed philosemitism to dominate scholarly assessment of *The Three Ladies*, ignoring the ambiguities and exaggerating the available evidence — scant though it may be — in both plays.

Notes

- 1 John Payne Collier (ed.), *Five Old Plays, Illustrating the Early Progress of the English Drama* (London, 1851), 157–244.
- 2 John Payne Collier, “‘To Turn Turk.’ — Jews in Our Early Plays,” *The Athenaeum* 1175 (1850), 476.
- 3 One notable exception is Matthew Biberman, who holds ‘it is wrong to read Gerontus in a straight (nonironic) way as a good character’, and argues that, as ‘a satire of a morality play’, *The Three Ladies* ‘rests on a strategy of inversion that here extends to include the absurdity of the charitable Jew’ (*Masculinity, Anti-Semitism, and Early Modern England Literature: From the Satanic to the Effeminate Jew* [Burlington, 2004], 23, 201n39).
- 4 Alfred Harbage, ‘Innocent Barabas’, *The Tulane Drama Review* 8.4 (1964), 49.
- 5 M.J. Landa, *The Jew in Drama* (London, 1926), 55.
- 6 Lloyd Edward Kermode, *Aliens and Englishness in Elizabethan Drama* (Cambridge, 2009), 18, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511576140>.
- 7 Robert A. Logan, *Shakespeare’s Marlowe: The Influence of Christopher Marlowe on Shakespeare’s Plays* (Aldershot, 2007), 137.
- 8 Joan Ozark Holmer, ‘Jewish Daughters: The Question of Philo-Semitism in Elizabethan Drama’, John W. Mahon and Ellen Macleod Mahon (eds), *The Merchant of Venice: New Critical Essays* (New York, 2002), 108, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9780203060537>.
- 9 Charles Edelman, ‘Which is the Jew that Shakespeare Knew?: Shylock on the Elizabethan Stage’, *Shakespeare Survey* 52 (1999), 100, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/ccol0521660742.008>.
- 10 E.E. Stoll, ‘Shylock’, *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 10.2 (1911), 247.
- 11 H.S.D. Mithal (ed.), *An Edition of Robert Wilson’s ‘Three Ladies of London’ and ‘Three Lords and Three Ladies of London’* (New York, 1988), xix.
- 12 Emma Smith, ‘Was Shylock Jewish?’ *Shakespeare Quarterly* 64.2 (2013), 188–219, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/shq.2013.0034>.
- 13 Anthony Bale, *The Jew in the Medieval Book: English Antisemitisms, 1350–1500* (Cambridge, 2007), 3, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2277/0521863546>. I raise these distinctions at the outset because Smith’s otherwise admirable work of revisionism employs the terms ‘anti-Semitic’ and ‘Semitic’ and their cognates in ways that tacitly validate the Victorian racial constructs she seeks to expose as fantasies: the pithiness of Smith’s repeated expression contrasting ‘semantic’ with ‘Semitic’ (189, 219), as well

as her consistent use of 'anti-Semitic' (189, 192, 195, 201, 202, 205, 207, 209, 219), undercut her argument for deessentialization.

- 14 Brett D. Hirsch, 'Judaism and Jews', Bruce R. Smith (ed.), *The Cambridge Guide to the Worlds of Shakespeare* (Cambridge, 2016), forthcoming. See also James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews* (New York, 1996).
- 15 Representative studies include Stephen G. Burnett, *Christian Hebraism in the Reformation Era (1500–1660): Authors, Books, and the Transmission of Jewish Learning* (Leiden, 2012), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/9789004222496>; Elaine Glaser, *Judaism without Jews: Philosemitism and Christian Polemic in Early Modern England* (New York, 2007), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/9780230599932>; David S. Katz, *The Jews in the History of England, 1485–1850* (Oxford, 1994) and *Philo-Semitism and the Re-admission of the Jews to England, 1603–1655* (Oxford, 1982); and Jeffrey S. Shoulson, *Fictions of Conversion: Jews, Christians, and Cultures of Change in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia, 2013), <http://dx.doi.org/10.9783/9780812208191>.
- 16 John 8. All references are to the Geneva Bible.
- 17 Representative studies include Joan Young Gregg, *Devils, Women, and Jews: Reflections of the Other in Medieval Sermon Stories* (Albany, 1997); Miri Rubin, *Gentile Tales: The Narrative Assault on Late Medieval Jews* (New Haven, 1999); Debra Higgs Strickland, *Saracens, Demons, and Jews: Making Monsters in Medieval Art* (Princeton, 2003); and Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and Its Relation to Modern Anti-Semitism* (New Haven, 1943).
- 18 Thomas Browne, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* (London, 1646), 2C1r. The reference is also used for comic effect when Crasy vows revenge in Richard Brome's *The City Wit* (London, 1653): 'I'll rid 'em one after another, like Guts, till they shall stink worse then Jewes' (B5v). Of course, some of these medieval and early modern beliefs were distorted reflections of real Jewish practices — the conflation of male circumcision with castration, for example — and economic circumstances, such as the association between Jews and usury — one of the few activities available to Jews in Christian lands, where they were otherwise subject to restrictions on land ownership and excluded from membership of merchant and craft guilds.
- 19 The same is also true for the iconography that became associated with the Jews, such as wolves and owls; on the latter, see Brett D. Hirsch, 'From Jew to Puritan: The Emblematic Owl in Early English Culture', Brett D. Hirsch and Christopher Wortham (eds), *'This Earthly Stage': World and Stage in Late Medieval and Early Modern England* (Turnhout, 2010), 131–72, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1484/M.CURSOR-EB.3.4722>.
- 20 Quoted in Arthur Freeman, 'Marlowe, Kyd, and the Dutch Church Libel', *English Literary Renaissance* 3.1 (1973), 44–52; on the question of Elizabethan xenophobia

- broadly, see also Matthew Birchwood and Matthew Dimmock, 'Popular Xenophobia', Andrew Hadfield, Matthew Dimmock, and Abigail Shinn (eds), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Popular Culture in Early Modern England* (Farnham, 2014), 207–20.
- 21 While the play 'does not explicitly identify' the character of Usury 'as a Jew', Janet Adelman has argued that 'the play's audience would have no trouble making the connection' (*Blood Relations: Christian and Jew in 'The Merchant of Venice'* [Chicago, 2008], 13, <http://dx.doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226006833.001.0001>). I do not find this persuasive, not least because it requires reading back from the play's sequel, *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London* (London, 1590), in which Wilson describes Usury's parents as 'both Iewes' (F4r).
 - 22 All quotations from *The Three Ladies of London* are taken from Lloyd Edward Kermode (ed.), *Three Renaissance Usury Plays* (Manchester, 2009), cited parenthetically by scene and line number.
 - 23 Thomas Wilson, *A Discourse vppon Vsurye* (London, 1572), F5v.
 - 24 Stephen Gosson, *Plays Confuted in Fiue Actions* (London, 1582), D1v–D2v. The alternate ending described by Gosson makes no mention of the Mercadorus–Gerontus subplot.
 - 25 On the implications of these interchangeable speech headings, see Brett D. Hirsch 'Counterfeit Professions: Jewish Daughters and the Drama of Failed Conversion in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* and Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*', *Early Modern Literary Studies*, Special Issue 19 (2009), 4.33–34, <http://purl.oclc.org/emls/si-19/hirscoun.html>; and, John Drakakis, "'Jew. Shylock is My Name": Speech Prefixes in *The Merchant of Venice* as Symptoms of the Early Modern', Hugh Grady (ed.), *Shakespeare and Modernity: Early Modern to Millennium* (New York, 2000), 105–21, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9780203141045>, though Drakakis's bibliographical argument — and the earlier scholarship on which it rests — are certainly flawed: see Gabriel Egan, 'Shakespeare: Editions and Textual Matters', *Year's Work in English Studies* 91 (2012), 328–42.
 - 26 As Kermode suggests, the name 'probably indicates an old man, from the Greek *gerōn*' (80). The similarity of 'Gerontus' to 'Gerontius' or 'Gerontios' (a fourth-century British-born Roman general) or its Welsh derivations 'Geraint' or 'Gereint' (names for a character in the Welsh Arthurian tradition) do not warrant further investigation.
 - 27 The ballad 'A new Song, shewing the crueltie of Gernutus a Jew' (London, 1620?) is available from the *English Broadside Ballad Archive* (ebba 20063; Magdalene College — Pepys 1.144–145), <http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/20063/>. A transcription of the ballad is also available in Thomas Percy (ed.), *Reliques of Ancient English*

- Poetry* (London, 1765), 1.189–98. Although Geoffrey Bullough deemed the ballad to be ‘probably pre-Shakespearian’ (*Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* [London, 1957–75], 1.449), I am inclined to follow Kenneth Muir who sees it as ‘influenced by Shakespeare’s play, and also by Robert Wilson’s play’ (*The Sources of Shakespeare’s Plays* [London, 1977], 88). For a lively discussion of the ballad, see Bruce R. Smith, ‘Shakespeare’s Residuals: The Circulation of Ballads in Cultural Memory’, Stuart Gillespie and Neil Rhodes (eds), *Shakespeare and Elizabethan Popular Culture* (London, 2006), 208–13, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781472555120.ch-009>.
- 28 On the existence of such a tradition, see Alan C. Dessen, ‘The Elizabethan Stage Jew and Christian Example: Gerontus, Barabas, and Shylock’, *Modern Language Quarterly* 35.3 (1974), 231–43, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1215/00267929-35-3-231>; cf. Edelman, ‘Which is the Jew’.
- 29 Smith, ‘Was Shylock Jewish?’, 196, 189; see also Edelman, ‘Which is the Jew’.
- 30 John Webster, *The Devil’s Law-Case*, David Gunby, David Carnegie, and MacDonald P. Jackson (eds.), *The Works of John Webster* (Cambridge, 2003), 2.37, 2.214n, 2.232n. References to the play are to act, scene, and line numbers and cited parenthetically.
- 31 The status of the text allows for this possibility: according to Martin Wiggins, Q1 of *The Three Ladies* appears to have been printed ‘from an authorial MS or a transcript thereof’ (*British Drama, 1533–1642: A Catalogue* [Oxford, 2012–], 2.265–69 [no. 700]). Leslie Thomson also believes that the stage directions ‘are almost certainly authorial, and probably reflect Robert Wilson’s practical experience as a player’ (“As it hath been publicly played”: The Stage Directions and Original Staging of *The Three Ladies of London*, *The Three Ladies of London*, <http://threeladiesoflondon.mcmaster.ca/contexts/LeslieThomson.htm>). However, the enterprise of determining the nature of an underlying manuscript from a printed playbook has recently come into question; see Paul Werstine, *Early Modern Playhouse Manuscripts and the Editing of Shakespeare* (Cambridge, 2013), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781139103978>.
- 32 Jean MacIntyre, *Costumes and Scripts in the Elizabethan Theatres* (Edmonton, 1992), 35. Likewise, Thomson suggests ‘the costumes of the lawyer, judge, constable, beadle, and other court figures would have been recognizable, as probably would that of “Gerontus, a Iewe”’; see Thomson, ‘“As it hath been publicly played”’.
- 33 These include characters in *The Story of Samson* (1567), *The Repentance of the Ninevites* (1569), *Dives and Lazarus* (1570), the Sherborne Corpus Christi Play (1571), *Herodes* (1572), *Abraham’s Sacrifice* (1575), and *All for Money* (1577). All dates of first performance are taken from Wiggins’ *Catalogue*.
- 34 Stephen Gosson, *The Schoole of Abuse* (London, 1579), C6v.

- 35 On the contents and wider significance of Nicolay's treatise, see the entry for it in David Thomas and John A. Chesworth (eds), *Christian-Muslim Relations: A Bibliographical History, Western Europe (1500–1600)* (Leiden, 2014), 6.754–63.
- 36 Nicolas de Nicolay, *The Navigations, peregrinations, and voyages, made into Turkie* (London, 1585), R6v.
- 37 Ibid, R6v.
- 38 Ibid, R7r–v. Nicolay also describes how the Jews on the isle of Chios are likewise 'constrayned to weare for a token a great cappe or yealowe colour' so 'they should be the better knowen from others' (F1v).
- 39 Nicolay, *The Navigations*, R7v; the illustration appears at R8r. A photograph of the illustration from the English edition is available online through the Folger Shakespeare Library Digital Image Collection: <http://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/s/5o5o7q>.
- 40 Randall Nakayama, '“I know she is a courtesan by her attire”: Clothing and Identity in *The Jew of Malta*', Sara Munson Deats and Robert A Logan (eds), *Marlowe's Empery: Expanding His Critical Contexts* (Newark, 2002), 138.
- 41 Robert Lublin, *Costuming the Shakespearean Stage: Visual Codes of Representation in Early Modern Theatre and Culture* (Farnham, 2011), 158.
- 42 On the association between Jews and spitting, see Brett D. Hirsch, 'The Taming of the Jew: Spit and the Civilizing Process in *The Merchant of Venice*', Rory Lougnane and Edel Semple (eds), *Staged Transgression in Shakespeare's England* (New York, 2013), 136–52, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/9781137349354.0014>; on early modern English perceptions of Jewish garments and appearance more generally, see Lublin, *Costuming the Shakespearean Stage*, 142–61, and Eva Johanna Holmberg, *Jews in the Early Modern English Imagination: A Scattered Nation* (Farnham, 2011), chap. 4.
- 43 Nicolay, *The Navigations*, N5r–N6r.
- 44 Ibid, N6r.
- 45 The comic possibilities of Mercadorus's costuming are beyond the scope of this essay. On the relationship of the play to the *commedia dell'arte* tradition, and to Mercadorus's role in this system in particular, see Pamela Allen Brown, 'Courtesan, Merchant, Zany: Italian Knockoffs in *The Three Ladies of London*', *The Three Ladies of London*, <http://threeladiesoflondon.mcmaster.ca/contexts/PamelaBrown.htm>.
- 46 On the Ottoman practice of usurious piety or *waqf al-nuqūd* (from the Arabic, literally 'detention of money'), see Jon E. Mandaville, 'Usurious Piety: The Cash Waqf Controversy in the Ottoman Empire', *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 10.3 (1979), 289–308, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/s0020743800000118>.
- 47 Elliott Horowitz, 'The New World and the Changing Face of Europe', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 28.4 (1997), 1181–201, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2543574>.

- 48 John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments* (London, 1570), N1v.
- 49 Jonathan Gil Harris, *Foreign Bodies and the Body Politic: Discourses of Social Pathology in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1998), 80.
- 50 Jewish characters frequently swear by Muhammad in the surviving medieval liturgical drama and mystery cycles. In the English drama, Jewish characters profess their faith to 'Machomet' throughout the Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, while Herod swears by 'Mahound' — a pejorative corruption of the name of the Islamic prophet — in the York, Towneley, and Digby plays. By way of a continental example, a Jewish usurer and his family repeatedly invoke the names 'Mahé' and 'Mahom' — Gallicized short-forms of 'Muhammad' — in the *Mistere de la Sainte Hostie*, a fifteenth-century Parisian host desecration play.
- 51 Michael Mark Chemers, 'Anti-Semitism, Surrogacy, and the Invocation of Mohammed in the *Play of the Sacrament*', *Comparative Drama* 41.1 (2007), 29, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/cdr.2007.0002>; see also Paula Blank, *Shakespeare and the Mismeasure of Renaissance Man* (Ithaca, 2006), 80–117. For an important discussion of the links between Islamic and Jewish characters in early modern drama, see Jonathan Burton, *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579–1624* (Cranbury, 2005), 196–232.
- 52 Quoted in Alan H. Cutler and Helen E. Cutler, *The Jew as Ally of the Muslim: Medieval Roots of Anti-Semitism* (Notre Dame, 1986), 2. On the perceived impossibility of Jewish conversion in early modern England, see Hirsch, 'Counterfeit Professions'; cf. M. Lindsay Kaplan, 'Jessica's Mother: Medieval Constructions of Jewish Race and Gender in *The Merchant of Venice*', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 58.1 (2007), 1–30, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/shq.2007.0012>.
- 53 All quotations from *A Christian Turned Turk* are from Daniel J. Vitkus (ed.), *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England* (New York, 2000), cited parenthetically by scene and line number. I thank Saskia Zinsser-Krys for clarifying an earlier reading of this scene.
- 54 G.K. Hunter, 'Elizabethan and Foreigners', *Shakespeare Survey* 17 (1964), 50, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/ccol0521064309.005>.
- 55 Teresa Lanpher Nugent, 'Usury and Counterfeiting in Wilson's *The Three Ladies of London* and *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*, and in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*', Linda Woodbridge (ed.), *Money and the Age of Shakespeare: Essays in New Economic Criticism* (New York, 2003), 203, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/9781403982469>.
- 56 Chloe Preedy, *Marlowe's Literary Scepticism: Politic Religion and Post-Reformation Polemic* (London, 2012), 72, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781472555021>.
- 57 Burton, *Traffic and Turning*, 220.

- 58 The term ‘paid’ in this instance means ‘absolved’, ‘cancelled’, or otherwise no longer enforceable by law.
- 59 M.M. Mahood (ed.), *The Merchant of Venice* (Cambridge, 1987), 22.
- 60 Claire Jowitt, ‘Robert Wilson’s *The Three Ladies of London*’, Thomas Betteridge and Greg Walker (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama* (Oxford, 2012), 311, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199566471.013.0019>.
- 61 Nabil Matar, *Islam in Britain, 1558–1685* (Cambridge, 1998), 60, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511582738>.
- 62 All quotations from *The Merchant of Venice* are from Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (gen. eds), *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 2005), doi:10.1093/acrade/9780199267170.book.1, cited parenthetically by act, scene, and line number.
- 63 Tobias P. Graf, ‘Of Half-Lives and Double-Lives: “Renegades” in the Ottoman Empire and Their Pre-Conversion Ties, ca. 1580–1610’, Pascal W. Firges, Tobias P. Graf, Christian Roth, and Gülay Tulasoğlu (eds), *Well-Connected Domains: Towards an Entangled Ottoman History* (Leiden, 2014), 134–35, doi:10.1163/9789004274686_009.
- 64 Eric R. Dursteler, *Venetians in Constantinople: Nation, Identity, and Coexistence in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Baltimore, 2006), 114.
- 65 *The Capitulations and Articles of Peace* (Constantinople, 1663), C2v.
- 66 Adelman, *Blood Relations*, 17.

JOHN A. WARRICK

Talbot's Death as Passion Play in Shakespeare's *1 Henry VI*

This article examines the death of John Talbot in Shakespeare's 1 Henry VI against late medieval passion plays. It argues that Shakespeare adapted common features of medieval pageants, and particularly those representing Christ's crucifixion, harrowing of hell, and resurrection, to enhance the tragic impact of his secular history play. Finally, it theorizes Talbot's secular martyrdom in relation to developments unique to the reformation of saintly devotion and the imitatio Christi in Elizabethan England.

Thomas Nashe, writing in defense of London's professional theatre in 1592, extolled the dramatization of the historical John Talbot in what was most likely Shakespeare's *1 Henry VI*:

How would it have ioyed brave Talbot (the terror of the French) to thinke that after he had lyne two hundred years in his Tombe, hee should triumphe againe on the Stage, and haue his bones newe embalmed with the teares of ten thousand spectators at least (at seuerall times), who, in the Tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding.¹

This passage, the earliest known printed response to a Shakespeare play, indicates that re-enactments of history in the theatre involved tragic presentation and an audience's response that perhaps touched upon religious fervour. Source studies have traced exactly how Shakespeare's histories align with the chronicles, but these texts cannot alone account for Nashe's complex reaction to the play. Classical models are also of limited help in explaining how English spectators developed their unique taste for blending tragedy with native history.² By convention, however, late medieval religious theatre often intermingled formally

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disparate elements when conveying salvation history, and we are increasingly aware that stage traditions involving the ‘representation of human history organized into patterns of rebellion, punishment, and redemption’ provided situational and dramaturgical models for events depicted throughout many of Shakespeare’s history plays.³ I will argue that one such event, the death of Talbot at Bordeaux in *1 Henry VI*, relies on late medieval passion plays that blend history, religion, and tragedy, and that these sources in turn can help to clarify the saintly appeal of Talbot, whose incarnational qualities align with features typical of Elizabethan hagiography.

Talbot’s certain demise and death take up most of act 4 of *1 Henry VI*, but the script’s account is a fictional re-envisioning that intentionally departs from Hall’s *Chronicle*, which otherwise serves as the source for this portion of the play.⁴ Beginning with Talbot’s parley at Bordeaux and his isolation from English reinforcements, the scene turns to the battle where he and his son, John Lord Lisle, are killed.⁵ Although in the play Talbot and his son fall together in combat, Shakespeare inaccurately conflates the siege of Bordeaux with the battle at Castillon, where in fact the English general was defeated and killed.⁶ Shakespeare also problematically includes the characters of Joan of Arc, who was burned as a heretic more than twenty years earlier in 1431, and Sir William Lucy, who apparently never fought in the Hundred Years’ War. Individually such infidelities demonstrate flexibility in the ways that early modern theatre could alter any historical event according to theatrical need. Shakespeare’s accumulation of factual disregard resembles the established tendencies of companies such as the Queen’s Men in staging Elizabethan history plays, but errors in *1 Henry VI* further indicate his intentional transformation of Talbot’s story to a dramaturgical model that substantially draws upon conventions unique to medieval religious theatre.⁷ If in 1592 Thomas Nashe responded to Talbot through the tragedian who played the part, then examining *1 Henry VI* against the long-standing theatrical legacy of historical tragedy in England could offer productive insight into Shakespeare’s play.

Talbot’s Passion and the Medieval Theatre of Crucifixion and Resurrection

Emrys Jones argues that ‘Christ’s ministry and death was the supreme narrative, the prototype of all suffering and all tragic action’, and that despite great theological upheaval the centrality of Christ’s passion remained a model of tragic sentiment for medieval and early modern audiences alike.⁸ In the analysis that follows, I will demonstrate that Shakespeare realized the emotional and thematic

potential of Talbot's death in *I Henry VI* by integrating iconic staging and recognizable dialogue common to late medieval plays on Christ's passion and resurrection. The text's clear indication of the *placētus Mariae* [Mary's lament] will be of specific interest due to its thematic and iconographical congruity with the eucharistic allegory of the pelican in her piety. I will further examine Sir William Lucy as a character who repeatedly alludes to theatrical versions of the descent from the cross and the resurrection. These examples should illustrate how Shakespeare imparts a Christological quality to Talbot, ultimately bestowing a tragic dimension and poetic complexity to the historical ruin of a much-celebrated English hero.

The image of the *pietà*, as a visual analogue to the narrative genre of the *placētus Mariae*, grounds several medieval theatrical allusions in *I Henry VI*. After skirmishes leading to the English army's defeat at Bordeaux, soldiers bear the lifeless body of John Lisle to his mortally wounded father. Talbot laments the loss of his son and instructs his men to,

Come, come, and lay him in his father's arms,
My spirit can no longer bear these harms.
Soldiers, adieu. I have what I would have,
Now my old arms are young Talbot's grave. (4.4.141–4)

Although this moment includes no explicit stage direction, an audience will see the visual representation of young Talbot laid at rest in his father's dying embrace — an arrangement that editor Edward Burns claims is emblematic of a *pietà*.⁹ Mary's iconic embrace of her dead son appears in theatrical versions of the passion story, with the following instruction provided by the burial play from the N-Town manuscript:

*Here Joseph and Nychodemus takyn Cryst of þe cros, on on o ledyr
and þe tother on another leddy. And quan [he] is had down,
Joseph leyth hym in oure Ladys lappe. (34.121 sd)*¹⁰

The likelihood that *I Henry VI* contains a *pietà* is reinforced by a direct textual reference when Burgundy, who has approached with other French commanders, comments on John Lisle's death.

Doubtless he would have made a noble knight.
See where he lies inhearsed in the arms
Of the most bloody nurser of his harms. (4.4.156–8)

Burns points to the double meaning of these lines, explaining that Talbot is the 'cause and the maintainer, and so the *nurser*' of John's bloody inclination to warfare; likewise he is the responsible agent for the injuries his son incurs in battle.¹¹ Nursing is a familiar topic throughout various literatures of the *planctus Mariae*, and in Chester's passion play Mary begs of Jesus,

Alas, sonne, my boote thou bee,
thy mother that thee bare.
Think one, my fruyte, I fostred thee
and gave thee sucke upon my brest.
Upon my pyne thou have pittye;

(16A.243–7)¹²

This example reveals the mechanics of Shakespeare's promotion of tragic sentiment. By placing the younger Talbot in the arms of his father, the archetypal emblem of the mourning mother is rendered into a patrilineal arrangement with John Lisle embodying the dead Christ and his father John Talbot standing in as Mary. Sandro Sticca explains the humanizing effect of the *planctus*, as Mary's profound anguish 'transcends the eschatological and spiritual character of her divine motherhood and finds expression in the representation and evocation of a mother's tenderness'.¹³ In this regard the *planctus* matches the general shift from an emphasis on the divinity of Christ to the humanity of Jesus in the late medieval period, a transformation reliant on alterations of passion imagery in a number of religious media. The overall effect upon Shakespeare's adaptation, drawn from long-standing devotional traditions, ranges among the lyrical, emotive, sorrowful, and compassionate.

By carefully intermingling dialogue associated with nursing and blood, Shakespeare may also engage with the topic of eucharistic sacrifice through the invocation of the comparable tradition of the pelican in her piety. Commonly included in bestiaries, the pelican was usually illustrated in the act of reviving her offspring with an aspersion of blood drawn from her own breast.¹⁴ Once allegorized, this image symbolic of Christ's spiritual nurture and self-sacrifice bore eucharistic connotations that survived England's Protestant Reformation. The allegory remained popular enough to appear in a sermon by Thomas Playfere, who in 1595 preached that 'Christ is that tender Pellican, who by wounding his owne breast, doth restore his owne to life againe by his blood'.¹⁵ Because of its thematic and visual congruity with the *planctus*, this referent should have imparted a Christological quality to Talbot that by convention is nurturing and vital; instead we find that he is rendered to audiences as a wretched father who is complicit in his son's demise. Karl Tamburr explains that the pelican's sacrificial blood, like

Christ's, signified 'the nourishment that flows from a mother to the children she nurses and that strengthens them in their new lives'.¹⁶ If Shakespeare intended to competitively situate eucharistic iconography against the identification of Talbot as a 'bloody nurser', then the image of Talbot with his dead son destabilizes into a set of utterly opposed connotations, promoting continuance, life, and nurture while also thematically confusing these with mortality, loss, and bereavement. This binary structure persists throughout the sequence of Talbot's passion, and Shakespeare's pietà grounds a poetic complexity that emerges through the tragic interplay of the human and divine aspects of Talbot's fictive characterization.

Mary's lament exists in passion plays alongside many distinct responses by other witnesses to Christ's death, and Shakespeare primarily refers to these sequences through the character of Sir William Lucy. Whereas the historical Sir William Lucy was a contemporary of John Talbot, his omission from Hall's *Chronicle* reveals that his appearance as an English emissary in *1 Henry VI* is fabricated. Michael Hattaway observes that his inclusion might have honoured his descendant Sir Thomas Lucy, a magnate of Charlecote who could have befriended Shakespeare.¹⁷ As such Lucy is uncomfortably situated as a non-fictional person whose appearance in the play is entirely imagined. In the sections that follow, I will trace this character through short episodes relating to the burial and the resurrection of Christ. As an instrument of the scene's medieval theatricality, Sir William Lucy advances passion imagery through coherent structural patterns, characterization, and, remarkably, linguistic citation.

Upon the conclusion of battle, Lucy parleys with the French to 'know what prisoners thou hast ta'en, / And to survey the bodies of the dead' (4.4.168–9). The French King Charles anticipates Lucy's search for Talbot, and his response is deeply suggestive of medieval plays that comment on the resurrection:

CHARLES For prisoners ask'st thou? Hell our prison is.
But tell me whom thou seek'st.

LUCY But where's the great Alcides of the field? —
Valiant Lord Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, (170–3)

Readers of liturgical drama may detect a vague resemblance in this exchange with the *visitatio sepulchri*, a category of medieval liturgical drama that celebrated the resurrection through the story of three women who encounter an angel at Christ's empty tomb. The play exists in countless dramatic versions, but its central exchange remains stable:

ANGEL *Quem quaeritis* [Whom do you seek?]

MARYS *Jesum Nazarenum* [Jesus of Nazareth]¹⁸

The angel then reveals that Christ has arisen from the grave, and he instructs the women to report the resurrection to others. Shakespeare's use of some variation of this dramatic exchange can be detected through the structural and linguistic similarities of Charles's line, 'But tell me whom thou seek'st', with medieval predecessors.¹⁹ While Shakespeare's direct knowledge of any version of the liturgical *visitatio* is implausible, at some point its features were transferred to vernacular mystery plays.²⁰ The women from the Chester pageant are greeted by Angelus Primus, who asks of them,

What seeke ye women here
with weeping and unlykinge chere?
Jesus, that to you was deare,
ys risen, leeve you mee. (18.345–8)

The Towneley resurrection casts the exchange in more recognizable language:

Ye mowrnyng women in youre thoght,
Here in this place whome haue ye sought? (26.399–400)²¹

As such, Shakespeare employs two of the more celebrated lines from the long history of medieval theatre, and his thoughtful integration of this familiar story may have elicited proportional emotional responses among audiences for *1 Henry VI*.

To experience the full potential of Talbot's fall, spectators would need to recognize the play's passion imagery as a vehicle for tragic sentiment. Emrys Jones insists that popular theatre must first of all 'establish a more or less instantly recognizable relation to traditional expected forms; however innovative in detail, it must in essence work through a modification of what is already known'.²² However, Shakespeare characteristically intervened against any uncritical association even as he promoted the empathetic conflation of Talbot with Christ through long-standing theatrical conventions. Medieval spectators mourning Christ's death by crucifixion would anticipate his resurrection, but such a victory would not be possible for Talbot whose utter mortality is conspicuous throughout the remainder of the scene. Despite his freshly killed body, Joan refers to Talbot's corpse as already 'Stinking and fly-blown' (4.4.188) and urges that Talbot and his son be quickly removed because 'to keep them here, / They would but stink, and putrefy the air' (201–2). These are excessive descriptions, possibly intended by the playwright to escalate the scene's tragic tone by accentuating the symbolic disparity of Talbot's human and divine dispositions. This treatment underscores French villainies in

a profoundly nationalistic play, engendering an epic sense of communal loss for English spectators who realized that their mythic Talbot, unlike Christ, could never overcome death.

Dramatic conflict in medieval crucifixion plays is by convention shaped through the various responses to Christ's execution by devout and disbelieving observers. Viewers actively function as intermediaries between the spectacle of the relatively passive Jesus and an audience's developing anguish as his suffering unfolds onstage. Shakespeare's treatment of Sir William Lucy recalls the story of one such character, Joseph of Arimathea, who removed Jesus from the cross to bury him. When Lucy learns of Talbot's death from Joan, he requests possession of the bodies so that they might be buried with honour.

Is Talbot slain, the Frenchmen's only scourge,
Your kingdom's terror and black Nemesis?

...

Give me their bodies that I may bear them hence
And give them burial as beseems their worth. (4.4.189–90 and 197–8)

Shakespeare here evokes a popular feature that appears in every surviving English crucifixion play. In the Towneley manuscript, for example, Joseph of Arimathea is emboldened by his service as a loyal councilor to plead for Christ's body:

JOSEPH For my long seruyce I the pray,
Graunte me the body — say me not nay —
Of Iesu dede on rud.

PILATUS I graunte well, if he ded be.
Good leyfe shall thou haue of me;
Do with hym what thou thynk gud. (23.695–700)

There are structural correspondences between this excerpt and Shakespeare's rendering of Sir William Lucy: a single character requests leave from a figure of authority to provide an honourable burial for a mythic figure. The petitions are also presented in comparable language, and Joseph pleads for Pilate to 'Graunte me the body' while Lucy more courageously demands of Charles to 'Give me their bodies'.

More convincing still is the N-Town play in which Pilate allows Joseph to dispose of the body in whatever manner he sees fit:

PYLAT Sere Joseph of Baramathie, I graunt þe;
 With Jesus body do þin intent.

...

And þan lete Joseph do his wylle,
 What þat he wyl with Jesu do. (34.57–8 and 67–8)

This characteristic language is later repeated for emphasis:

PYLAT Sere, all þoure lest 3e xal haue.
 With Jesus body do þoure intent.
 Whethyr 3e bery hym in pyt or grave,
 þe powere I grawnt þow here present. (34.77–80)

In *1 Henry VI*, Joan urges the Dauphin to dispense the corpses to Lucy's custody; in doing so she reinforces Lucy's association with Joseph of Arimathea:

JOAN For God's sake let him [Lucy] have him: to keep them here,
 They would but stink, and putrefy the air.

CHARLES Go, take their bodies hence.

LUCY I'll bear them hence;
 But from their ashes shall be reared
 A phoenix that shall make all France afear'd.

CHARLES So we be rid of them, do with him what thou wilt. (4.4.201–7)

By permitting Lucy to 'do with him what thou wilt', the king fittingly echoes Pilate in the *N-Town* play when he commands, 'lete Joseph do his wylle, / What þat he wyl with Jesu do'. Similar dialogue appears throughout versions of late medieval burial plays.²³ Lucy's final remark also fittingly invokes the regenerative phoenix as a culminating statement (205–6 above), as many medieval crucifixion plays close with a hopeful vision of the coming resurrection. This promise is offered by Joseph's companion, Nichodemus, at the close of the *Towneley* play:

He that dyed on gud Fryday
 And crownyd was with thorne,
 Saue you all that now here be—
 That lord that thus wold dee,
 And rose on Pashe-morne! (23.720–24)

These transitional lines serve a double purpose for medieval audiences, providing closure to the tragedy of the crucifixion while anticipating Christ's eventual defeat of death. Lucy's allusion to the regenerative phoenix resonates with the

promise of the resurrection, but his feeble defiance betrays the ruin of England's heroic spirit, so perfectly embodied in brave Talbot, which cannot persist against the loss of Talbot's son and the factious state of Henry's army in France.

Talbot, the incarnation, and the harrowing of hell

Passion imagery establishes the quality of Talbot's tragedy, and by alternating poetic focus on both the human and the divine aspects of Christ's identity *1 Henry VI* additionally engages with incarnational theology as an intellectual matter worthy of thematic exploration. In the section that follows, I will revisit *1 Henry VI*'s passion sequence for the perceptible inclusion of incarnational theology unique to the harrowing of hell, an event of Christ's afterlife that directly pertains to the crucifixion's role in medieval salvation history.²⁴ Shakespeare's royal characters often vacillate between majesty and mundanity, and Ernst Kantorowicz attributed to English constitutional law the struggles of characters like King Henry V, who is 'Twin-born with greatness' but also 'subject to the breath / of every fool' (*H5* 4.1.234–5).²⁵ More recent inquiries into Henry's duality have demonstrated the influence of New Testament dramas that theologically relate to the role of the incarnation in the fulfillment of salvation history. These rediscovered sources fundamentally shift our understanding of Shakespeare's characters in the history plays, many of whom repeat variations of Henry's ambivalent qualities. Beatrice Groves for instance links Hal's redeeming promise to 'wear a garment all of blood' (*IH4* 3.2.135) to Christ's humanity in the mysteries, whose enfleshment distracts the devil much in the same way that Hal's indolence misleads Hotspur.²⁶ Karen Sawyer Marsalek has also shown that medieval Antichrist dramas inform Falstaff's unseemly and false emulation of Christ's resurrection at the Battle of Shrewsbury, where he nevertheless finally concedes that 'I am not a double man' (*IH4* 5.4.138).²⁷ In each case Shakespeare draws upon the incarnation to emphasize the willingness of human characters to manipulate Christological associations. This tendency perhaps even begins with *1 Henry VI*, the earliest of the plays listed here, where incarnational overtones become discernable when examined alongside late medieval plays on the topic of the harrowing of hell, at the core of which exists a theological debate about the dual nature of Christ as jointly human and divine.

In passion plays, audiences of the crucifixion watch Christ's human suffering before seeing his powerful divinity revealed in glory during the subsequent episode of the harrowing of hell. This story's apocryphal origin, which told of Jesus's rescue of Old Testament prophets from the prison house of *limbo patrum* [limbo

of the patriarchs], rendered it highly contestable despite official efforts to indulge reformed tastes in England. As a result multiple versions of the story were hotly debated throughout the 1580s-90s, so that the characteristically medieval harrowing still remained vital to audiences of *1 Henry VI*.²⁸ Late medieval prototypes typically open with a militaristic Christ advancing upon hell's gate, whereupon he commands infernal fiends to open their doors in acquiescence to his divine authority. Talbot's approach at Bordeaux refers to this apocryphal sequence. Upon arriving with his army, Talbot demands that the city's defenders 'open your gates, / Be humble to us, [and] call my sovereign yours' (4.2.5-6). This command evokes the central feature of every medieval harrowing play as Jesus discards his human vestment and demands entry through hell's gates as the son of God. Jesus in the Chester play instructs the devils to

Open up hell-gates anonne,
ye prynces of pyne everychon,
that Godes Sonne may in gonne,
And the king of blys. (17.153-156)

In *1 Henry VI* Bordeaux's captain appears on the walls for parley, but his words, accompanied by the distant boom of French drums, only portend Talbot's doom.

The period of thy tyranny approacheth.
On us thou canst not enter but by death:
...
And no way canst thou turn thee for redress
But death doth front thee with apparent spoil. (4.2.17-18 and 25-6)

The encounter indicates Shakespeare's awareness of the theological necessity of the crucifixion to Christ's sovereign authority over hell's dominion, which as a concept in medieval texts is reduced to the simple question of his right to enter hell's gate. The captain's declaration that Talbot 'canst not enter but by death' invokes the function of the sacrifice of Christ's human form, which deceives the devil from recognizing his truly divine nature. The crucifixion is a precondition often referred to in plays on the harrowing, as in the Towneley manuscript where Christ first announces 'My deth need must I take' (25.4) as an introduction to his confrontation with the wardens of hell.

1 Henry VI cleanly aligns with the plot of the medieval harrowing, and in so doing extends the capacity of Talbot's passion to involve the complexities of incarnation theology. In medieval theological terms, the crucifixion beguiles Satan, who is not fully aware that he plotted the unjust killing of an innocent man.²⁹

Patristic theory attributed to Gregory of Nyssa clarifies this idea through the metaphor of the 'bait and hook' — to ensure that Satan accepted Christ as ransom for humankind, 'the Deity was hidden under the veil of our nature, that so, as with ravenous fish, the hook of the Deity might be gulped down along with the bait of flesh'.³⁰ Associated theologies on the human incarnation of the divine Christ were eventually applied to the legalistic *disputatio* section of some harrowing of hell dramas. The York play contains an extended example of this device, where Satan scoffs at Jesus's claim to divine lineage in light of his human birth:

SATTAN God sonne? panne schulde þou be ful gladde,
 Aftir no catel neyd thowe cravel!
 But þou has leued ay like a ladde,
 And in sorowe as a simple knave.

...

JESUS Mi Godhede here, I hidde
 In Marie modir myne, (37.241–4 and 49–50)

Talbot's demise emulates this fundamentally medieval debate, and Bordeaux's captain simultaneously acknowledges and dismisses Talbot's ambivalent duality.

Lo, there thou stand'st a breathing valiant man
 Of an invincible unconquered spirit:

...

These eyes that see thee now well coloured
 Shall see thee withered, bloody, pale and dead. (4.2.31–2 and 37–8)

Talbot's mortality is distinguished from his 'invincible unconquered spirit', and Bordeaux's captain plainly discerns his enemy's double nature. The captain does not threaten Talbot's spirit but instead goes out of his way to 'glory of thy praise' (33) before separately threatening corporeal harm. The French thematically dismantle the aura of English invincibility, and the captain's clarity of observation prepares the ground for Talbot's death.

The captain's grasp of Talbot's dual nature can also sustain comparative analysis with plays from the second tetralogy. Beatrice Groves contends that the harrowing fundamentally informs the 'self-fashioning' narrative by which Hal masks his nobility through 'Covering discretion with a coat of folly' (*H5* 2.4.38).³¹ For Groves this metaphorical allusion echoes Hal's tendency to disguise himself in borrowed clothes in clever emulation of Christ who cloaked himself in humanity.³² Hal's dissimulation, as with Christ's, results in confusion on behalf of friends and enemies alike who cannot discern his true nature, and he ultimately

attains political magnificence through the cultivation of an ignoble pretense; in contrast, the mythic Talbot is estranged from his 'invincible unconquered spirit' and exposed as ordinarily human in anticipation of his death at Bordeaux. Skill in dissimulation resolves these characters' fates, and the confusion, or lack of confusion, engendered in their enemies ultimately results in success or failure. Whereas incarnational dissimulation and the deception of the devil are important themes throughout medieval dramas on the life of Christ, even serving to organize dramatic action in plays as diverse as those depicting the nativity and temptation, the revelation of Christ's true nature occurs only once, in the event of the harrowing of hell.

Many of Shakespeare's characters demonstrate contradiction and paradox, but these qualities alone do not mark an incarnational aesthetic. References to crucifixion and resurrection dramas define the parameters of Talbot's passion, but an explicit textual reference to the harrowing of hell confirms the core of his incarnational disposition. Upon the entrance of English soldiers bearing aloft the body of his dead child, John Talbot begs his son to once more

Speak to thy father ere thou yield breath:
 Brave death by speaking, whether he will or no;
 Imagine him a Frenchman, and thy foe.
 Poor boy, he smiles, methinks, as who should say,
 'Had death been French, then death had died today'.(4.4.136–40)

The distinctive patterning of 'death' here is ultimately attributable to 1 Corinthians 15:26, which reads 'And death once dead, there's no more dying then'.³³ Middle English versions of the apocryphal gospel of Nicodemus apply this passage to their description of Christ's victory at *limbo patrum*. The Harley manuscript reports 'All patryarkes and ilk prophete / And other saintes all' rejoice that 'Ded thurgh ded es destroit'.³⁴ We find a later dramatic correspondence in the N-Town play titled 'Christ's Appearance to Mary':

JESUS Now, dere modyr, my leve I take.
 Joye in hert and myrth 3e make.
 For deth is deed and lyff doth wake,
 Now I am resyn fro my graue.
 ...
 MARIA Now all mankynde, beth glad with gle!
 for deth is deed, as 3e may se, (35.117–120 and 125–6)

Some similar dramatic exchange between Christ and Mary has likely influenced Talbot's final appeal to his dead son at the point at which enduring mythopoeia gives way to the finite limits of their mortal condition.

Instead of thinking that medieval theatrical sources seeped into *1 Henry VI* through the unaware reminiscences of a playwright who was indirectly influenced through an array of liturgical, print, and dramatic sources, we might instead consider that Shakespeare knowingly applied the conventions of late medieval religious drama for poetic and theatrical cohesion. The medieval theatricality of Talbot's passion is probably not the work of another playwright or even the result of collaborative effort. Based on stylistic analysis Gary Taylor and others have already assigned this portion of *1 Henry VI* to Shakespeare's sole authorship, and the two Bordeaux scenes at question here total only 152 lines, providing a striking concentration of medieval citation within a clearly defined sampling of text.³⁵ The comparative classification of characters from other history plays who demonstrate incarnational traits also supports the attribution. Shakespeare's recycling of the passion story is notable but not entirely remarkable when compared to works by other secular playwrights of the period. His penchant for restaging the harrowing of hell, though, represents a unique dramaturgical feature separating his work from that of every other playwright of his generation — *1 Henry VI*, *1 Henry IV*, *Twelfth Night*, *Macbeth*, and *Henry VIII* all bear the imprint of Shakespeare's enduring interest in the harrowing.³⁶ Through source study readers may apprehend Talbot's passion within the scope of tragic form and incarnational characterization, but it is a separate task to explain the viability of the play's medieval features against the cultural and theatrical expectations of Elizabethan audiences.

Shakespeare's Medievalism and the English History Play

1 Henry VI may never be regarded by modern theatre makers as anything other than apprentice work, but our growing awareness of the play's formal complexity corrects its famous critical disregard as 'that drum and trumpet thing'.³⁷ In the following section I wish to speculate on some implications of Shakespeare's medieval dramaturgies, extending attention to the theatrical experience of Elizabethan audiences who witnessed the surge of English history plays during the late 1580s and early 1590s. Roland Wymer points out that, aside from the established exception of Shakespeare and perhaps Marlowe, no other Elizabethan or Jacobean dramatist shows evidence of having witnessed a mystery play.³⁸ If Wymer is correct, it is worth revisiting Shakespeare's access to the mystery plays at Coventry before then reassessing the passion's greater viability to the community of

London's professional theatre. These are important matters that bear upon *1 Henry VI* because at some level Talbot's death re-enacts divine sacrifice when state censorship seemingly would have forbidden any such representation. Within this framework I will argue that Talbot may be construed as a national martyr whose individual traits align with major shifts in Reformation England regarding the devotion and veneration of saints.

There are convincing reasons to think that Shakespeare attended the pageants at Coventry, that he made use of some of their features in many of his plays beyond *1 Henry VI*, and that versions of the passion were generally accessible to London audiences well into the early modern period. Michael O'Connell notes that Shakespeare's combined 'generational and geographical positioning' provided him with access to the mysteries, access that may not have been feasible for other contemporary playwrights.³⁹ Whereas the cycles of York and Chester were terminated in 1575 and 1576, Coventry's presentation of wholly New Testament material persisted until 1579 — meaning that these plays remained accessible to within a day's journey from Stratford for most of Shakespeare's youth.⁴⁰ The manuscript of Coventry's passion play has been lost to time, but we may detect its effect upon Shakespeare's career. Emrys Jones and John D. Cox have independently demonstrated that the passion sequence appears in the other installments of *Henry VI*. For instance, Gloucester's fall in Part 2 forms the perfect 'tragedy in little' according to conventional phases — like Christ, he is isolated by the careful plotting of malevolent conspirators who first bait their victim before publicly besetting him with minutely legalistic accusations.⁴¹ Later in Part 3 we find features of Christ's buffeting and scourging in the treatment of York's death, where Margaret jeers at York's claim to kingship, sets him upon a molehill, drapes him in a napkin of Rutland's blood, and humiliates him with a paper crown before killing him.⁴² Discernable visual elements emerge through implied staging, so that distraught parents like Queen Margaret and King Lear embrace their dead children in stage arrangements reminiscent of *pietàs* while speaking their grief in narratives that mimic the structure of the *planctus Mariae*.⁴³ Critics have also long recognized that characters from Shakespeare's history plays aspire to the symbolic authority of Christ, if only imperfectly. As an example of this trend, Jeffrey Knapp points to Richard II's surrender to 'Pilates' who 'have here deliver'd me to my sour cross' (*R2* 4.1.240–1). Rosalie Osmond has also observed Hal's invocation of the passion, likening his responsibility for the 'debt I never promised' (*IH4* 1.2.199) to Christ's payment on the cross for the 'debt I never owed'.⁴⁴ There is no better example of Shakespeare's medieval theatricality than *Macbeth's* porter scene, saturated with prolonged comic dialogue and stage business suggestive of

medieval drama (but not of apocryphal or poetic sources), a staged version of the harrowing of hell.⁴⁵ Because direct theatrical borrowing seems to be the case here, we may fittingly accept Michael O'Connell's call to 'eliminate the *if* and say with virtual certainty that Shakespeare saw the Coventry play in the last decade of its existence'.⁴⁶

Shakespeare's intricate debt to medieval drama is now acknowledged by scholars who are familiar with the continuous transmission of theatre practice into the early modern period; however, general consensus still maintains a more abstracted category of influence that can be discerned at the structural level only. Exact borrowings, if any, at the level of language, characterization, or theme have been thought to be unrecoverable due to the loss of manuscripts from Coventry.⁴⁷ Even as he identified a range of medieval theatrical sources for Shakespeare's histories, Emrys Jones nevertheless contended that 'There is nothing to warrant such a hunt for adumbrations of the Christian story. The resemblances in structure and conception ... were not meant to be noticed, and ... nothing is gained by tracing any connection between them'.⁴⁸ Jones discounts the impact of Shakespeare's proficient use of medieval dramaturgy and in doing so he effectively eliminates one discernable theatrical mode that in turn carries many of the playwright's thematic inquiries into historiography, political theory, and theology. Certainly the story of the passion remained theatrically viable for significant portions of Shakespeare's theatre-going public. Considering that he sometimes emulated Marlowe's verse, Shakespeare may have been impressed by Christological associations abounding in the dramatic treatment of Edward II's assassination, where Marlowe inserts several features from medieval devotional work that told of Christ's 'secret passion'.⁴⁹ Other theatrical productions apparently eluded government censorship well into the seventeenth century. William Prynne once reported that thousands of Londoners attended a Good Friday production of 'the acting of Christ's Passion' sometime between 1620 and 1624.⁵⁰ If this example indicates even sporadic popular interest, then spectators who witnessed Talbot's stage death in *1 Henry VI* at some point could have attended theatrical depictions of Christ's crucifixion outside of the context of the medieval mystery tradition. Even if they had not, audiences might still recognize elements of the crucifixion, the deposition, or the resurrection that reinforced superficially secular plays like Chapman's *The Widow's Tears* as late as 1604.⁵¹ If anything, these plays illustrate that certain verbal and visual components of the medieval drama were indeed reducible to generic citation for use in plays like *1 Henry VI*, and that the effective presentation of Talbot's death likely relied on the orchestration of dialogue and stage pictures identifiable by spectators regardless of regional difference.

The full impact of Talbot's passion, then, was accessible to many of Shakespeare's original audiences, and they may have responded instinctively to the affective piety in which his death was cast. *1 Henry VI* presents us with a rich example whereby medieval religious tragedy as a mode of theatrical expression translates into contexts that are primarily historical and nationalistic. Perhaps as spectators witnessed Talbot's theatrical death they engaged in a type of feigned eucharistic enactment conveyed through the play's deployment of the passion of Christ. According to Anthony Dawson, such experiences in early modern theatres may not have been entirely rare; underlying the allure of the period's tragedy could have been a 'peculiar theatrical magic' whereby a protagonist's stage death accedes to the phenomenon of a participatory sacrifice in the 'temporary and secular reenactment of Eucharistic community'.⁵² Following from Deborah Shuger's investigation into the period's 'habits of thought', Dawson claims that England's ongoing eucharistic controversies were 'unconsciously appropriated' by the early modern theatre, which he describes as a 'greedily appropriative institution, ingesting and transforming a whole range of cultural phenomena and making them its own'.⁵³

This is an appealing formulation, but as a model for the secularization of the theatre it favours the study of ideological interiority and institutional agency in ways that inadvertently diminish the purposeful craft of theatre makers, who, along with their London audiences, were immersed regularly in the deep culture of English Reformation debates.⁵⁴ Broader secularization theories are helpful to understanding the cultural poetics of devotional transformation in early modern theatres, but they can mystify Shakespeare's observable refashioning of medieval plays. His deliberate care with adaptation belies the 'unconscious appropriation' of pre-existing dramatic forms. External evidence indicates that Shakespeare's associates were fully aware of the religious dimensions of their work. In November 1589, representatives of Lord Strange's Men were summoned with other London theatre companies for their inappropriate presentation of 'certain matters of Divinity and of State unfit to be suffered'.⁵⁵ The lord mayor indefinitely suspended all theatrical activity in the city, but further steps were taken against some of Strange's players who were jailed for non-compliance — among those committed to the compters were presumably actors who later performed in *1 Henry VI*. Sally-Beth MacLean and Lawrence Manley even recommend that political and religious controversy made for a core feature of the company style, probably because these subjects remained theatrically viable for London's paying audiences.⁵⁶ This incident cannot be tied directly to the conception of *1 Henry VI*, but there remains an allowance for the play's foray into religious topics considering

that it was first produced by Lord Strange's company. As Helen Cooper points out, from explicit documentary evidence we know the names of only a few Elizabethans who attended both a mystery play and a play from London's professional theatre, and the city of Chester presented selections drawn from their civic pageants to Ferdinando Lord Strange and his father the earl of Derby in 1578.⁵⁷ While this contact with medieval theatre cannot establish a predilection by Lord Strange for medieval theatrical topics, the Chester plays offer an interesting and rare point of irrefutable contact with both theatre traditions for Shakespeare's early patron.

Shakespeare's audiences were probably complex enough to emotionally engage with elements of the passion while maintaining a critical awareness of the radical discontinuity of Talbot from his Christological gloss. Talbot's imperfect emulation of Christ as a divine model may even align with conventional Elizabethan models for saintly reform. Whereas Protestants targeted the veneration of saintly images, saints still provided a redeemable function within the aims of England's reform movements. According to Carol Piper Heming, 'the medieval worldview deemed saints perfect and thus incapable of being emulated'.⁵⁸ Medieval saints were models of perfection and therefore suited to glorification and adoration, but reformed attitudes held that humans were innately limited in their capacity to imitate pure divinity. Reformers such as Zwingli and Luther provided a solution to this disconnect by instead celebrating saints as 'weak humans and thus sinners; this made them more realistic models for other fallible mortals'.⁵⁹ By complementing virtue with frailty, saints became examples for the pursuit of human piety rather than unobtainable models suited to holy adoration.⁶⁰

Talbot's inadequate emulation of divine essence is appropriate to the Elizabethan period, and literatures widely available to Shakespeare theorized the innate disparities involved in the *imitatio Christi*, or the human imitation of Christ as exemplar. Thomas Rogers's translation and adaptation of Thomas à Kempis's pre-Reformation book, *Imitatio Christi*, was reprinted in England on the average of every other year between 1580 and 1609.⁶¹ Nandra Perry explains that according to popular conceptions of the *imitatio*, 'true Christian imitation is mindful of the distance between human subject and divine object, between contingent sign and transcendent referent. It is a necessary but always imperfect and potentially dangerous element of Christian piety'.⁶² The model warned against imitating those characteristics of Christ that were 'unimitable' by humans such as certain forms of creation, the raising of the dead, and any attempt to perform miracles.⁶³ With conspicuous similarities to Shakespeare, Edmund Spenser also explored the devotional limitations of the *imitatio Christi* by presenting a human protagonist's

emulation of the harrowing of hell in the *The Faerie Queene* (1590). In book 2, canto 7, the chivalric Guyon descends to the house of Mammon where he resists various temptations for three days, at the end of which time he is compelled to depart because 'No liuing wight / Below the earth might suffred be to stay' (66.2–3).⁶⁴ In many of Shakespeare's plays a similar theme emerges in the existential inability of humans to fulfill the sacral archetypes they might otherwise attempt to emulate. Talbot importantly dies having gained the clarity that his earthly harrowing of French castles provoked hubristic tendencies, and his tragedy closes with the lucid observation that, 'Had death been French, then death had died today'. John D. Cox argues that although Shakespeare uses medieval models to assure the 'emotional impact' of his history plays, the result is ultimately one of contrast and not likeness, 'always with the effect of analyzing the political process empirically rather than identifying the hand of God in the government of humankind'.⁶⁵ What emerges is a style of 'political realism' that is observable through the disparities of characters who act pragmatically, in opposition to the 'sacral archetypes' according to which they were modelled.⁶⁶

Even while directly referring to the passion *1 Henry VI* curiously accumulates the traits of a saint play, and by way of theatrical genealogy Talbot's saintly demeanor comfortably situates Shakespeare's work within the established, if vague, genre of the secular history play of the 1580s and 1590s. John Wasson and others point to the structural and thematic resemblances of secular history plays with earlier saint plays that celebrate characters like Becket, Swithin, and Meriasek as indigenous figures worthy of dramatic treatment for their significance to English history, and their combined focus on religious and nationalistic themes possibly made English saint plays appealing for adaptation by later writers.⁶⁷ If we follow the secular conversion narrative of *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* to Hal's transformation in *1 Henry IV*, we realize that Shakespeare grasped the major conventions of the saint play.⁶⁸ Of course, Shakespeare's works alone do not define the genre of the English history play, and relatively secular iterations of saintly characters range among representative plays such as John Bale's *King Johan* (1538) and *Thomas Lord Cromwell* (entered into the Stationer's Register in 1602). James Simpson explains that for English reformers, 'authentic saints eventually become sites of memory, but not channels of grace, unable as they are to intercede on behalf of a living suppliant'.⁶⁹ Perhaps the unique features of Talbot's character, marked by the recycled formulas of late medieval religious theatre, presented a viable saintly conduit for the phenomenon of England's secular history play.

Shakespeare's medieval dramaturgies have been subsumed within increasingly nuanced but abstracted models that extend to the secularizing tendencies

of early modern theatre in general but often without reference to individual plays or the people who produced them; these tendencies in turn are usually thought to involve passive substitution in the redeployment of sacral modes of experience to the play world of the theatre.⁷⁰ Secularization theories now form a naturalized discourse within Shakespeare studies, but their epistemological assumptions do not sit comfortably with some medievalists, who suspect that a too-convenient linearity compromises the productive study of various medievalisms at play in the early modern period, and especially in the appreciation of individual works such as *1 Henry VI*. Progressive secularization requires a retrospective and long view of history that effaces the benefit of the direct analysis of any single play, implicitly valuing what Catherine Sanok identifies as the 'central typological paradigm of modernity: premodern religious types are at once canceled and fulfilled in a later secular iteration'.⁷¹ By refusing the foundational premise of Shakespeare's medieval dramaturgical practice, we not only mistake the unique tragic qualities of early English history plays; according to Sanok, we also obscure 'how late medieval religious phenomena are themselves complexly related to political social formations'.⁷² Our comprehension of Shakespeare's dynamic medievalism has suffered as a result: scenes bearing identifiably medieval aesthetics are often branded as interpellations and reassigned to other writers; late medieval religious themes that are not schematically Protestant are routinely taken to be intentional Roman Catholic subversions; and we almost certainly maintain unhelpful methods for assessing play texts such as *1 Henry VI* as imperfect works of literature when sometimes they should be understood as limited records of performance.

Notes

I am grateful to the reviewers and editors of *Early Theatre* who provided helpful feedback for multiple revisions of this article, and to Rebecca Morgan Frank for her editorial assistance.

- 1 See *Pierce Penilesse his Supplication to the Diuell* as reprinted in R.B. McKerrow (ed.), *The Works of Thomas Nashe*, 5 vols (London, 1910), 1.212.
- 2 Emrys Jones, *The Origins of Shakespeare* (Oxford, 1977), 52. See also John D. Cox, *Shakespeare and the Dramaturgy of Power* (Princeton, 1989), 82, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/9781400860012>.
- 3 Rowland Wymer, 'Shakespeare and the Mystery Cycles', *English Literary Renaissance* 34.3 (2004), 273–4, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.0013-8312.2004.00044.x>.

- 4 Geoffrey Bullough (ed.), *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare*, 8 vols (New York, 1960), 3.72–4.
- 5 Editors assign scene breaks differently in act 4 of *IH6*, which in F is comprised of a single continuous scene. I follow editor Edward Burns in numbering the ‘Bordeaux’ scenes as 4.2 and 4.4. All references to the play derive from Edward Burns’s Arden edition (London, 2000).
- 6 Most chronicle sources agree on Castillon as the site of Talbot’s defeat, but Crompton alone lists the site as being ‘Bordeaux’. See John Dover Wilson’s edition of the play (Cambridge, 1968), 176n. See also Michael Hattaway’s edition (Cambridge, 1990), 64.
- 7 Brian Walsh observes that the Queen’s Men ‘discovered fundamental incongruities inherent in representing the past’ that provoked their aesthetic experimentation with fictive modes in plays about English history. They are considered to be innovators of the genre, with a signature style for medley and allegory that introduced new dramaturgical possibilities for writers like Shakespeare, who perhaps advanced their tendency to experiment with chronicle sources. The Queen’s Men significantly influenced the genre of the Elizabethan history play, although for coherence I keep a diachronic focus on Shakespeare’s direct adaptation of medieval theatrical sources. See Brian Walsh, *Shakespeare, the Queen’s Men, and the Elizabethan Performance of History* (Cambridge, 2009), 34–5, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511657498>. For a catalogue of the company style of the Queen’s Men’s history plays, see the indexical listing for ‘medley, as style’ in Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean’s *The Queen’s Men and Their Plays* (Cambridge, 1998).
- 8 Jones, *Origins of Shakespeare*, 51.
- 9 Burns, *IH6*, 250n.
- 10 Stephen Spector (ed.), *The N-Town Play*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1991). All further references to the N-Town plays derive from this edition.
- 11 Burns, *IH6*, 250n.
- 12 R.M. Lumiansky and David Mills (eds), *The Chester Cycle: Text* (London, 1974), 1.315. All further references to the Chester plays derive from this edition.
- 13 Sandro Sticca, *The Planctus Mariae in the Dramatic Tradition of the Middle Ages*, trans. Joseph R. Berrigan (Athens, 1988), 2.
- 14 See for example Wilene B. Clark, *A Medieval Book of Beasts: The Second-Family Bestiary* (Woodbridge, 2006), 52.
- 15 Thomas Playfere, *A most excellent and heauenly sermon. Vpon the 23. chapter of the gospel by Saint Luke* (London, 1591; STC: 20014), D1r.
- 16 Karl Tamburr, *The Harrowing of Hell in Medieval England* (Cambridge, 2007), 167.
- 17 See Hattaway, *IH6*, 64.

- 18 David Bevington (ed.), *Medieval Drama* (Boston, 1975), 27–8. Text here is re-formatted and excludes editorial expansions.
- 19 A less obvious symbolic allusion lies in Lucy's response, in which he describes Talbot as 'the great Alcides of the field' (4.4.172). Alcides, or Hercules, was a not uncommon classical metaphor for Christ in the literature of early modern England — an association that was perhaps most memorably employed by Milton in *Paradise Regained*. Lucy then, true to the structural pattern of the *visitatio*, essentially responds to Charles that he seeks 'Christ'. See E.M.W. Tillyard, 'The Christ of "Paradise Regained" and the Renaissance Heroic Tradition', *Studies in Philology* 36.2 (1939), 247–57.
- 20 Documentary evidence suggests that the play's popularity declined in England over the late medieval period, and a reliance on Latin service books hastened its complete demise upon the advent of the Reformation. See Clifford Davidson, *Festivals and plays in Late Medieval Britain* (Aldershot, 2007), 26.
- 21 Martin Stevens and A.C. Cawley (eds), *The Towneley Plays* (Oxford, 1994). Further references to the Towneley manuscript or the Wakefield plays derive from this edition.
- 22 Jones, *Origins of Shakespeare*, 33.
- 23 It may also be that the Bastard's call to 'Hack their bones asunder' (4.4.159) aligns with another storyline connected to Joseph of Arimathea, who refuses to break Jesus's bones in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. See the N-Town play, where the soldier accompanying Joseph observes, 'Methynkyth Jesu is sewre anow — / It is no ned his bonys to breke. / He is ded, how pinkythy 3ow?' (34.81–3).
- 24 Traditionally the harrowing represents a closely aligned but categorically separate event from Christ's passion, but some Calvinists equated the harrowing of hell with Christ's torments on the cross, disavowing Christ's 'literal descent'. See Beatrice Groves, 'Hal as Self-Styled Redeemer: The Harrowing of Hell and *Henry IV Part 1*', *Shakespeare Survey* 57 (2004), 237, doi: 10.1017/ccol0521841208.019.
- 25 Ernst Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton, 1957), 24.
- 26 As cited in Groves, 'Hal as Self-Styled Redeemer', 241.
- 27 Karen Sawyer Marsalek, 'Marvels and Counterfeits: False Resurrections in the Chester *Antichrist* and *1 Henry IV*', Curtis Perry and John Watkins (eds), *Shakespeare and the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2009), 217–40, esp. 235.
- 28 Groves, 'Hal as Self-Styled Redeemer', 237–8.
- 29 See excerpt and discussion of the Gospel of Nicodemus 23 in C.W. Marx, *The Devil's Rights and the Redemption in the Literature of Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1995), 49.

- 30 Gregory of Nyssa, 'The Great Catechism', Henry Wace and Philip Schaff (eds), *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, 2nd series (Oxford, 1893), 5.495.
- 31 Beatrice Groves, *Texts and Traditions: Religion in Shakespeare 1592–1604* (Oxford, 2007), 127, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199208982.001.0001>.
- 32 Ibid, 126.
- 33 Burns, *IH6*, 249n.
- 34 With slight variation only this passage consistently appears in the Galba, Sion, and Additional GN manuscripts. See William Henry Hulme, *The Middle English Harrowing of Hell* (Oxford, 1978), 118–19.
- 35 Gary Taylor, 'Shakespeare and Others: The Authorship of *Henry the Sixth, Part One*', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* (1995), 145–205, esp. 182. Some editions combine the play's 'Bordeaux' sequences into a single scene. See note 5 above.
- 36 See Paul Dean, 'The Harrowing of Malvolio: the Theological Background of *Twelfth Night*, Act 4, Scene 2', *Connotations* 7.2 (1997–98), 203–14. For *Macbeth*'s Porter scene as a harrowing of hell, see Glynne Wickham, 'Hell-Castle and Its Door-Keeper', *Shakespeare Survey* 19 (1966), 68–74, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/ccol0521064325.007>. See also John B. Harcourt, 'I Pray You, Remember the Porter', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 12.4 (1961), 393–402, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2867456>. For the influence of the harrowing in *IH4* see Groves, 'Hal as Self-Styled Redeemer', 236–48. Scene 5.3 of *Henry VIII* stages porters who refer to *limbo patrum* (l 59), which when combined are clear markers for the influence of the medieval theatrical harrowing of hell.
- 37 Originally coined by Maurice Morgann, as cited by Anthony David Nuttall, *Shakespeare the Thinker* (New Haven, 2007), 24.
- 38 Wymer, 'Shakespeare and the Mystery Cycles', 268.
- 39 Michael O'Connell, 'King Lear and the Summons of Death', Perry and Watkins (eds), *Shakespeare and the Middle Ages*, 199–216.
- 40 Wymer, 'Shakespeare and the Mystery Cycles', 269–70.
- 41 Jones, *Origins of Shakespeare*, 35–54.
- 42 See Cox, *Shakespeare and the Dramaturgy of Power*, 89. Cox also suggests that characteristics of Queen Margaret and Cardinal Beaufort in *2H6* may derive from passion plays.
- 43 Katharine Goodland, 'Inverting the Pietà in Shakespeare's *King Lear*', Regina Buccola and Lisa Hopkins (eds), *Marian Moments in Early Modern British Drama* (Aldershot, 2007), 47–74.
- 44 Jeffrey Knapp, 'Author, King, and Christ in Shakespeare's Histories', Kenneth Graham and Philip Collington (eds), *Shakespeare and Religious Change* (New

- York, 2009), 227–9, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/9780230240858>. See also, Rosalie Osmond, 'Prince Hal's Parody of the Passion', *Notes and Queries* (1978), 132.
- 45 Wickham, 'Hell-Castle and Its Door-Keeper', 68–74.
- 46 As cited in Wymer, 'Shakespeare and the Mystery Cycles', 269.
- 47 Groves, *Texts and Traditions*, 41. However, fresh research on the topic of Shakespeare's medievalism continues to identify new lines of influence. See Helen Cooper, *Shakespeare and the Medieval World* (London, 2010), <http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781472555243>. See also Ruth Morse, Helen Cooper, and Peter Holland (eds) *Medieval Shakespeare: Pasts and Presents* (Cambridge, 2013), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/cbo9781139060905>. *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* issue 40.1 (2010) is themed 'Premodern Shakespeare', <http://dx.doi.org/10.1215/10829636-2009-011>. For broader inquiries into early modern medievalisms, including those of Shakespeare, see Gordon McMullan and David Matthews (eds), *Reading the Medieval in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2007).
- 48 Jones, *Origins of Shakespeare*, 54. Scholars still (understandably) avoid the direct allegorical implications of Shakespeare's medieval theatricality. See for example David Bevington's examination of *Richard III* in 'Conclusion: The Evil of "Medieval"' in Morse, Cooper, and Holland (eds) *Medieval Shakespeare*, 230–33.
- 49 Patrick Ryan, 'Marlowe's "Edward II" and the Medieval Passion Play', *Comparative Drama* (1998–99), 465–95.
- 50 William Prynne, *Histrion-Mastix: The Players Scourge or Actors Tragedie* (London, 1633), 117. As cited in Wymer, 'Shakespeare and the Mystery Cycles', 270n.
- 51 See Alice Dailey, 'Easter Scenes from an Unholy Tomb: Christian Parody in *The Widow's Tears*', Buccola and Hopkins (eds), *Marian Moments*, 127–40.
- 52 Anthony B. Dawson and Paul Yachnin, *The Culture of Playgoing in Shakespeare's England: A Collaborative Debate* (Cambridge, 2001), 12.
- 53 Ibid, 28–29. Also see Debora Shuger, *Habits of Thought in the English Renaissance: Religion, Politics, and the Dominant Culture* (Berkeley, 1990), esp. 9 and 254.
- 54 Elizabeth Williamson, 'Things Newly Performed: The Resurrection Tradition in Shakespeare's Plays', Graham and Collington (eds), *Shakespeare and Religious Change*, 111–13.
- 55 See items 48 and 49 in Glynne Wickham, Herbert Berry, and William Ingram (eds), *English Professional Theatre, 1530–1660* (Cambridge, 2000), 93–5. This incident likely reflects the involvement of various theatre companies in the religious and political satire of the Martin Marprelate affair of 1588–89.
- 56 Lawrence Manley and Sally-Beth MacLean, *Lord Strange's Men and Their Plays* (New Haven, 2014), 216, <http://dx.doi.org/10.12987/yale/9780300191998.001.0001>.
- 57 Helen Cooper, *Shakespeare and the Medieval World*, 57.

- 58 Carol Piper Heming, *Protestants and the Cult of the Saints in German-Speaking Europe, 1517–1531* (Kirksville, 2003).
- 59 Ibid, 108.
- 60 Robert Kolb, 'Festivals of the Saints in late Reformation Lutheran Preaching', *The Historian* (1990), 613, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6563.1990.tb00789.x>.
- 61 Elizabeth K. Hudson, 'English Protestants and the Imitatio Christi, 1580–1620', *Sixteenth Century Journal* 19.4 (1988), 543, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2540986>.
- 62 Nandra Perry, 'Imitatio and Identity: Thomas Rogers, Philip Sidney, and the Protestant Self', *English Literary Renaissance* 35.3 (2005), 375–6, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6757.2005.00063.x>.
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 Text from the edition by A.C. Hamilton (Harlow, 2001), as cited by Christopher Bond, 'Medieval Harrowings of Hell and Spenser's House of Mammon', *English Literary Renaissance* 37.2 (2007), 180–1, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6757.2007.00100.x>.
- 65 Cox, *Shakespeare and the Dramaturgy of Power*, 90–1.
- 66 Ibid, 84 and 103.
- 67 John Wasson, 'The Secular Saint Plays of the Elizabethan Era', Clifford Davidson (ed.) *The Saint Play in Medieval Europe* (Kalamazoo, 1986), 243 and 248. See also Benjamin Griffin, *Playing the Past: Approaches to English Historical Drama 1385–1600* (Woodbridge, 2001), 150.
- 68 Wasson, 'Secular Saint Plays', 248.
- 69 James Simpson, 'Diachronic History and the Shortcomings of Medieval Studies', McMullan and Matthews (eds) *Reading the Medieval*, 22.
- 70 Anthony B. Dawson, 'The Secular Theatre', Graham and Collington (eds), *Shakespeare and Religious Change*, 246. Dawson cites Tom Bishop's use of Giorgio Agamben's theory.
- 71 Catherine Sanok, 'Good King Henry and the Genealogy of Shakespeare's First History Plays', *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 40.1 (2010), 40, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1215/10829636-2009-013>.
- 72 Sanok, 'Good King Henry', 42.

PHILIP D. COLLINGTON

‘A Mad-Cap Ruffian and a Swearing Jack’: Braggart Courtship from *Miles Gloriosus* to *The Taming of the Shrew*

There is a generic skeleton in Petruchio’s closet. By comparing his outlandish behaviour in Shakespeare’s The Taming of the Shrew (ca 1592–94) to that of Pyrgopolinices in Plautus’s Miles Gloriosus (ca 200 BC), as well to that of English variants of the type found in Udall, Lyly, and Peele, I re-situate Petruchio as a braggart soldier. I also reconstruct a largely forgotten comic subgenre, braggart courtship, with distinctive poetic styles, subsidiary characters, narrative events, and thematic functions. Katherina’s marriage to a stranger who boasts of his abilities and bullies social inferiors raises key questions: What were the comic contexts and cultural valences of a match between a braggart and a shrew?

Is there a generic skeleton in Petruchio’s closet? When he arrives in Padua in *The Taming of the Shrew* (ca 1592–94), he introduces himself to locals as old Antonio’s heir — and those who remember the father instantly embrace the son. ‘I know him well’, declares Baptista, ‘You are welcome for his sake’ (2.1.67–9).¹ But when Petruchio begins beating his servant and boasting of his abilities, he may also have struck playgoers as a character type they knew well: the braggart soldier. By comparing Petruchio to the type’s most storied ancestor, Pyrgopolinices in Plautus’s *Miles Gloriosus* [*The Braggard Captain*] (ca 200 BC), as well as to sixteenth-century exemplars like Ralph in Nicholas Udall’s *Ralph Roister Doister* (ca 1545–52), Sir Tophas in John Lyly’s *Endymion: The Man in the Moon* (1588), and Huanebango in George Peele’s *The Old Wives Tale* (ca 1588–94), I will propose a different protagonist from the one to which modern playgoers and readers may be accustomed.² Viewed alongside these generic forbears, Petruchio emerges as a type whose bark is worse than his bite; and his eccentric behaviour recalls conventions of a lost comic subgenre, *braggart courtship*, with distinctive poetic styles, subsidiary characters, narrative events, and thematic functions. If

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Petruchio represents a variant of the braggart, then the type appears earlier in Shakespeare's corpus than is currently acknowledged.³ Braggart elements in the folio version also complicate this play's relationship with the quarto *Taming of a Shrew* (1594) in which Ferando's courtship of Kate proves more businesslike than boastful. The folio's Christopher Sly boasts that his family 'came in with Richard [the] Conqueror' (Ind. 1.4), but Petruchio's generic ancestry goes back to Pyrgopolinices the 'vain-glorious',⁴ comic butt of ancient Rome.

Because the folio does not identify him as a specific type (as in '*Gremio a Pantelowne*'), editors often adopt Nicholas Rowe's 1709 description of Petruchio as 'a gentleman of Verona' in their dramatis personae⁵ — fostering preconceptions at odds with a protagonist who claims indomitable courage, martial prowess, and widespread travel. 'Think you a little din can daunt mine ears?' Petruchio demands, in response to doubts he can woo the local 'wildcat':

Have I not in my time heard lions roar?
 Have I not heard the sea, puffed up with winds,
 Rage like an angry boar chafed with sweat?
 Have I not heard great ordnance in the field,
 And heaven's artillery thunder in the skies?
 Have I not in pitched battle heard
 Loud 'larums, neighing steeds and trumpets' clang?

(*The Shrew* 1.2.190–200)

While the descriptors 'gentleman' and 'adventurer' are not mutually exclusive, 'gentleman' and 'boaster' are. In *The French Academie* (1586), Pierre de la Primaudaye notes the ignobleness of bragging, 'Let vs not ... brag of our earthly race, but let vs glory in the integritie of maners'; in *The Compleat Gentleman* (1622), Henry Peacham counsels, 'learne [we] not to begge to our selues admirations from other'; and in *Advice to Young Gentlemen* (1698), Jacques Goussault asserts that 'Always to be boasting what a Man is, and how worthy he is, is to affront those he converses with ... [an] Advocate has not always his Pen in his Hand, nor a Soldier his sword'.⁶

Ann Thompson proposes that Petruchio's speech 'helps to define him as a "romantic" hero' (1.2.194–200 n). I will qualify this definition. By having his protagonist evoke a soldier-adventurer in this speech, Shakespeare conjures up their most inglorious captain: Pyrgopolinices. The play further alerts us to the type when Grumio undercuts his master's claims with a pun that he 'fears' (ie, 'frightens'/'is afraid of') no 'bugs' (204) — a common device whereby a braggart's tales are deflated by a subordinate who knows the truth. 'Look at the block-head',

notes one Plautine servant in a typical aside, ‘how he puffs and swells!’ (4.2.89).⁷ Pyrgopolinices’s stories are overinflated, and so may be Petruchio’s. The latter confides to Hortensio that he has been blown into town by ‘Such wind as scatters young men through the world / To seek their fortunes’ (*The Shrew* 1.2.47–8). Shakespeare does not specify the durations or locations of Petruchio’s adventures in the worldly ‘maze’ (52). Rather than speculate on when or where he fought in pitched battles, sailed stormy seas, or heard lions roar, I will explore the significance of claims that he did, and his intimation that as a result of these experiences, he is uniquely suited to wed Katherina: What were the comic contexts and cultural valences of a match between a braggart and a shrew?

If the braggart is lurking in Petruchio’s closet, then this character type and elements of his comic subgenre should combine — according to theories proposed by Mikhail Bakhtin, E.D. Hirsch, Jr, and Alastair Fowler — to facilitate audience comprehension and critical interpretation.⁸ Fowler likens genres to ‘armatures’ that ensure core stability yet allow for creative variation in each new incarnation.⁹ Bakhtin’s account is more visceral. To him, genre provides a ‘flexible skeleton’ on which to hang the flesh and blood of innovation; each work has distinctive features, but a generic outline remains visible — like the skull beneath the skin. If genres fail to incorporate new elements, Bakhtin warns, they become inflexible, stylized, even moribund.¹⁰ Fowler agrees: ‘to have any artistic significance ... a work must modulate or vary or depart from its generic conventions, and consequently alter them for the future’.¹¹ Familiar elements like comically oversized weapons and improbable stories function as initial ‘generic signals’ that help playgoers detect an array of other generic codes — like the braggart’s reliance on parasitic advisors or his brusque courtship techniques.¹² Hirsch notes that an initial ‘generic conception’ constitutes and colours ‘everything that [the reader] subsequently understands’ in the text. In a variant of the ‘hermeneutic circle’, first impressions activate generic preconceptions, which are then revised during the course of reading the work at hand. ‘[H]aving experienced that [signal] trait’, Hirsch explains, ‘we come to expect others belonging to the same type, and this system of expectations ... is the idea of the whole that governs our understanding’.¹³ Thus genre performs both a ‘heuristic and a constitutive function’, and every subsequent reading (or play-going) experience increases what Fowler calls our ‘competence in genre’ or ‘familiarity with such types’.¹⁴ This evolving ‘system of expectations’ is reminiscent of M.C. Bradbrook’s earlier proposal that an ‘internal society’ of typical roles — eg, ‘clowns, young lovers, pantaloons, boastful cowards’ — populated the minds of early modern playgoers. These types assisted

with the apprehension of character functions, the anticipation of narrative outcomes, and the recognition of dramatic forms.¹⁵

Wolfgang Iser has called Plautus ‘the father of European comedy’ and the latter’s character Pyrgopolinices certainly begat a long generic line of stage braggarts.¹⁶ Literary historians often enlist the analogy of genres as families — with ancestors, descendants, and traits passed down through the generations — to account for variations in individual members. Fowler recommends this approach to ascertaining form: ‘individual members are related in various ways, without necessarily having any single feature shared in common by all.’¹⁷ Fowler goes on to liken the introduction of new elements to ‘exogamy’, a practice that strengthens the generic/genetic pool. A genre remains most vital when it ‘marries out’, so to speak, blending traits and begetting hybrids as seen in the proliferation of English comic modes (eg, humoural comedy, city comedy). Paradoxically, a genre’s durability depends upon this capacity for assimilation and change. ‘No pantheon of immutable forms’, Fowler notes, rises above ‘the course of literary history’.¹⁸

The Taming of the Shrew includes many variant braggart conventions, but these innovations have obscured Petruchio’s resemblances to the Plautine exemplar now that interim figures like Sir Tophas and Huanebango no longer populate our ‘internal societies’. But in the sixteenth century, such figures did contribute to what David Fishelov refers to as the ‘horizon of expectations’ or ‘generic world view’ of playgoers; and he further notes that critics attentive to textual and extra-textual ‘clues’ can recover the hermeneutic parameters of distant periods.¹⁹ Taken individually, the generic signals outlined below may seem faint; but they gain both clarity and significance when grouped in a formal context and read against a work’s comic ‘congeners’.²⁰ My designation of Petruchio as ‘braggart’ is therefore not meant to function as a constrictive or pejorative label, but as a heuristic point of departure — an invitation to re-examine *The Taming of the Shrew* using recovered dramatic contexts and expanded generic competencies.

Braggarts and Shrew-Tamers

Petruchio and Sly, the inebriated tinker transformed into a married lord in the play’s Induction, share many similarities and are sometimes played by the same actor. Dana E. Aspinall surveys one critical camp in which the tinker is viewed as a ‘prototype Petruchio’ on the grounds that Sly ‘never realizes the extent to which he becomes a joke’ to the Lord and to others both on and off stage. This joke prefigures Petruchio’s own ‘delusion’ in thinking he has tamed Katherina. The latter’s deferential closing speech completes the ‘mock elevation’ of a fortune-hunting

bully who boasts and barks orders, unaware of the elaborate joke at his expense.²¹ The present study provides generic evidence supporting this view. 'I long to hear him call the drunkard "husband"', snickers the Lord, as he coaches his page on how to play Sly's wife, 'And how my men will stay themselves from laughter / When they do homage to this simple peasant' (Ind. 1.129–31). Sly's transformation into a 'mighty man' of 'high esteem' fools no one but Sly (Ind. 2.12–13), just as Petruchio's meteoric rise from home-keeping youth to fearless shrew-tamer only impresses those willing to humour the eccentric outsider (indeed, any outsider!) who might wed Katherina. Padua cynically props up his intrepid persona as he presents himself as if he were a man of singular importance, settling down to wed after a storied career of war, travel, and adventure.

Daniel C. Boughner identifies the braggart type by his essential 'folly in triplicate' — 'boastfulness, lust, and vanity' — vices that make him instantly recognizable as comic cannon fodder.²² Much of this generic DNA can be detected in Shakespeare's bold suitor. Petruchio exhibits boastfulness, claiming he will 'board' Katherina 'though she chide as loud / As thunder' (1.2.91–2). He also displays indifference in his choice, vowing to woo any woman 'Be she as foul as was Florentius' love, / ... as curst and shrewd / As Socrates' Xanthippe' (65–9). His lusty refrain 'kiss me, Kate' has become a familiar catch phrase (2.1.313). He is also vain, in spite of achievements that seem overstated — such as travelling 'abroad to see the world' (1.2.55) when Padua is merely forty miles overland from Verona. Katherina identifies the type in her protest to Baptista quoted in my title. 'You have showed a tender fatherly regard', she complains, 'To wish me wed to one half lunatic, / A mad-cap ruffian and a swearing Jack / That thinks with oaths to face the matter out' (2.1.275–8). Defined as 'a general term of contempt for saucy or paltry fellows', 'Jack' also evokes Latinate terms like *jactator* ('a cracker or boaster') and *jactancy* ('a vain boasting').²³ Katherina's observations echo the cadence of Plautus's *Palaestrio*, who introduces the braggart captain to playgoers thus: 'An impudent, vain-glorious, dung-hill fellow / As full of lies as of debauchery. / He makes his brag forsooth, that he is follow'd / By all the women; though he is the jest / Of all, wher'er he goes' (*Brag* 2.1.13–16). In like manner, Katherina accuses her tardy bridegroom of being 'a mad-brain rudesby, full of spleen', and a serial seducer to boot: 'I told you, I, he was a frantic fool, / Hiding his bitter jests in blunt behaviour. / And to be noted for a merry man, / He'll woo a thousand' (*The Shrew* 3.2.10, 12–15). Ever since Plautus's *Acroteleutium* exclaimed, 'What! must I not know / The scorn of every one? an empty Braggard, / A Wenching, perfum'd, frizzle-pated fellow' (*Brag* 3.6.69–71), beleaguered female characters have complained about impertinent braggart suitors — to little or no avail. Baptista certainly does

not heed his daughter's assessment, and neither have many critics. For instance, H.J. Oliver accepts Petruchio's 'wide range of dangerous experience', noting that 'there is no reason to doubt [his] claim[s]'.²⁴ The contexts outlined below suggest there may be many.

Of course Petruchio has been called a braggart before, but the type is usually mentioned in passing (eg, '[he] is certainly something of a braggart soldier') and then passed over.²⁵ Others ignore the type but note the traits (eg, 'Petruchio's verbal behavior is both extravagant and consistently aggressive as he blusters, brags about his roughness, ... and threatens at various times to beat others').²⁶ Harriet A. Deer proposes that Shakespeare's couple adopts the stereotypical poses of shrew and braggart — she to protest her father's willingness to sell her off to 'mercenary suitors', and he to tame her shrewishness by 'mirroring' its 'destructiveness'.²⁷ I submit that resemblance to these types stems, not from ad-hoc posturing, but from the core of their characterization and pairing. Petruchio exhibits braggart traits before his courtship begins, and his partner's shrewishness follows a trajectory established by sixteenth-century 'generic models' as documented below.²⁸ Scholars have extensively documented Katherina's links to dramatic and folkloric shrews,²⁹ but Petruchio's blustering ancestry has fallen through the cracks. We have studies of him as a schoolmaster, a model wife, a failed orator, a falconer, a horse-tamer — even as an exorcist,³⁰ but it is now time to examine him as an amorous braggart.

Early audiences may not have been so circumspect, as references suggest that Petruchio was seen as a blustering fool, and his shrew-taming as a fool's errand. One Elizabethan proverb maintained that *Every man can rule a shrew but he that has one* — that shrew-taming was a contradiction in terms, like squaring a circle.³¹ Sir John Harington refers to the folly of shrew-taming in *The Metamorphosis of Ajax* (1596): 'For the shrewd wife, read the booke of taming a shrew ... now euery one can rule a shrew in our countrey, saue he that hath hir'.³² Antony Chute's *Beawtie Dishonoured* (1593) confirms that Shakespeare's pair had become a touchstone for unhappy couples like Jane Shore and her elderly husband:

He calls his Kate, and she must come and kisse him,
 Doting his madded loue vpon her face:
 Hee thinckes her smile hath where withall to blisse him,
 Thus franticques his loue to the fayres disgrace
 Which not withstood she dares not say him no
 Ô ist not pittie bewtie's vsed so.³³

The stanza echoes Petruchio's catch phrase 'kiss me, Kate', as well as Katherina's complaint about her 'frantic fool' suitor (3.2.12). Calling Jane a 'Kate' also suggests a name newly synonymous with a wife 'disgrace[d]' by her 'madd[ed]' husband. Exchanges in Samuel Rowlands's *A Crew of Kind Gossips* (1613) also attest to the impact of Shakespeare's couple. 'The chiefest Art I haue', threatens one husband, 'I wil bestow, / About a worke cald taming of the Shrow'. One gossip's retort suggests that such boasts were not taken seriously:

I finde my Husband but a bragger,
His humour is, he will a little swagger,
And seemes as if he were Knight of the Sunne.
But let me stand to him, and he hath done.³⁴

Brian Morris confirms all three allusions, but dismisses them as 'unimpressive' and indicative of a 'lack of extensive contemporary enthusiasm for the play'.³⁵ I disagree. They reveal a growing fascination with Shakespeare's character types and plot conventions. They also suggest that each time a stage Petruchio boasted he would tame his bride, a number of playgoers may have anticipated the opposite outcome.

Subsequent adaptations and criticism also suggest that Petruchio was seen as a braggart. In John Lacy's *Sauny the Scot* (1667), Margaret (ie, Katherina) describes Petruchio as a 'mad Hectoring Fellow' possessed by the 'Devil'.³⁶ In David Garrick's *Catharine and Petruchio* (1767), Bianca is horrified by her brother-in-law's behaviour at the wedding: 'This Swaggerer should repent his Insolence'.³⁷ And in his 'Preface to Shakespeare' (1765), Samuel Johnson argued that, unlike 'familiar comedy', 'imperial tragedy' was too lofty for performance, a point he illustrated with the following juxtaposition: 'The humour of Petruchio may be heightened by grimace; but what voice or what gesture can hope to add dignity or force to the soliloquy of *Cato*[?]'³⁸ If comic performances 'agitated' playgoers to laughter by depicting excesses, who better to illustrate grimacing 'insolence' than Shakespeare's vain protagonist?³⁹ In later productions, actors like John Philip Kemble portrayed Petruchio as a whip-wielding bully — Thompson calls this trend an 'ominous addition'.⁴⁰ But glimpses of violence resurface in modern Petruchios as well — in the whip-cracking 'bravado' of Douglas Fairbanks in the 1929 film, the tipsy roughhousing of Richard Burton in Franco Zeffirelli's 1966 update, or the 'swashbuckling' of Ben Carlson who brought a gigantic lance to his wedding in the 2015 Stratford Ontario production.⁴¹ In this last instance, audiences enjoyed the subplot's 'Looney Tunes' slapstick and 'casual violence', but when these bled into the taming plot one reviewer called the results 'misogynistic',

‘deeply problematic’, and a ‘brutal, twisted parody of romance’: ‘I was revolted by the end of the play’.⁴² A detailed performance history is beyond the scope of this study, but I submit that a recovered ‘generic competence’ in braggart comedy may serve to reassure modern playgoers and readers that such excesses once proved more conventional than controversial, and that Petruccio was originally more laughing stock than menace.

The Braggard Captain

Plautus’s Ephesian recruiting officer remains the first major amorous braggart to appear in European comedy.⁴³ Notoriously boastful of his military prowess, Pyrgopolinices claims to have slaughtered 7000 warriors ‘in one day’ (*Brag*, 1.1.53). Most of his boasts are unverifiable — such as smashing an Indian elephant with his fist (30–2), or fathering children who live ‘a thousand years’ (4.2.138). Nor is anyone fooled by his claims. As servant Artotrogus notes in an aside, ‘you ne’er perform’d [them]. / Shew me whoever can a greater lyar’ (1.1.22–4). Pyrgopolinices swears compulsively (eg, ‘By *Hercules*’ [4.1.44]), claims divine ancestry (eg, ‘I am *Venus*’ grand-son’ [4.6.76–7]), and takes inordinate pride in his personal appearance and in oversized weapons such as a shield that ‘outshine[s] / The sun’s bright radiance’ (1.1.1–2).

Pyrgopolinices’s misogyny and brusque wooing techniques represent important skeletal traits germane to Petruccio. Insatiable lust prompts Plautus’s officer to abduct one concubine, then later to discard her in order to seduce a woman he mistakes for his neighbour’s wife. Regarding his first concubine, Palæstrio explains how in Athens the braggart initially plied Philocomasium’s mother with wine and gifts, and then simply abducted the daughter by force: ‘[He] clap’d her on board a ship / And carried her against her will to *Ephesus*’ (2.1.26–35). The braggart proves utterly incapable of delaying gratification: ‘What? — shall I stand here, I who am renown’d / For my exploits and beauty, but a moment’, he bellows, ‘I’m tortur’d with impatience’ (4.2.51). Petruccio’s dealings with Baptista betray a similar trait — ‘my business asketh haste, / And every day I cannot come to woo’ (*The Shrew* 2.1.110–11). Indeed, hurried courtships would become a hallmark of the amorous braggart, as seen in the refrain of the ballad, *The Ingenious Braggadocia* — ‘I cannot come every day to wooe’ — as well as in Miles Gloriosus’s song in *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*: ‘My bride! My bride! / I’ve come to claim my bride Let haste be made, / I cannot be delayed!’⁴⁴ When Pyrgopolinices is tempted by the wife next door, he elects to discard his first captive; and should she refuse to leave, he twice threatens ‘to turn / The baggage’ out

'by force' (*Brag* 4.1.46, 4.3.31). Locals have long endured his empty boasts and idle threats, but his opportunistic attempt to seduce his neighbour's wife (actually courtesan Acroteleutium in disguise) represents the final straw — occasioning harsh punishments of the 'letcher[ous]' (4.9.15), 'rake-hell' (3.2.286) 'wenching captain' (4.3.38) in the play's final scene.

Other braggart traits include a lack of social awareness, an essential strangeness, general pomposity, and a tendency to abuse household servants. Pyrgopolinices claims universal admiration, but Palæstrio counters that his master 'is the jest / Of all, where'er he goes' (2.1.15–6). To underscore this discrepancy, Plautus inserts asides by Artotrogus — 'vain boasting' (1.1.25) — Palæstrio — 'senseless ... lack-wit' (4.2.53) — and Milphidippa — 'monstrous fibber!' (118). A related trait involves Pyrgopolinices's reliance on parasitical servants who enable their master's delusions for personal gain. Artotrogus studies the braggart's 'inclinations' and anticipates his 'wishes' — prompting Pyrgopolinices to declare, 'How rarely thou dost suit / Thy mind to mine!' (1.1.45–9). He also boasts of being a recruiting officer for King Seleucus of Syria (1.1.89–93, cf. 4.1.1–6). Thus, even though he owns a home in Ephesus, his bizarre appearance, foreign employer, purportedly divine lineage, and exotic travels all render him conspicuously other — a 'caricature of a foreign type'.⁴⁵ Pyrgopolinices also prides himself in being something of an educator, having trained his first concubine into a 'woman all accomplish'd'. 'If she had not been with me', he boasts, 'She to this day had liv'd in ignorance' (4.6.16–20). Finally, Pyrgopolinices bullies household servants, who dread being 'put to torture' (2.2.40), having their legs broken (16), or their backs whipped (97). Yet in the final scene, servant Cario cows the braggart into submission with threats of castration: 'I'll hang his chitterlings about his neck, / As children carry baubles' (5.1.7–8). Thus the man who earlier claimed that mighty warriors like '*Bombomachides Cluninstaridysarchides*' (1.1.15) are 'struck with fear' (4.6.88–9) when they behold him is now defeated by a knife-wielding chef. 'Ye have made me tame', Pyrgopolinices concedes (5.1.43).

By Boughner's count, more than a half-dozen braggart soldiers appear in extant Latin comedies, though Pyrgopolinices is the only one who functions as titular hero.⁴⁶ Robert S. Miola notes that Plautus's emphasis on romantic intrigues sets his braggart comedy apart from others like Terence's *The Eunuch*, making *Miles Gloriosus* celebrated by playgoers and 'widely imitated' by playwrights.⁴⁷ In particular, starting in the mid-sixteenth century, Pyrgopolinices's English descendants began to engender a host of comic variants that would pave the way for the creation (and reception) of Shakespeare's 'mad-cap ruffian' in the 1590s.

Ralph Roister Doister

Setting aside non-romantic incarnations of the type — the Herods of medieval pageants, various morality vices, and the ‘noisy quarrelers’ found in Tudor academic plays⁴⁸ — the first major amorous braggart in English comedy is the eponymous hero of *Ralph Roister Doister*. Edmund Creeth surveys Udall’s debt to *Miles Gloriosus*, but the editor also notes the addition of new plot elements, English social types, and an updated sense of social propriety.⁴⁹ Regarding this last point, Udall’s prologue justifies the play’s impending frivolity on the grounds that

wyse Poets long time heretofore,
Under merrie Comedies secretes did declare,
Wherein was contained very vertuous lore,
With mysteries and forewarnings very rare. (15–18)⁵⁰

Ralph embodies the vice playgoers love to hate (or at least, that Udall thinks they should hate), and thus Udall’s moralizing prologue promises ‘against the vayne glorious [to] invey’ (24).

Ralph is introduced by his servant Merrygreek in lines that alert playgoers to the braggart’s signal traits of bullying and cowardice:

All the day long is he facing and craking
Of his great actes in fighting and fraymaking:
But when Royster Doyster is put to his prooffe,
To keepe the Queenes peace is more for his behooffe. (1.1.35–8)

Beneath his rough exterior, Ralph is a hopeless romantic, brimming with overconfidence. ‘I am sorie God made me so comely’, he sighs, ‘all women on me [are] so enamoured’ (1.2.106–8). They are not, but like Pyrgopolinices Ralph seems incapable of reading social cues correctly. As the play opens, he has become infatuated with a rich local widow, Dame Christian Custance. Although she is engaged to a merchant away on business, Ralph will not take ‘no’ for an answer: ‘Shall [a merchant] speede afore me?’ he demands to know; ‘I wyll have hir myne owne selfe I make God a vow’ (1.2.96–8). He plies her maids with gifts, composes poems for their mistress, and dispatches noisy minstrels to her house — all in the hopes of winning her love. He also sends her a dictated love letter that is read aloud with punctuation so garbled that it reverses the intended meaning. Infuriated, Ralph threatens the scrivener in language that anticipates Petruccio’s abuse of the tailor. ‘[A]lthough he had as many lives’, Ralph fumes, ‘As a thousande lyons, and a thousande rattes, He shall never scape death on my swordes point’

(3.4.133–9). Neither carry out their terrible threats; in fact, it is the scrivener who strikes Ralph in the next scene, and during the siege of the widow's house, the only serious blows land on Ralph's head.

One key trait emphasized by Udall is the braggart's use of courtship to assert his masculinity. Despite his bluster, Ralph is routinely beaten by servants and he cries when he is thwarted. 'What weepe? fye for shame, and blubber? for manhods sake', counsels Merrygreek, 'Rather play the mans part' (3.4.87–9). When Dame Christian questions his 'prowesse greate' (3.3.23), Ralph redoubles his efforts to win her so that 'she may knowe she hath to answere to a man' (109). He refashions himself as a warrior by taking lessons from Merrygreek in how to stand ('handes under your side man' [118]), speak ('a lustie bragge it is ye must make' [123]), and walk ('must ye stately goe, jetting up and downe' [121]). This transformation introduces a related variant whereby the braggart alters his dress and demeanour in order to impress his love.

Like an anarchic puppet master, Merrygreek encourages the belligerent courtship and stage-manages the siege of the widow's house. Preparations for this assault look backwards to Pyrgopolinices (whose Greek name means 'Tower-town-taker'⁵¹) and forwards to Petruchio (who attends his wedding armed with a rusty sword), as Ralph takes up sword and 'harnesse ... tergat, and ... shield' — all polished to 'dimme [his] enimies sight' (4.3.14–21). The widow is not impressed by the ensuing 'braggyng up and downe' (4.3.105), and she musters her defenders with considerable aplomb. In stark contrast to Ralph, she rules her household with a sure hand — berating her 'naughty girls' for failing to heed instructions (2.4.17), and scolding Merrygreek for the affronts of his master. 'I coulede not stoppe hir mouth', the latter admits (3.3.41).

In spite of these stern reprimands, Dame Christian is widely admired in her community. Only Ralph perceives her as needing correction:

RAFE ROYSTER Yes in faith Kitte, I shall thee and thine so charme,
That all women incarnate by thee may beware.

CHRISTIAN CUSTANCE Nay, as for charming me, come hither if thou dare,
I shall clout thee tyll thou stynke, both thee and thy train.

(4.3.117–20)

Ralph's use of the word 'charm' particularly rankles the widow. Defined as 'to overcome or subdue, as if by magic power; to calm, to soothe, to influence or to control',⁵² the verb reveals the presumption of a man who, despite the fact that 'all folke mocke hym when he goth abrode' (4.4.12), seeks to control Dame Christian and make an example of her for all women. The word 'shrew' appears several

times in this play — not as a noun to describe a woman in need of taming, but as a verb to convey women's indignation at the excesses of men. Dame Christian complains: 'My mynde [is] vexed, I shrew his head, sottish dolt' (3.2.87; cf. 4.2.14, 5.4.28). Thus in Udall's play, true strength and resolve are found in women. As the second inserted song recommends, 'A good husbände ever styll, ... Must lette [his wife] have hir owne will' (ll 6–8).

Susan E. James has made a convincing case for Udall's comedy as a source for *The Taming of the Shrew*, and I need not repeat the many verbal echoes she identifies.⁵³ But James is more concerned with documenting topical references to the Bassano family and to Katharine Parr, than with exploring the two comedies' generic affinities. James does identify Ralph and Petruchio as 'roisterer[s]' who woo scornful partners, harry local artisans, and insist on kissing in public. But she also gives them too much credit, stating that both 'have been soldiers and are of mature age'. Terming Ralph and Petruchio 'courtier-soldier[s]' makes their dubious achievements and hollow threats seem more credible than risible.⁵⁴ Moreover, James detects in Katherina's final speech echoes of the 'hagiographic overtones of religious martyrdom' found in John Foxe's account of the 1546 plot against Henry's last queen.⁵⁵ But contexts provided by subsequent braggart courtships point to a lighter conclusion than the shrew's abject surrender.

Endymion

In *Endymion*, Lyly elaborates the stock situation in which the braggart selects a woman who is unattainable, by making her unpleasant too. Lyly's witch Dispas is old, hideous, immoral, and married to boot; as one observer notes, 'she is ... a scold, fat, without fashion, and quite without favour' (3.3.96–7).⁵⁶ Yet the 'amorous ass' Sir Tophas undertakes to woo this social outcast (120), in large part — like Ralph before him — to prove his courage. 'Without doubt all the world will now account him valiant', says his sidekick Epiton, 'that ventureth on her whom none durst undertake' (73–5). Sir Tophas ignores warnings about Dispas's age, stating that 'I love the smoke of an old fire' (5.2.26–7). That she also rails, pouts, crabs, and frets does not deter him (3.3.106–10). She is truly shrewish, yet instead of seeking to tame her he celebrates her faults; for instance, when she turns Bagoa into a tree, he marvels, 'I honour her for her cunning' (5.2.89).

Sir Tophas initially scorns love, boasting that Mars may 'pierce' his heart but 'Venus shall not paint on it' (2.2.127–8). But when he falls for Dispas, the knight grandly disarms to become a lover: 'Take my sword and shield, and give me beard-brush and scissors' (3.3.29–33). Epiton helps 'unrig' his master (3), though most

of the latter's weapons are used to shoot birds and catch fish. Sir Tophas also composes a blazon: 'O, what a fine thin hair hath Dispas! ... What little hollow eyes! ... How harmless she is, being toothless!' (55–8). This inversion of faults anticipates Petruchio's distorted praise of Katherina as mild-mannered, well-reputed, etc. When asked how the 'amorous knight' now looks, Epiton simply replies: 'Lovely' (92–4). Repeating a variant introduced by Udall, Sir Tophas dabbles in poetry — trading his 'pike' for a 'pen' (37) and writing love sonnets. He is also pedantic, citing Ovid to justify his change from martial to marital: '*Militat omnis amans, et habet sua castra Cupido*' ('every lover goes to war, and Cupid has a camp of his own' [46–7 and n]). Boughner terms this last trait 'the braggart conceived as pedagogue', and (mistakenly) traces it back to Terence's Thraso.⁵⁷ Sir Tophas revels in pseudo-erudition, telling Dares, 'Learned? I am all Mars and Ars' (1.3.96), before quizzing local children on their Latin.⁵⁸

Like his comic progenitors, Sir Tophas transforms the mundane into the extraordinary, such as when he calls a fish-hook his 'scimitar' (1.3.92), or vows to slay a dismal 'monster' which Epiton clarifies is merely a black sheep (2.2.95–100). Sir Tophas also claims divine favor, saying 'Mars himself [gave] me for my arms a whole armoury' (1.3.53). The braggart's trademark bullying appears when Sir Tophas threatens to shoot pages Samias and Dares: 'their brains must as it were, embroider my bolts' (24–5). His reliance on a parasitic advisor is underscored each time he bellows for his laggard attendant: 'Epi!'⁵⁹ And his imperceptiveness is revealed when the pages join with Favilla and Scintilla to flatter Sir Tophas: 'make as though you love him, and wonder at him', instructs Dares (2.2.60–1). 'I could stay all day with him', laughs Favilla, 'if I feared not to be shent' (152–3).

Sir Tophas ultimately undergoes the braggart's requisite exposure — not for cowardice, but for an eleventh-hour bout of incivility towards women. Following his discovery that Dispas has an estranged husband, the knight agrees to marry, sight unseen, the tree that Cynthia returns to her human form. 'Turn her to a true love or false', he grumbles, 'so she be a wench I care not' (5.4.293–4). David Bevington sees in this plot twist simply more of the same: 'Tophas remains an absurd caricature to the very end' (287–8 n). In contrast to the praise lavished on the main plot's Cynthia, the braggart's last words are a curse on his bride: 'Bagoa? A bots upon thee!' (298). Lyly's comedy presents an allegorical hierarchy contrasting the lofty idolatry of Endymion with the lowly infatuation of Sir Tophas.⁶⁰ Not surprisingly, the braggart shows the 'wrong way' in courtship, such as through the parodic imitation of his social betters; and Leo Salinger notes that Pyrgopolinices provoked similar disapproval among Roman playgoers.⁶¹ By critical consensus, Sir Tophas is an amorous bottom feeder, an incompetent scholar, and an

ineffectual soldier — a pompous butt who tries to wed the local witch. As one page scoffs, ‘We will ... dig an old wife out of the grave that shall be answerable to his gravity’ (5.2.114–16). But I would qualify the scorn heaped on Sir Tophas. His agreement to wed Bagoa actually seems rushed and *out* of character. Before this last scene, instead of abducting his first love (like Pyrgopolinices) or besieging her house (like Ralph), Sir Tophas sings Dispas’s praises, writes her love poems, and dispatches go-betweens to ‘angle’ for his cause (112). He weighs her good and bad qualities, and decides, ‘I love no Grissels ... if they be touched they are straight of the fashion of wax’ (98–100). Sir Tophas does not seek a bride made of ‘wax’ to shape and manipulate. He wants to wed a curst woman, and to cherish her — warts and all.

The Old Wives Tale

Peele’s braggart Huanebango proves a crucial missing link between Pyrgopolinices and Petruchio because of his successful courtship of a woman considered utterly unmarriageable by locals. Initially dispatched to rescue Delia from the sorcerer Sacrapant, Huanebango presumes that, on finding the princess, she will instantly fall for him: ‘she is mine, she is mine. *Meus, mea, meum, in contemptum omnium grammaticorum*’ (293–4).⁶² Corebus’s aside, ‘*O falsum Latinum!*’ (295) underscores both his master’s incivility and his rusty Latin. Always accompanied by this sidekick, Huanebango is vain about his appearance and his enormous two-handed sword (264 sd, 351, 566–8). He also swears elaborate oaths: ‘by Mars and Mercury ... and by the honour of my house Polimackeroplacidus’ (268–71). This exotic genealogy makes him sound conspicuously foreign among the Madges and Wiggins of the forest.⁶³ His poor soldiership is exposed when, after claiming that he ‘commandeth ingress and egress with his weapon’ (580–1), he is easily disarmed by Sacrapant. Thus the man who boasts he can ‘monsters tame ... riddles absolve ... and kill conjuring’ (280–3) achieves not one of these feats.

As in the variant introduced by Ralph and Sir Tophas, Huanebango is anxious to display his masculine prowess, and he basks in one of the braggart’s signature rhetorical gestures, the hyperbolic introduction (cf. Ralph’s ‘This is hee, understand, / That killed the blewe Spider in Blanchepouder lande’ [*Ralph* 1.4.63–4], or Petruchio’s ‘I am he am born to tame you’ [*The Shrew* 2.1.265]). In a similar vein, Huanebango thunders:

Fee, fa, fum,
Here is the Englishman—

Conquer him that can—
 Came for his lady bright,
 To prove himself a knight. (*Old* 571–5)

But his churlish refusal of charity to elderly Erestus (326–33) unleashes a whirlwind braggart courtship instead. Tempting a beggar with food and then snatching it away (330) exemplifies the braggart's bullying of social inferiors. Erestus's riddling response to the affront — 'He shall be deaf when thou shalt not see' (347) — sets in motion two love plots. In one, deafened Huanebango falls for the beautiful but shrewish daughter of Lampriscus (Zantippa), and in the other, blinded Corebus falls for her ugly but sweet-natured sister (Celanta). Huanebango initially rails against lovers — 'silly fellows ... in the wane of their wits' (271–3). But his transformation into a lover who weds the local shrew consolidates this final key variant for the braggart line.

Peele's Lampriscus despairs of finding a husband for his notorious daughter who is proud as a peacock, 'curst as a wasp', and 'hangs on [him] like a bur' (231–9). Sent to the well to find her fortune, Zantippa smashes her pot once against her sister's (652 sd), and then against the magic head itself (675 sd). She is without doubt 'the curstest quean in the world' (653), but her future seems linked to Huanebango's in that she too flouts social conventions: 'my father says I must rule my tongue. Why, alas, what am I then? A woman without a tongue is as a soldier without his weapon' (660–2). To her surprise, when the wellhead thunders at her, deaf Huanebango rises up and proceeds to court her: 'pretty peat, pretty love ... / Just by thy side shall sit surnamèd great Huanebango; / Safe in my arms will I keep thee, threat Mars or thunder Olympus' (677–9). By sweeping her off her feet, demanding to 'kiss that I clasp' (684), and vowing to defend her against all foes, Huanebango's actions prefigure Petruchio's bluster as he protects Katherina from 'thieves' after their wedding. Huanebango's blazon of Zantippa's 'coral lips, / her crimson chin, / Her silver teeth so white within, / Her golden locks' (700–5) recalls how Ralph and Sir Tophas used music and poetry to woo their loves. And in light of what playgoers know about Zantippa's foul temper, this praise also reprises the braggart's inverted perception. She underscores the discrepancy in an aside: "'Her coral lips, her crimson chin!" Ka, wilshaw!' (706–7).

Huanebango's final action in *The Old Wives Tale* is to assure Zantippa of a generous marriage portion, and despite her ominous threat to cuckold the 'prating ass' (713, 699) the two exit to seal their love. This plot omits the climactic humiliation of the braggart, but the mad couple may receive fitting punishments for their excesses: each other. John D. Cox calls their hasty marriage the 'wrong

way' in love, contrasting it with Eumenides's hard-fought rescue of Delia: braggart and shrew marry in haste, and may repent in leisure.⁶⁴ Huanebango's inversion of Eumenides's qualities, Cox stresses, 'is designed to reveal the braggart's deficiency in every respect'.⁶⁵ Yet thanks to the success of recent English variants, by the 1590s the amorous braggart was firmly established as one of the most popular 'deficient' types in English comedy.

The Taming of the Shrew

When Shakespeare came to characterize his own mad couple, he enlisted a comic subgenre that comprised original Plautine traits and significant English variants. Playgoers familiar with these likely responded to the man who boasted that he would wed Katherina 'were she as rough / As are the swelling Adriatic seas' (1.2.70–1) with a host of anticipations: that this wooer should be threatening and vain, yet harmless and endearing; that he should present bravado and eccentricity that belie cowardice and reliance on parasitic assistants; that he should select a social cast-off for his bride, and undertake to school her in a discipline over which he has little mastery; that he should undergo a transformation for love, and view his beloved through a distorted lens; that his courtship should prove hurried and uncivil; and that his folly should be exposed by play's end. Above all, as Ralph lost Dame Christian, Sir Tophas was denied Dispas, and Huanebango failed to rescue Princess Delia, Petruchio must fall short in his brash titular endeavour.

John W. Draper proposes that, in the fast-paced comedies of Elizabethan England, playwrights introduced characters according to a kind of law of first impressions: 'an important figure at his first entrance should show his social caste and relation to the others by dress or word or action'.⁶⁶ Fowler confirms the importance of initial presentation: 'The generic markers that cluster at the beginning of a work have a strategic role in guiding the reader. They help to establish ... an appropriate mental "set" that allows the work's generic codes to be read'.⁶⁷ As already noted, Petruchio's arrival in 1.2 quickly establishes his generic ancestry: he is a stranger blown by adventure to Padua, he makes grand martial claims, and he bullies his servant. And while he does not boast to be of 'famous stock' greater than 'the meanest gods' like Huanebango (*Old* 300–1), Petruchio tells Baptista his late father was 'A man well known throughout all Italy' (*The Shrew* 2.1.68). To Robert Heilman, in these early exchanges Petruchio 'creates an image of utter invincibility'.⁶⁸ But if he is coded as braggart, his quarrel with Grumio generates the opposite effect, as Petruchio's threats seem about as credible as the fee-fi-fo thumping of Peele's braggart. Petruchio complains to Hortensio, 'I bade the rascal

knock upon your gate / And *could not get him for my heart to do it*' (1.2.35–6, emphasis added). Why would a servant provoke a master who poses a genuine threat? Audiences quickly perceive that Petruchio is neither feared by his servants nor admired by his peers onstage.

Shakespeare's comedy enlists both old traits and recent English variants, especially the braggart's willingness to wed the local shrew. From the play's first scene, Katherina is described as a 'devil' (1.1.66), 'stark mad', (69), and a 'fiend of hell' (88). 'You may go to the devil's dam!' scolds Gremio, 'here's none will hold you' (105–6). As with Lampriscus's curst daughter, Baptista's eldest is the 'rotten apple' in the basket of Padua's maids (128). Petruchio's backroom negotiations with Baptista recall Pyrgopolinices's attempt to win Philocomasium by plying her mother with gifts, and Ralph's bid to win Dame Christian by bribing her maids. Petruchio's uncivil methods become apparent when he vows to be 'rough and woo not like a babe' (2.1.133). During his first encounter with Katherina he prematurely claims to have secured her father's consent: 'your dowry [is] 'greed on, / And will you, nill you, I will marry you' (258–60). Petruchio also praises Katherina in lines that contradict the local consensus regarding her demeanour: '[I heard] thy mildness praised in every town, / Thy virtues spoke of and thy beauty sounded' (187–8). His admission in a soliloquy (166–76) that such distortions represent a deliberate strategy makes this a complex variant of the braggart's inverted perception of reality.

Gremio's incredulous joy that Hortensio should find an out-of-town stooge to 'woo this wildcat' (1.2.190) sets up Petruchio's proud declamation of past achievements (cited above), an important signal to playgoers that, in his protagonist, Shakespeare is fleshing out a familiar generic skeleton. The fact that the playwright presents Petruchio's achievements as rhetorical questions — eg, 'Have I not in a pitched battle heard / Loud 'larums, neighing steeds and trumpets' clang?' (1.2.199–200) — raises doubts about their veracity. Did he actually *fight* in a pitched battle, or did he merely *hear* its terrible sounds (ie, from a safe distance)? Petruchio cagily uses erotesis, defined by Richard A. Lanham as a "rhetorical question" ... which implies an answer but does not give or lead us to expect one'.⁶⁹ Yet playgoers may infer different answers from those so assertively implied by the questions themselves. The speech also recalls a related device, epiplexis, defined as 'asking questions in order to reproach or upbraid'.⁷⁰ The overall effect is of an oration which avers abilities in the speaker, but also reprimands (even bullies) anyone who would doubt his claims.

Petruchio's behaviour on his wedding day furtheres his resemblance to the amorous braggart. As Biondello reports, his master has furnished himself with

mismatched boots, a filthy jerkin, a broken-down horse, and ‘an old rusty sword tane out of the town armoury, with a broken hilt and chapeless’ (3.2.41–4). As with Pyrgopolinices’s giant shield, Petruchio and his blade cut a ridiculous figure: ‘wherefore gaze this goodly company’, he wonders, ‘As if they saw ... / Some comet or unusual prodigy’ (84–6). Gremio then relates how, during the offstage ceremony, Petruchio swears ‘by gogs-wouns!’ and strikes the priest, gulps the wine, throws sops in the sexton’s face, and behaves like ‘a devil, a devil, a very fiend!’ (145–67). This generic cluster of drunkenness, strange weapons, outlandish clothes, blaspheming, and demonic behaviour can be found in contemporary accounts of the non-dramatic braggart as well. In *Wits Miserie and the Worlds Madnesse* (1596) Thomas Lodge recounts how the spawn of arch-devil Baalberith takes the form of ‘A Ruffian, a Swashbuckler, and a Bragart’ — one who wears a doublet of grease spattered taffeta with the ‘bumbast ... eaten through it’, who brandishes a ‘basket hilted sword, and a bum dagger’, and who prays each morning: ‘Gogs wounds hostesse one pot more.’⁷¹ Sir Tophas and Huanebango changed from soldiers into lovers to court their idols, and Ralph added ‘a portely bragee ... [to his] estate’ to woo Dame Christian (*Ralph* 3.3.113), but Petruchio becomes an *even more braggart-like* soldier to claim his bride on their wedding day.

As with Ralph’s siege of Dame Christian’s house, Petruchio would use the conquest of a woman to assert his masculinity; and as with Sir Tophas (who perceives sheep as monsters), Petruchio asserts dangers where none exist. Citing safety concerns, the latter refuses to stay for the wedding banquet. ‘Draw forth thy weapon’, he shouts to Grumio, ‘We are beset with thieves! / Rescue thy mistress, if thou be a man. / — Fear not, sweet wench, they shall not touch thee’ (*The Shrew* 3.2.225–7). Petruchio’s antics recall Huanebango sweeping Zantippa off her feet. Incidentally, Zantippa is equally horrified by her suitor’s strange dress: ‘what greasy groom have we here? He looks as though he crept out of the backside of the well’ (*Old* 680–1). Finally, Petruchio’s defiant inventory of his new marital prize — ‘I will be master of what is mine own. / She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house’ (*The Shrew* 3.2.218–19) — echoes Huanebango’s gleeful stock-taking of Zantippa: ‘True, mine own, and my own because mine, and mine because mine — ha, ha!’ (*Old* 708–9). Sir Tophas kills ‘by the dozen’ (*End* 1.3.68–9), for Ralph to kill forty ‘is a matter of laughter’ (*Ralph* 4.7.77), and Pyrgopolinices slays ‘Sev’n thousand’ in a day (*Brag* 1.1.43–7); but Petruchio outbraves them all, vowing to ‘buckler’ Katherina ‘against a million!’ (*The Shrew* 3.2.228). The guests do not try to stop the escape, not because they fear Petruchio’s blade, but because they want to be rid of the mad couple. ‘[L]et them go’, chuckles Baptista, ‘a couple

of quiet ones.’ Despite Petruchio’s brandished sword and martial outbursts, the only actual threat the braggart poses is that Padua’s onlookers ‘should die with laughing’ (229–30).

When he returns home with Katherina, it becomes apparent that Petruchio is not in control of his household, as he expresses outrage that they have ignored his explicit instructions. To his complaint that the ‘rascal knaves’ did not assemble to meet the newlyweds in the park, Grumio merely replies: ‘Nathaniel’s coat, sir, was not fully made, / And Gabriel’s pumps were all unpink’d i’t’h’heel’ (4.1.102–4). Stage productions generate much slapstick out of these flashes of insubordination, and editors add vivid stage directions not present in the folio — eg, ‘[*He strikes the servant*]’ (118 sd, cf. 127 sd), ‘[*He boxes Curtis’s ear*]’ (46 sd), ‘[*He throws the food and dishes at them*]’ (137 sd) — to convey Petruchio’s fearsome nature. But to early playgoers steeped in the daily grind of domestic hierarchy, details like a servant ducking an order because ‘There was no link to colour [his] hat’ (105) must have suggested incompetence in the household head. Why else would Grumio note that, when they approached on horseback from Padua, ‘my master [was] riding behind my mistress’ (49)? ‘Both of one horse?’ asks Curtis (50), incredulous that Petruchio would not take the reins with his bride riding pillion behind him. After all, proverbially if two ride upon a horse, ‘one must sit behind.’⁷² Petruchio seeks to strike fear into the hearts of women and men, but as William Gouge observes in *Of Domesticall Duties* (1622), masters need to instill a more complex form of respect in their household: ‘An awe in regard as his masters place: [and] a dread in regard of his masters power ... This [two-fold] fear will draw seruants on, cheerfully to performe all duty.’⁷³ Petruchio’s error is symptomatic of the braggart type, as he rather seeks to provoke what Gouge terms ‘slauish fear’ — defined as ‘when they feare nothing but the reuenging power of their master: the staffe or the cudgell’. Slavish fear merely generates in subordinates ‘light esteeme and plaine contempt’ for their master, the insistently ‘hard man’ who surrenders all authority and credibility, and wonders ‘If I be a master, where is my fear?’⁷⁴

Flying in the face of contemporary wisdom on the subject, Petruchio sticks to his regimen of seeking to provoke ‘slavish fear’ in subordinates. In her new home, Katherina is deprived of sleep by shrill midnight lectures, of sustenance by servants sworn not to feed her, and of gifts like the hat and gown destroyed before her eyes. Snatching away her food recalls the taunting of the beggar by Peele’s braggart: ‘Huanebango giveth no cakes for alms’ (*Old* 330). As Katherina complains: ‘Beggars that come unto my father’s door / Upon entreaty have a present alms ... [But I am] starved for meat’ (*The Shrew* 4.3.4–9). We have already seen how Pyrgopolinices terrorizes his household to no effect, and how Ralph’s threat

to blast the scrivener 'to the worldes ende' backfires (*Ralph* 3.5.19). Petruchio's abuse is of a piece with this tendency to bully servants and craftsmen. He threatens one servant who 'pluck[s his] foot awry' while taking off his boot: 'Out you rogue!' (*The Shrew* 4.1.118). He berates another as a 'whoreson beetle-headed, flap-eared knave!' for spilling his water (128). He rages at Peter and 'the rascal cook' for burning his supper: 'You heedless joltheads ... I'll be with you straight' (133, 137–8). In the most elaborate passage he berates the tailor for allegedly marring Katherina's dress. 'Thou flea, thou nit, thou winter-cricket, thou!' he begins, 'Away, thou rag, thou quantity, thou remnant! / Or I shall so bemete thee with thy yard / As thou shalt think on prating whilst thou liv'st' (4.3.108–12).

Jacques Gaultier's *Rodomontados. Or, Brauadoes and Bragardismes* (1610) preserves a number of outlandish claims and threats made in a domestic setting.⁷⁵ In one, a Spanish captain orders his cook to prepare a meal of smashed up cannonballs, truncheons, and pikes, with a side salad of pistols, saying 'let whosoeuer dare, come suppe with mee: for these are [my] Vyands' (VI). In another, this same braggart recounts how 'My shoo-maker one Morning pulling on my shooes, I found one of them somewhat too strait in the insteppe, I gaue him such a kicke with my foote against the ground, that the earth immediately opened, and he fell in as farre as Hell' (XXV). Finally, to anyone who dares 'offend' him, the braggart issues this blanket warning: 'I wil kil this Villain, his Wife, his Children, his Seruants, his Dogs, his Cats, his Pullaine, his very Lice, Nits & Fleas, or any liuing creature belonging to his house, which also I wil ruinyte from the top to the foundation' (XLVII). Petruchio's behaviour anticipates that depicted in Gaultier's compendium of excess: the Veronese householder berates the servant who pinches his foot, but the Spaniard notes, 'Twenty men together dare not touch the string of my Shoo' (XXXVII).

Some critics suggest that, by managing his household in this rough manner, Petruchio is modelling for Katherina how a shrew looks to outside observers.⁷⁶ Such is Gaultier's avowed purpose in publishing the 'Bragardisms'; he explains in the dedication, 'I am verily perswaded, that many men in reading this Book, and falling into laughter: may happen to laugh and smile at themselues, because they may chance to finde their owne follies recorded, vnder the fable alluded to another'.⁷⁷ Paradoxically, Petruchio's educational montage of the excesses of the shrew enlists the most improbable thunderings of the braggart. '[He] rails and swears and rates', summarizes Curtis (4.1.155), in a noisy barrage as tiresome as Ralph's siege of Dame Christian's house. In comedies with contrasting love plots, braggart courtship inverts the 'right way'. As Sir Tophas observes, 'love is a lord of misrule, and keepeth Christmas in my corpse' (*End* 5.2.5). Katherina could once

dismiss her would-be lord of misrule as a 'swearing Jack' (*The Shrew* 2.1.277), but now that she is permanently tied to him, she must learn to manage her master's bluster.

This fact brings us to the so-called 'taming' of Katherina. She has proven herself an astute judge of men's characters such as her negligent father's (1.1.57–8), her manic suitor's (2.1.274–8), and that of his 'false deluding slave' (4.3.31). Her discovery of this last man's survival strategy, however, will save her. Grumio knows what parasitic predecessors have all known before him, that if he humours his master, he can live peaceably with him. Plautus's Artotrogus candidly admits: 'My ears must hear him, or my teeth want work [ie, food]; / And I must swear to every lie he utters' (*Brag* 1.1.39–40). Merrygreek echoes the principle in the early moments of Udall's comedy: 'Then must I sooth it, what ever it is: / For what he sayth or doth can not be amisse' (*Ralph* 1.1.47–8). Katherina begins 'sooth'-ing her master and swearing to his 'lies' in the notorious sun and moon scene, where she reluctantly agrees: 'sun it is not, when you say it is not, / And the moon changes even as your mind' (*The Shrew* 4.5.19–20). This concession no more proves she has been tamed than Artotrogus's agreeing that his master smashed an elephant proves that feat actually occurred. 'It shall be what o'clock I say it is', thunders Petruchio (4.3.189) — thundering is what braggarts do. Hortensio sums up the only sensible response: 'Say as he says, or we shall never go' (4.5.11). When Katherina taunts old Vincentio as a budding virgin, she ingratiates herself as the braggart's new flattering sidekick; and significantly, Grumio does not speak again after this scene. By enabling her husband's folly, 'Kate the curst' finally becomes 'Kate of Kate-Hall' (2.1.182–4), Petruchio's new second in command.

Conclusion: 'False Commendations' in *A Shrew* and *The Shrew*

Like his generic forbears, Petruchio embellishes his life narrative with imaginary feats and hypothetical heroics, and Padua cynically enables his delusion to get rid of its troublesome shrew. Early on, Gremio refers to him as 'great Hercules' (1.2.250), and Tranio also flatters 'the man' come to do the 'feat' that none before him could — 'Achieve the elder, set the younger free' (258–61). This process recalls Merrygreek pumping up Ralph with news that ladies mistake him for Lancelot, Hercules, Hector, and other Worthies (*Ralph* 1.2.115–27). Petruchio's actions are consistently framed as dangerous or momentous. An argument with Katherina becomes 'two raging fires meet[ing] together' (*The Shrew* 2.1.128). He arrives late for his wedding because some 'occasion of import' too 'harsh to hear' detained him (3.2.92–5). During the ceremony he seizes the wine and proposes

“A health” ... *as if*/ He had been aboard, carousing to his mates / After a storm’ (160–2, emphasis added). When Katherina agrees that the sun is the moon, Hortensio marvels ‘The field is won’ — as if Petruchio has won a bold military victory (4.5.23). And Lucentio welcomes the couple to Bianca’s wedding banquet as if it were a post-war celebration: ‘At last, though long, our jarring notes agree, / And time it is when raging war is done / To smile at scapes and perils overblown’ (5.2.1–3). Thompson notes that Lucentio’s lines ‘bring all the nautical and military metaphors to a satisfactory climax’ (2–3 n), though it remains unclear whether the word ‘overblown’ indicates dangers ‘passed’ or ‘grotesquely exaggerated’.

The braggart’s climactic humiliation seems to be in store for Petruchio when, at this second banquet, the assembled guests tease him for still being ‘troubled with a shrew’ (5.2.28). Anticipation mounts when Petruchio proposes a wager over which wife will come to her master’s call, and all are surprised when only Katherina returns. She then gives her controversial speech on wifely duties, one that has been variously interpreted as an orthodox submission to her husband, an ironic send-up of patriarchy, or a mutual game played by the spouses.⁷⁸ I suggest that the speech deftly mixes all three, as it uses the first to conceal the second in a playful exposé of braggart puffery and side-kick flattery. Katherina servilely bends to the will of her new ‘lord’, ‘king’, and ‘governor’ (138), as she praises him for sacrifices he never made and risks he never took. Using the same implicit ‘as if’ formulation that has sustained him throughout, she describes how husbands endure ‘toil and trouble in the world’ (166) as they embark on perilous adventures — ‘painful labour both by sea and land, / To watch the night in storms, the day in cold, / Whilst [their wives lie] warm at home, secure and safe’ (149–51). Such a husband ‘craves no other tribute at [his wife’s] hands / But love, fair looks and true obedience — / Too little payment for so great a debt’ (152–4). Petruchio may project himself into these perilous hypothetical scenarios, but by overstating her indebtedness, Katherina underscores his actual failings. After all, the last time he toiled on a stormy night, he left his wife in the mud, pinned beneath their fallen horse.

Katherina does express genuine gratitude that Petruchio chose her when no one else would, in lines that recall Zantippa’s meeting with Huanebango at the well: ‘A woman moved is like a fountain troubled, ... And while it is so, none so dry or thirsty / Will deign to sip, or touch one drop of it’ (5.2.142–5) — none, that is, except an amorous braggart. But Katherina winds down with more implicit criticism, noting that ‘now I see our lances are but straws, / Our strength as weak, our weakness past compare, / That seeming to be most which we indeed least

are' (173–5). By highlighting hollow claims and harmless weapons, she exposes the straw lance and ersatz heroism of the man who purports to have tamed her. 'I am ashamed that women are so simple', she observes, 'To offer war where they should kneel for peace' (161–2). Peele's shrew once noted that 'A woman without a tongue is as a soldier without his weapon' (*Old* 661–2). By flattering Petruchio's war-like accomplishments with her ostensibly bridled tongue, Katherina disarms her braggart captain. She overstates her husband's authority; she says as he says.

Katherina outlines how false deference, obsequious submission, and affectionate manipulation will ensure a superficial peace within their marriage. She exposes the hollowness of the braggart's 'victory', yet he uncomprehendingly roars with approval as she offers to place her hand beneath his foot: 'Come on and kiss me, Kate' (*The Shrew* 5.2.180). Not since Merrygreek led Ralph around by the nose has a subordinate held such sway over a master. Merrygreek explains:

Prayse and rouse him well, and ye have his heart wonne,
For so well liketh he his owne fonde fashions
That he taketh pride of false commendations.
But such sporte have I with him as I would not l[o]se ...
I can set him in hope and eke in dispaire,
I can make him speake rough, and make him speake faire.

(*Ralph* 1.1.50–62)

In fact, this symbiotic flatterer-braggart dynamic extends back to Plautus. Servant Artotrogus notes, 'Tis fit that I should study / Your inclinations, and my care should be / Ev'n to fore-run your wishes' — to which Pyrgopolinices happily accedes. 'Bear thyself / As thou hast hitherto,' he vows, 'and thou shalt eat / Eternally, — for ever shalt thou be / Partaker of my table' (*Brag* 1.1.46–8, 59–61). Hortensio/Litio was earlier asked if he thought Katherina would 'prove a good musician', to which he replied, 'I think she'll sooner prove a soldier!' (*The Shrew* 2.1.140–1). In her gloss, Thompson notes the ambiguity of his pun on 'prove' (ie, will she 'make a good soldier'? or will she 'put a soldier to the test?'). In fact, both scenarios prove true: in her self-serving speech and ostentatious submission, Katherina proves more than a match for the 'soldier' she wed and whom she now exposes as the latest in a long line of shallow boasters.

This persistent military imagery is notably absent from the taming plot of the anonymous *Taming of a Shrew* — a play which has been variously posited as a narrative source, an apprentice draft, a memorial reconstruction, and a 'bad quarto'.⁷⁹ Stephen Miller notes that modern critics have yet to agree 'upon a theory to account for the variation between the two versions', and the present study will

not attempt to resolve the issue.⁸⁰ Reading Petruchio in light of braggart conventions, however, underscores one key difference between *A Shrew* (1594) and *The Shrew* (1623) that has been overlooked in criticism. Simply put, Petruchio's quarto counterpart Ferando is not much of a boaster.⁸¹ Gone is Petruchio's elaborate vow to woo a woman as old as Sibyl, as curst as Xanthippe, or as rough as the Adriatic sea; Ferando merely notes that 'they say thou art a shrew, / And I like thee the better for I would have thee so' (*A Shrew* 3.154–5). Also omitted is Petruchio's grand speech recounting battles and adventures; Ferando is rather more 'blunt in speech' than apt to invent tall tales (75). Petruchio pretends to be an exotic outsider; yet as a local Athenian, Ferando is rather more the boy next door, courted by Alfonso with a promise of 'six thousand crowns' to marry his 'scolding' daughter (117–19). Kate initially seems outraged at the prospective match; but unlike Katherina (who twice calls out her suitor's boasting), the quarto bride merely calls her wooer 'an ass' and a 'brainsick man' (3.150, 167). And while Petruchio's wooing scene is a tour de force of sublimated violence and sexual innuendo, the quarto's Sander mocks Ferando for his milksop approach: 'You spoke like an ass to her ... [I would] have had her before she had gone a foot fuder' (190–2). Sander is correct, for Kate admits in an aside that 'hav[ing] lived too long a maid' she was already predisposed to wed Ferando — if only to test whether 'his manhood's good' (169–71).

The quarto wedding scenes further deflate Petruchio's bluster. Instead of arriving with mismatched boots and a rusty sword from the town armoury, Ferando merely enters '*basely attired and [with] a red cap on his head*' (*A Shrew* 4.107 sd). Reports of Petruchio's bullying during the ceremony have no parallel in the quarto. Ferando does refuse to stay for the banquet, but omitted are the folio couple's stamping, staring, fretting, threatening, as well as any reference to weapons, bucklers, thieves, or rescues. Instead the quarto presents a more conciliatory groom who promises, 'This is my day, tomorrow thou shalt rule' (5.79). At times, even Sander appears more boastful than his master, claiming to be 'stout' in his new livery, to having 'a life like a giant', and vowing 'to slash it out and swash it out amongst the proudest' servants (3.206–13). To be sure, at home Ferando beats these same servants, threatens skilled tradesmen, and deprives Kate of the necessities of life (scenes 6, 8, 10). Thompson calls his taunting of Kate with '*a piece of meat upon his dagger's point*' (8.23 sd) the height of Marlovian 'savagery.'⁸² Yet when the time comes for Kate's speech on wifely duties, gone are all mock serious references to sovereign lords, painful labours by land and sea, war, and straw lances. Instead quarto Kate pays tribute to 'The King of kings, the glorious God of heaven' — attributing her surrender to the eternal order of his

'heavenly work / [That] made all things to stand in perfect course' (14.127–9). If this shrew is tamed, she gives Ferando no credit — hollow or otherwise — for her conversion. 'As Sarah to her husband', she intones, 'so should we, / Obey them, love them' (136–7).

Does the absence of the braggart's excesses suggest that *A Shrew* represents an earlier version of the shrew-taming story — one which Shakespeare spiced up with a boasting hero, heightened conflicts, and verbal excess? Not exactly. Hyperbolic speeches abound in *A Shrew*, but these are dispersed among many characters. For instance, Polidor, Emelia, Aurelius, and Phylena indulge in fantasies of travel and adventure — 'To leave fair Athens and to range the world', 'to scale the seat of Jove', 'to pass the burning vaults of hell', 'to swim the boiling Hellespont', and so forth (*A Shrew* 11.6–36). Emelia even vows to do battle 'Like to the Warlike Amazonian queen' to save her love (51). Duke Jerobel (ie, Vincentio) threatens his son Aurelius (ie, Lucentio) with a terrible Rodomontade: 'O that my furious force could cleave the earth / That I might muster bands of hellish fiends / To rack his heart and tear his impious soul' (13.73–5). To be sure, Ferando prosaically threatens to 'cut [Sander's] nose' (6.23), and later complains about Emelia's 'monstrous, intolerable presumption! / Worse than a blazing star' when she refuses her husband's call (14.68–9). But these outbursts seem tame when compared with Jerobel's Marlovian fury:

This angry sword should rip thy hateful chest
And hew thee smaller than the Libyan sands ...
The ceaseless turning of celestial orbs
Kindles not greater flames in flitting air
Than passionate anguish of my raging breast (13.62–3, 76–8)

Like father like son (but unlike tame Ferando), Aurelius replies with a hollow promise of his own — 'To kill untamed monsters with my sword, / To travel daily in the hottest sun, / And watch in winter when the nights be cold' — to atone for his unfilial behaviour (85–7).⁸³

One point on which commentators do agree is that the missing resolution of the folio's Induction represents a regrettable defect in an otherwise intricately plotted comedy. To remedy this, many editions append the quarto's final scene where Sly awakes from 'the best dream' of his life and vows to return home 'to [his] wife presently, / And tame her too, and if she anger me' (*A Shrew* 15.18–21). Does the Tapster accompany Sly to learn from an adept who 'know[s] now how to tame a shrew' (16), or to protect the gullible tinker from the humiliation (or worse) that may result from failing in the attempt? Lucentio concludes *The*

Taming of the Shrew by saying, 'Tis a wonder, by your leave, she will be tamed so', a line which, Thompson finally notes, raises 'doubts' about whether Petruchio actually achieves his objective (5.2.189 and n). Could his 'taming-school' really 'charm her chattering tongue' (4.2.54–8)? No more than Pyrgopolynices manages to outwit Acroteleutium, or Ralph subdues the spirited Dame Christian. The preponderance of generic evidence points to two simple facts: as of the mid-1590s in English comedy, no woman had yet been tamed in a braggart courtship; and no one had been fooled but the 'frantic fool' himself.

Notes

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- 1 William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. Ann Thompson, New Cambridge edn (Cambridge, 1995), hereafter referenced parenthetically as *The Shrew*. For another example of Petruchio mentioning his parentage as 'Old Antonio's son' see 1.2.184. On the date of the play, see Thompson's introduction, 1–3.
- 2 Dates are approximate and are merely included to establish a rough priority sequence for comedies depicting braggart courtship; see G.K. Hunter, 'Chronology', *English Drama 1586–1642: The Age of Shakespeare* (Oxford, 1997), 544–77.
- 3 Stuart Gillespie identifies the conventional company: 'Shakespeare's braggart soldier figures (such as Don Armado, Parolles, Bardolph, Pistol and Falstaff) have their ancestry in Plautus's *miles gloriosus*'; *Shakespeare's Books: A Dictionary of Shakespeare's Sources* (London, 2004), 415–7, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781472555328>. Daniel C. Boughner adds Toby Belch and Andrew Aguecheek to the group in *The Braggart in Renaissance Comedy: A Study in Comparative Drama from Aristophanes to Shakespeare* (Westport, 1954), 75 and *passim*. Wolfgang Riehle even suggests Malvolio resembles the type; *Shakespeare, Plautus and the Humanist Tradition* (Cambridge, 1990), 232. All three critics overlook Petruchio.

- 4 The phrase is repeated in Plautus, *The Braggard Captain*, in *The Comedies of Plautus*, trans. Bonnell Thornton, vol. 1 (1767), *Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO)*, 126 n and 203 n.
- 5 Eg, *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. Brian Morris, Arden 2nd edn (London, 1989), 152; *The Norton Shakespeare, Based on the Oxford Edition: Comedies*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al (New York, 1997), 144; *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. Thompson, 44. Gremio's generic designation 'Pantelowne' appears in *The Norton Facsimile of the First Folio of Shakespeare*, ed. Charlton Hinman (London, 1968), 228.
- 6 Peter de la Primaudaye, *The French Academie* (1586; facs, New York, 1972), 747; Henry Peacham, *The Compleat Gentleman* (1622), *Early English Books Online (EEBO)* 186; Jacques Goussault, *Advice to Young Gentlemen, in their Several Conditions of Life* (1698), *EEBO*, 29. Barbara Hodgdon notes that 'Petruccio's account of his military career may (or may not) be fictional' — but whatever the case, 'it sounds like boasting'; *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. Hodgdon, Arden 3 edn (London, 2014), 187.
- 7 Plautus, *The Braggard Captain*, in *The Comedies of Plautus*, trans. Bonnell Thornton, vol. 1 (1767), *Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO)*, 125–248, hereafter referenced as *Brag*.
- 8 M.M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin, 1992); E.D. Hirsch, Jr, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven, 1967); Alastair Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: A Theory of Genres and Modes* (Cambridge, MA, 1982).
- 9 Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, 29.
- 10 Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, 3.
- 11 Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, 23.
- 12 *Ibid*, 88.
- 13 Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, 76–7, italics in original.
- 14 *Ibid*, 78; Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, 44.
- 15 M.C. Bradbrook, 'Dramatic Rôle as Social Image: A Study of *The Taming of the Shrew*', *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* 94 (1958), 132–50, 132–3. The phrase 'system of expectations' is from Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, 77.
- 16 Riehle, *Shakespeare, Plautus and the Humanist Tradition*, 4.
- 17 Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, 41.
- 18 *Ibid*, 156–7, 38, 46.
- 19 David Fishelov, *Metaphors of Genre: The Role of Analogies in Genre Theory* (University Park, 1993), 67–8.
- 20 Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, 88.
- 21 Dana E. Aspinall, 'The Play and the Critics', in *The Taming of the Shrew: Critical Essays*, ed. Aspinall (New York, 2002), 3–38, 15 (and sources cited there).

- 22 Boughner, *Braggart in Renaissance Comedy*, 10. Many traits discussed in this paper are gleaned from Boughner, *passim*, though he does not discuss Huanebango or Petruchio.
- 23 See Samuel Johnson, *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755; facs, Tokyo, 1983), sv 'Jack'; Thomas Blount, *Glossographia; or a Dictionary* (1661), *EEBO*, sv 'Jactator'; and Elisha Coles, *An English Dictionary* (1677), *EEBO*, sv 'Jactancy'.
- 24 H.J. Oliver, introduction, *The Taming of the Shrew*, Oxford edn (Oxford, 1998), 53.
- 25 Michael W. Shurgot, 'From Fiction to Reality: Character and Stagecraft in *The Taming of the Shrew*', *Theatre Journal* 33 (1981), 327–40, 331, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3207031>. William Babula calls Sly 'a braggart, a role that is not unlike Petruchio's'; '*The Taming of the Shrew* and the New Historicism', *Journal of the Wooden O Symposium* (2004), 1–8, 4. And Andrew Grewar notes that 'Petruchio is a type of braggart suitor, although an unusual one in that he wins his love'; 'The Old Man's Spectacles and Other Traces of the *Commedia dell'Arte* in Early Shakespearean Comedy', *Shakespeare in Southern Africa* 11 (1998), 23–37, 30. Those familiar with Huanebango's courtship of Zantippa (discussed below) would not have found Petruchio's 'winning' of Katherine so unusual.
- 26 Wayne A. Rebhorn, 'Petruchio's "Rope Tricks": *The Taming of the Shrew* and the Renaissance Discourse of Rhetoric', *Modern Philology* 92 (1995), 294–327, 305, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/392250>.
- 27 Harriet A. Deer, 'Untyping Stereotypes: *The Taming of the Shrew*', in Sara Munson Deats and Lagretta Tallent Lenker (eds), *The Aching Hearth: Family Violence in Life and Literature* (New York, 1991), 63–78, 71–3.
- 28 Eg, Lyly's Dispas and Peele's Zantippa are each paired with a braggart suitor (see below). The phrase 'generic models' is taken from Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, 32. In her introduction, Jean E. Howard infers from Grumio's comments at 1.2.103–10 that pretensions to 'rhetorical prowess' are not 'out of character' for Petruchio, but form an enduring aspect of his identity; see Greenblatt (ed.), *The Norton Shakespeare*, 135–6.
- 29 See Bradbrook, 'Dramatic Rôle as Social Image', 132–50; Valerie Wayne, 'Refashioning the Shrew', *Shakespeare Studies* 17 (1985), 159–87; Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womanhood, 1540–1620* (Urbana, 1986), 184–223; and the introduction and documents in Frances E. Dolan (ed.), *The Taming of the Shrew: Texts and Contexts* (Boston, 1996), 1–38, 244–326.
- 30 Elizabeth Hutcheon, 'From Shrew to Subject: Petruchio's Humanist Education of Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew*', *Comparative Drama* 45 (2011), 315–37, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/cdr.2011.0029>; Marion D. Perret, 'Petruchio: The Model Wife', *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900* 23 (1983), 223–35, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/cdr.2011.0029>.

- org/10.2307/450090; Rebhorn, 'Petruccio's "Rope Tricks," 294–327; Sean Benson, "'If I Do Prove Her Haggard": Shakespeare's Application of Hawking Tropes to Marriage', *Studies in Philology* 103 (2006), 186–207, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/sip.2006.0006>; Joan Hartwig, 'Horses and Women in *The Taming of the Shrew*', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 45 (1982), 285–94, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3817090>; and Robert M. Schuler, 'Bewitching the Shrew', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 46 (2004), 387–431, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/tsl.2005.0003>.
- 31 Morris Palmer Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor, 1950), # M106. Brian Morris likewise notes how 'The play's title ... is, in the literal sense, an absurdity ... Petruccio is a fool for making the attempt'; introduction, *The Taming of the Shrew*, Arden 2nd edn, 64–5.
- 32 Sir John Harington, *A New Discourse of a Stale Subject, Called the Metamorphosis of Ajax* (1596), *EEBO* 79–80.
- 33 Antony Chute, *Beawtie Dishonoured, Written vnder the Title of Shores Wife* (1593), *EEBO* 21, italics omitted. The allusion was first identified in William H. Moore, 'An Allusion in 1593 to *The Taming of the Shrew*?' *Shakespeare Quarterly* 15 (1964), 55–60, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2867956>.
- 34 Samuel Rowlands, *A Crew of Kind Gossips, All Met to be Merrie: Complayning of their Husbands, with their Husbands Answeres in their Owne Defence* (1613), *EEBO*, D3v, B2r.
- 35 Morris, Introduction, *The Taming of the Shrew*, Arden 2nd edn, 64–5.
- 36 John Lacy, *Sauny the Scot: Or, The Taming of the Shrew*, in *Shakespeare Made Fit: Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare*, ed. Sandra Clark (London, 1997), 2.2.252–61.
- 37 David Garrick, *Catharine and Petruccio: A Comedy in Three Acts* (1767), *ECCO*, 22.
- 38 Samuel Johnson, 'Preface, 1765', in Bertrand H. Bronson and Jean M. O'Meara (eds), *Selections from Johnson on Shakespeare* (New Haven, 1986), 8–60, 26.
- 39 Johnson's *Dictionary* defines 'grimace' as 'a distortion of the countenance from habit, affectation, or insolence' (sv).
- 40 See Thompson, Introduction, *The Taming of the Shrew*, New Cambridge edn, 18–20, and 27 plate 5, quotation on 19.
- 41 On the films, see Barbara Hodgdon, 'Katherina Bound; or, Play(K)ating the Strictures of Everyday Life', *PMLA* 107 (1992), 538–53, 543–6, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/462760>. On the stage production, see Richard Ouzounian, review of *The Taming of the Shrew*, dir. Chris Abraham, Stratford ON, *The Toronto Star*, 6 June 2015.
- 42 J. Kelly Nestruck, review of *The Taming of the Shrew*, dir. Chris Abraham, Stratford ON, *The Globe and Mail*, 8 June 2015.

- 43 On Plautus's possible Greek sources and earlier instances of the type, see Boughner, *Braggart in Renaissance Comedy*, 3–10.
- 44 Anon., *The Ingenious Braggadocia* (ca 1678–81), *EEBO; A Funny thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, book by Burt Shevelove and Larry Gelbart, music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim (New York, 1991), 81.
- 45 E.F. Watling (ed.), *Plautus: The Pot of Gold and Other Plays* (London, 1965), 150.
- 46 Boughner, *Braggart in Renaissance Comedy*, 10–14.
- 47 Robert S. Miola, *Shakespeare and Classical Comedy* (Oxford, 1994), 12, 17, 46–7 and sources cited there, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198182696.001.0001>.
- 48 See Boughner, *Braggart in Renaissance Comedy*, 119–78, 154.
- 49 Creeth, Introduction, *Tudor Plays: An Anthology of Early English Drama*, ed. Edmund Creeth (New York, 1966), xxvii–xxxii.
- 50 Nicholas Udall, *Royster Doyster*, in Creeth, ed., *Tudor Plays*, hereafter referenced parenthetically as *Ralph*.
- 51 Boughner, *Braggart in Renaissance Comedy*, 10.
- 52 *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Compact edn, 3 vols (Oxford, 1987), s.v. 'charm' (v4, v1).
- 53 Susan E. James, 'A New Source for Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*', *Bulletin of the John Ryland Library* 81 (1999), 49–62, <http://dx.doi.org/10.7227/bjrl.81.1.3>.
- 54 *Ibid.*, 50. James's assertion that Petruchio is an accomplished thirty-something is based on Grumio's quibble that his master may be, 'for aught I see, two and thirty, a pip out' — which as Thompson notes, does not confirm his master's age but rather alludes to a popular card game and connotes that Petruchio is either drunk or 'not quite right in the head' (1.2.30–1 and n).
- 55 James, 'A New Source for Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*', 56–8.
- 56 John Lyly, *Endymion*, ed. David Bevington, Revels edn (Manchester, 1996). Hereafter referenced parenthetically as *End*.
- 57 Daniel C. Boughner, 'The Background of Lyly's Tophas', *PMLA* 54 (1939), 967–73, 968, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/458713>. Boughner's claim that this innovation stems from Terence ignores Pyrgopolinices's boast of having educated his first concubine (cited above).
- 58 Eg, see the Latin-English exchanges at 1.3.28–32, 39–40, and 5.2.15–6, 26–7, 48–50.
- 59 At 1.3.5, cf. 2.2.65, 2.2.86, 2.2.162, 4.2.1.
- 60 See Bevington, Introduction, *Endymion*, 41; Bernard F. Huppé, 'Allegory of Love in Lyly's Court Comedies', *ELH* 14 (1947), 93–113, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2871648>; and Sara Deats, 'The Disarming of the Knight: Comic Parody in Lyly's *Endymion*', *South Atlantic Bulletin* 40 (1975), 67–75, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3199121>.

- 61 Leo Salinger, *Shakespeare and the Traditions of Comedy* (Cambridge, 1976), 107, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511553189>. For comparisons of the two plays, see Bevington, introduction, *Endymion*, 14, 41–3, and Boughner, 'The Background of Lyly's Tophas', 967–73.
- 62 George Peele, *The Old Wives Tale*, ed. Patricia Binnie, Revels edn (Manchester, 1980), hereafter referenced parenthetically as *Old*.
- 63 His name has been traced to Juan y Bango — 'a type of the egotistic Spanish braggart'; see Binnie (ed.), *The Old Wives Tale*, 36 and sources cited there.
- 64 John D. Cox, 'Homely Matter and Multiple Plots in Peele's *Old Wives Tale*', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 20 (1978), 330–46, 338–9. Binnie is more sanguine about their love: 'Zantippa ... is a shrew; yet even with her bad temper she finds an oddly appropriate husband'; Introduction, *The Old Wives Tale*, 22.
- 65 Cox, 'Homely Matter', 339.
- 66 John W. Draper, *The Twelfth Night of Shakespeare's Audience* (Stanford, 1950), 5.
- 67 Fowler, *Kinds of Literature*, 88.
- 68 Robert B. Heilman, 'The *Taming* Untamed, or, The Return of the Shrew', in Aspinall (ed.), *The Taming of the Shrew*, 45–57, 51, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1215/00267929-27-2-147>.
- 69 Richard A. Lanham, *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, 2nd edn (Berkeley, 1991), sv 'erotesis'.
- 70 *Ibid*, sv 'epilepsis'.
- 71 Thomas Lodge, *Wits Miserie and the Worlds Madnesse: Discovering the Devils Incarnat of this Age* (1596), *EEBO* 62–3.
- 72 Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England*, #T638. On pillion cushions and female riding positions, see Alexander Mackay-Smith, Jean R. Druessedow, and Thomas Ryder, *Man and Horse: An Illustrated History of Equestrian Apparel* (New York, 1984), 123.
- 73 William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties: Eight Treatises* (1622), *EEBO* 594–5 italics omitted.
- 74 *Ibid*, 595 (citing Mt 1:6).
- 75 Jacques Gaultier, *Rodomontados. Or, Brauadoes and Bragardismes* (1610), *EEBO*, hereafter cited parenthetically by entry number.
- 76 Eg, see Perret, 'Petruccio: The Model Wife', 225–30; and Dennis S. Brooks, "'To Show Scorn her own Image": The Varieties of Education in *The Taming of the Shrew*', *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature* 48 (1994), 7–32, 20–4, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/1347881>.
- 77 Gaultier, dedication, *Rodomontados*, A3v italics omitted.

- 78 On her 'orthodox' submission, see Brooks, "'To Show Scorn her own Image'", 26–7; on her winking signal 'that she does not really believe it', see Howard's introduction in Greenblatt (ed.), *The Norton Shakespeare*, 138; on the scene as illustrating 'the mutual pleasure and play of the couple', see Corinne S. Abate, 'Neither a Tamer Nor a Shrew Be: A Defense of Petruchio and Katherine', in *Privacy, Domesticity, and Women in Early Modern England*, ed. Corinne S. Abate (Aldershot, 2003), 31–44, 39.
- 79 The complex relationship between the two texts is explored in Stephen Roy Miller, introduction, *The Taming of a Shrew: The 1594 Quarto* (Cambridge, 1998), 1–55, hereafter referenced parenthetically as *A Shrew*.
- 80 Stephen Miller, 'The Taming of a Shrew and the Theories; or, "Though This be Badness, Yet There is Method In't"', in Laurie E. Maguire and Thomas L. Berger (eds), *Textual Formations and Reformations* (Newark NJ, 1998), 251–63, 251. Cf Leah S. Marcus, who agrees that 'Barring the discovery of new evidence, we are unlikely ever to settle the question of which play came first'; *Unediting the Renaissance: Shakespeare, Marlowe, Milton* (London, 1996), 122, <http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9780203424445>.
- 81 My list of altered or omitted braggart conventions is meant to supplement Marcus's account of differences in plot, character, setting, language, and ideology between *A Shrew* and *The Shrew*; *ibid.*, 107–14. Miller notes that 'Ferando has less of the menacing tamer of folklore ... [and] appears less dangerous and less spirited than Petruchio' — though he does not explore the significance of these differences; Introduction, *Taming of a Shrew*, 15.
- 82 Thompson, introduction, *The Taming of the Shrew*, New Cambridge edn, 18.
- 83 The quarto's debt to Marlowe in these and other bombastic passages has been extensively documented; see Miller, Introduction, *The Taming of a Shrew*, 20–2, and notes, *passim*; and F.S. Boas (ed.), *The Taming of a Shrew*, Shakespeare Library edn (London, 1908), Appendix I (90–8).

RACHEL PRUSKO

Youth and Privacy in *Romeo and Juliet*

Passionate, dramatic, secretive, and misunderstood, Romeo and Juliet represent adolescence in ways that strike a familiar chord for audiences today. My essay suggests, however, that these young characters likely appeared to Shakespeare's original audiences as troubling, unsettling figures, because Romeo and Juliet dismantles extant understandings of young people in Shakespeare's England. I argue that the play's staging evokes the guarded interiority of its young protagonists and establishes private spaces in which they constitute themselves as adolescent subjects. Private space, in turn, makes possible a private language: a kind of teen-speak recognizable today but among its earliest manifestations.

Perhaps what strikes readers and audiences most forcefully about Shakespeare's famous young lovers is the way they talk. Beautiful and complex, dominated by wit and wordplay, their language is a thing to wonder at, yet feels at the same time oddly familiar. 'Did my heart love till now?' gushes Romeo on first glimpsing the fair Juliet: 'Forswear it, sight, / For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night' (1.5.49–50).¹ When they speak, audiences hear the language of the young; somehow they sound, in ways that Shakespeare's other adolescent characters do not, like teenagers. Indeed, much scholarship on *Romeo* has addressed the play's influence on current cultural perceptions of teenagers.² My main interest here, however, is not to determine whether, or how, *Romeo* produced youth culture as we understand it today, but rather to explore how the play dismantled youth culture as Shakespeare knew it. In *Romeo*, Shakespeare raises the unsettling possibility of a private adolescent self, a particular kind of subjectivity likely yet unexplored in early modern England; in so doing he exploits his culture's growing unease with the idea of inner, hidden selves and insinuates unstable ideas of youth into a culture already worried about secret subjectivities. Looking specifically at *Romeo and Juliet*, I argue that the play's staging both reflects and reveals

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the guarded interiority of these young characters, establishing pockets of private space in which they constitute themselves as subjects. This spatializing of privacy in turn makes possible the young lovers' distinctive, private language, marked by narrative, evasiveness, dissimulation, and word play; a kind of teen-speak recognizable to audiences today, but among its earliest manifestations.

Paul Griffiths's analysis of the early modern period's 'vocabulary of age' finds that 'youth' was the most usual descriptor for the stage of life between childhood and adolescence.³ The word 'adolescent', despite its medieval origins, appears less frequently, and the first recorded use of 'teen' appears in 1673.⁴ With my self-consciously anachronistic application of the word 'teenager' to Romeo and Juliet, I mean to suggest that Shakespeare contributed to a new conception of the youthful subject: his destabilized portrayals of young people are to a degree responsible for the version of 'the teenager' we recognize in the twenty-first century — that creature who is resistant to authority, emotional, prone to peer pressure, and above all impossible to understand. The term 'teenager' is today freighted with significance, and by invoking the word here I want to acknowledge this debt.

In Shakespeare's time, however, youth, while extant as an age category, was as yet only crudely defined. Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos identifies the rudimentary types applied to young people in the period.⁵ Common images of young age occurring in religious manuals, educational writings, autobiographies, and literature depict the young as prone to sin and vice; they were lustful and ungodly.⁶ Protestant preachers often wrote of youths' immoral activities, disobedience, and insubordination.⁷ Thus the conduct literature advocated the strict subordination of youth to adult authority. Frequently viewed as naturally sinful and rebellious, requiring a firm hand, adolescents might also be held up as emblems of hope and joy:⁸ conversion rhetoric, in particular, offered a positive view of youth as people capable of reasoned decision-making but still sufficiently malleable to receive religious instruction.⁹ Both formulations assigned young people to categories; they were construed as types rather than as individuals, as evidenced in the period's morality plays: sixteenth-century dramatic interludes, starring such stock figures as Youth in the anonymous *Interlude of Youth*, or Lusty Juventus ('Flaming Youth') in R. Wever's *Lusty Juventus*, tend to follow a basic sin-and-redemption pattern. The young were expected, Griffiths explains, merely to choose their path: an onerous one to heaven, or a certain one to hell.¹⁰

But historians working on the lived experience of early modern youth have found that between the poles of piety and profanity stretched a wide gap, what Griffiths has called 'an extensive middle territory in which people blended orthodoxy with their own assumptions about authority, piety, work, time, youth, conviviality,

and play'.¹¹ This gap, a space in which the young carved out their own sense of themselves, was evidently of interest to Shakespeare, whose young characters are nuanced, distinctive, and individuated. I suggest that the playwright invents, in his rendering of Romeo and Juliet and other teenaged characters (notably Prince Hal of the second tetralogy, Anne Page of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*,¹² Miranda of *The Tempest*, Marina of *Pericles*, and Perdita of *The Winter's Tale*), new ways of thinking about the young. His plays often depict teens coming of age on their own terms, engaging in self-definition outside the usual narratives established in conduct literature and morality plays. In *Romeo*, a new version of an old tale, Shakespeare represents young people in the process of becoming something other than the received versions of youth familiar to his contemporaries: the complex subjectivity of youth on display in *Romeo* is quite at odds with the hegemonic production of youthful subjects elsewhere in early modern culture.

Paul A. Kottman observes that most criticism on the play, notwithstanding its variations in method, roots itself in a particular critical paradigm, a 'dialectical tension between the lovers' desires and the demands of society or nature'.¹³ While my analysis of Romeo and Juliet as self-fashioning teenagers participates in this interpretive paradigm, I read the two young characters not only *against* the cultural forces impinging upon them, but also as people who find and express a selfhood *outside* the prevailing parameters of their culture; in other words, their resistance is more nuanced than what we think of today as uncomplicated teenaged rebellion against parents and social mores. Against the dominant public narratives of feud, patriarchy, and despotic parents, Shakespeare sets the teens' shared, private narrative, consisting in secrets, lies, and confessions; it is through these forms of private and elliptical narrative, rather than through straightforward rebellion, that Romeo and Juliet constitute themselves as subjects. In *Romeo*, privacy and resistance converge: the keeping of secrets reflects the incipient self-awareness of the play's teens. *Romeo's* early construction of interiorized youthful selves resonates powerfully both for the surviving characters at the end of the play and for audiences through the centuries.

Privacy and subjectivity

A sense of a private, guarded interiority thus emerges in Shakespeare's treatment of the young lovers: they not only possess, but also work to conceal, inner selves. As Keith Thomas reminds us, the idea that people had 'true' selves discrete from the masked selves they presented in public first took hold during the early modern period.¹⁴ Print and literacy allowed people to 'internalize privately' others' words;¹⁵

thus the spread of print and private reading, as Cecile M. Jagodzinski argues in *Privacy and Print*, led early moderns to develop a sense of a private self.¹⁶ Private space emerged as the embodiment of this newly interiorized sense of subjectivity; those who could afford it sought out such spaces in houses with specialized rooms and locking doors, as well as in gardens, closets, and cupboards.¹⁷ People began to control access to interior spaces, both literal and psychological. While scholars frequently qualify the critical commonplace that self-fashioning was a Renaissance innovation, looking much earlier for evidence of the interior self, much of the work on nascent signs of interiority continues to evidence the particular emergence of the self in early modern literature and culture.¹⁸ In England, the shift to an interior spirituality characterized the Protestant Reformation: unmediated access to spiritual writings, a personal relationship with God, and a dependence on faith and grace became paramount to Christian belief.

Thus a complication arose alongside this growing sense of interiority, for a private self could be guarded or kept secret.¹⁹ God alone could access a person's innermost thoughts, an idea that generated much anxiety: the new private subjectivity was at once something to celebrate and to fear.²⁰ Early modern privacy is interesting in the way that it helped both to fix the idea of an interior self and made that idea troubling and suspicious, for it unsettled the truism of a coherent, stable self, readily definable in terms of social and economic hierarchies. The new interior self emerged as a real and valued entity, but also a cause for concern, for the 'true' self could be masked. This conflict prompted efforts to stabilize the new subjectivity by penetrating its dark recesses. Theatre in the period, Katherine Maus argues, exploits these conflicted responses to the idea of inwardness, for its 'spectacles are understood to depend upon and indicate the shape of things unseen'.²¹ Inwardness performed is, unavoidably, inwardness destroyed; thus early modern anxieties about the hidden, interior self resonate with particular force on the stage.

Shakespeare confronted his audiences with unstable, difficult representations of the young through a public staging of private interiority, instituting a shift in contemporary perceptions of this age group. Here I draw on Steven Mullaney's reading of the performative 'as a consequential and primary mode of signification',²² and Paul Yachnin's argument that for Shakespeare's audiences, 'judgment came to require some understanding of the inward state of others'.²³ The early modern playhouse functioned as a public and therefore discursive and 'contestatory space',²⁴ its performance of plays 'itself a kind of social thinking'.²⁵ Romeo and Juliet perform their own sense of privacy; in doing so they not only publicize their guarded inner selves, but also put forward the idea that a private youthful

subjectivity could exist at all. Perhaps, for audiences, this idea was unsettling enough to provoke new questions about the young. Mary E. Trull's discussion of overhearing, a key trope in early modern works, is also useful here: 'each performance of privacy through overheard lament conjures up a public with a distinctive style that evokes specific affects and establishes an ethics for relations between audiences and performers'.²⁶ As Trull suggests, the public/private boundary in the early modern period was flexible; texts of the period commonly exploit this flexibility using the trope of overhearing to reveal a character's secret thoughts. Overhearing renders public that which is intended as private. While overhearing occurs within *Romeo* itself — in, for example, Romeo's overhearing of Juliet at her window — its audience also eavesdrops, becoming privy to the protagonists' innermost thoughts and desires, and thus witnessing a performance of the young self that conflicted with depictions of youth familiar at the time.

A particular version of youthful male behavior recognizable to an Elizabethan audience is quite evident in *Romeo*: such scenes as the play's opening exchange between Samson and Gregory, or Benvolio and Mercutio's discussion of their friend Romeo in the second act, inventory 'all the things likely to happen when young men get together in unspecified outdoor sites in Verona'.²⁷ The play's youth endeavour, in 'the public haunt of men' (3.1.45), to establish a specifically masculine identity: sexual puns ('Draw thy tool' [1.1.29]) and the drive to differentiate themselves from women ('therefore women, being the weaker vessel, are ever thrust to the wall' [1.1.14–15]) characterize their sense of masculinity. Mercutio construes his witty banter with Romeo and Benvolio as vastly superior to 'groaning for love': 'Now art thou sociable, now art thou Romeo' (2.3.77). Violence and public unruliness are also required: 'Draw, if you be men', instructs Samson (1.1.55). While Shakespeare does not offer a specific age for Romeo, he clearly belongs to an adolescent peer group, one that would be understood as such by its original audience. Bruce Young points out that Romeo is still a dependent member of the Montague household.²⁸ Since dependency lasted until marriage, Romeo could be twenty-something years old, but this seems not to be the case, given Friar Lawrence's emphasis on Romeo's youth and his implication that Romeo is not mature enough for marriage. Jill L. Levenson, writing of Romeo's age, claims convincingly that the play 'catches the lovers specifically in the early and middle phases of adolescence', citing Shakespeare's portrayal of Romeo's sexual energy and involvement in a peer group of other boys.²⁹

The play reflects its culture's normative expectations for adolescent girls as well, particularly in terms of rigid subordination to parents and purposeful attention to marriage. Juliet is instructed by her mother to 'think of marriage now',

for, her mother claims, ladies ‘younger than you’ (1.3.71), are already wives, and indeed mothers. Juliet should waste no time fulfilling the single purpose of her life, established at her birth. In her lengthy recollection of Juliet’s infancy, the nurse delights in repeating, no fewer than three times, the tale of her husband’s jest upon seeing the toddler Juliet fall on her face: ‘Thou wilt fall backward when thou hast more wit’ (44). The nurse is charmed by her memory of the little girl’s uncomprehending acquiescence to this vision of her sexual future: ‘It stinted and said “Ay”’ (59). Meanwhile, Juliet’s father, with his steadfast belief in his daughter’s obedience in the matter of her marriage, must have looked familiar to early modern audiences: ‘I think she will be ruled / In all respects by me. Nay, more, I doubt it not’ (3.4.13–14). Her refusal to marry Paris triggers not only consternation in her father — ‘How, will she none? Doth she not give us thanks?’ (3.5.142) — but rage, hatred, and threats:

Hang thee, young baggage, disobedient wretch!
I tell thee what: get thee to church o’ Thursday,
Or never after look me in the face. (160–2)

In effect, as Coppélia Kahn has argued, girls in Verona are denied the adolescence that boys are allowed, in that girls have ‘no sanctioned period of experiment with adult identities or activities’.³⁰ Juliet is to be married against her will at the age of thirteen.

Juliet’s age in Shakespeare’s play, however, marks a startling departure from his source material: in Bandello’s *Giulietta e Romeo* (1554) Juliet is eighteen, while in Brooke’s *Tragicall Historie of Romeus and Juliet* (1562), Shakespeare’s immediate source, she is sixteen. Shakespeare’s change is significant, particularly when we recall that average marriage ages in the period were much higher than thirteen, or even eighteen: E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield find an average first marriage age of twenty-eight years for men and twenty-six years for women in the period 1600–49;³¹ Tine De Moor and Jan Luiten Van Zanden offer similar findings for the same period: twenty-five years for women and twenty-seven and a half for men.³² Even among Italian women, who married somewhat younger, ‘the benchmark age was 19’.³³ Patricia Crawford’s discussion of marriage ages in the early modern period demonstrates that while wealthier girls married earlier than poorer ones, the average age for girls in higher levels of society was still around twenty; for the majority of the population it was approximately twenty-four. Men were usually significantly older than their brides.³⁴ *Romeo* thus begins to complicate, even as it dramatizes, its culture’s stereotypes of adolescence: Juliet’s extreme youth must have been as startling to the play’s first audiences as it is today. Her mother is

incorrect to claim that plenty of girls of thirteen and younger are already married and mothers, and Shakespeare's audiences would have known as much. Intentionally exaggerating his heroine's youth, the playwright unsettles the foundations of an old, familiar tale, rendering the Capulets absurd for forcing their daughter into such an early marriage and garnering sympathy for their adolescent daughter. The resulting heightened sense of conflict between daughter and parents enables the play's extended exploration of the teenaged subject.

Uses of private space

Both Romeo and Juliet resist the expectations of family and friends by turning inward, setting their interiorized youthful selves against the weight of cultural obligation. Juliet cleverly evades her parents by feigning compliance to their wishes, while Romeo withdraws from the boys' social sphere; his friends complain that his interest in women distracts him from the masculine pursuits celebrated in Verona. 'Alas, poor Romeo, he is already dead,' laments Mercutio, 'stabbed with a white wench's black eye, run through the ear with a love song' (2.3.12–14). At odds with parents and community, Romeo and Juliet seek to inhabit spaces — physical, psychological, and linguistic — outside the world they know: they try to articulate a private teenaged subjectivity. Early in the play, Montague recognizes his son's inclination to conceal both the source of his melancholic behavior (1.1.140–6) and his physical body:

Away from light steals home my heavy son,
And private in his chamber pens himself,
Shuts up his windows, locks fair daylight out

(130–2)

As the play individuates its young protagonists, it situates them in private spaces, alone or with only one another (or the Friar) for company, and emphasizes their secretive behavior.

Thus Shakespeare insistently separates his young characters from the forces that oppose them, and the territoriality of the staging registers this breach.³⁵ Here again his method departs from Brooke's, for Brooke's poem sketches a simple opposition between parents and their children that merely recycles and emphasizes authoritative structures. When, for example, Brooke's Capulet rages at his daughter for her disobedience, the fearful Juliet retreats wordlessly into her chamber to weep:

Then she that oft had seen the fury of her sire,

Dreading what might come of his rage, nould farther stir his ire.
 Unto her chamber she withdrew herself apart,
 Where she was wonted to unload the sorrows of her heart.³⁶

Unlike Shakespeare's Juliet, who argues and pleads with her father in this scene, Brooke's character is silent but for her sobs: 'When she to call for grace her mouth doth think to open, / Mute she is — for sighs and sobs her fearful talk have broken'.³⁷ Deserted by her enraged father and baffled mother, Brooke's Juliet withdraws into her chamber to cry over her misfortune; the private space serves merely to accentuate the girl's powerlessness in the face of her father's autocratic authority. Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, by contrast, use spatial separation to forge protected interiors, claiming private spaces for their own. Friar Lawrence's cell is one such space; in act 3, the Nurse's efforts to gain admission to this space underscore its concealed and private nature. The Friar's remarks indicate the spatializing of the scene:

Hark, how they knock! — Who's there? —
 Romeo, arise.
 Thou wilt be taken. — Stay a while. — Stand up.
[Still] knock [within]
 Run to my study. — By and by! — God's will,
 What simpleness is this?
Knock [within] (3.3.73–7)

Secure cues in the dialogue here ('Hark, how they knock'; 'Run to my study') divide the space outside the cell, occupied by the Nurse, from its interior, occupied by the Friar and Romeo. The continuous knocking characterizes the interior space as guarded and private (anticipating the porter scene in *Macbeth*, another play preoccupied with interior spaces and selves: 'Knock, knock, knock. Who's there, I'th' name of Beelzebub?' [2.3.3]), while the dialogue also points to the presence of an internal door, leading to the Friar's study, a space set even further apart from the rest of the action. In Juliet's later scene with the Friar, the stage is again demarcated as private for her use; embedded in her dialogue is the important direction to the Friar to 'shut the door' (4.1.44). When he does so, the stage transforms into a confidential space suitable for his conversation with Juliet:³⁸ 'O, shut the door, and when thou hast done so, / Come weep with me, past hope, past cure, past help!' (44–5).

Directionality, built into dialogue, again polarizes space in the balcony scene of act 2: 'I hear some noise within' (2.1.178) says Juliet to Romeo, interrupting

their farewell in order to acknowledge the Nurse's call. Shakespeare's emphatic spatializing of the scene takes hold as the protracted parting drags on:

NURSE (*within*) Madam!

JULIET I come, anon. [*To Romeo*] But if thou mean'st not well,
I do beseech thee —

NURSE (*within*) Madam!

JULIET By and by I come. —

To cease thy strife and leave me to my grief.

Tomorrow will I send.

(191–7)

The Nurse's repeated, insistent calls, like her knocking later at the Friar's cell, detach the balcony space from the interior of the house, designating the house as an adult space at odds with the youthful space of balcony and garden, the lovers' private territory. Later, this same space remains the private domain of the newly married couple, prior to Romeo's departure. In this scene (3.5), there is an unusual shift — what Mariko Ichikawa calls a 'remarkable transition'³⁹ — in locale: while the main stage represents Capulet's orchard until line 59, it transforms suddenly into the interior of his house at line 64. During the intervening lines in which Juliet weeps and rails against the fickleness of fortune, two things occur, as stage directions indicate: she pulls up the ladder of cords Romeo has used to flee, and her mother enters below. This entrance bisects line 64, which belongs first to Juliet ('But send him back'), and then gives way to her mother's question: 'Ho, daughter, are you up?' In the midst of this exchange, the stage space transforms: the lovers' separation, followed closely by the mother's appearance, effects the sudden transition from garden to house. With the wrenching departure of Romeo ('Art thou gone so, love, lord, my husband, friend?' [43]) and the puncturing of the space by the adult figure, the lovers' private world dissolves.

There is a sense of opposition in the staging, then, that reflects youthful resistance to scripted subjectivity. Moments of isolation for Romeo and Juliet, when they inhabit spaces discrete from the world of adults or peers, are revelatory: hidden from fellow characters, their inner selves are on display. Once again, directionality carefully embedded in dialogue marks Romeo's physical detachment from his friends as he pursues a private conference with Juliet: 'He ran this way, and leapt this orchard wall' (2.1.5), Benvolio informs Mercutio as they search for Romeo. Hidden by the 'humorous night' (31), Romeo hears his friends' teasing — 'Romeo! Humours! Madman! Passion! Love!' (8) — but evinces little concern once they have gone: 'He jests at scars that never felt a wound' (43). Together,

he and Juliet now control the stage space, and the balcony scene marks the beginning of their private love story. Ready to dispense with Verona's expectations, Romeo interrupts Juliet's private musings with an offer to shed his name and all that it means: 'Call me but love and I'll be new baptized. / Henceforth I never will be Romeo' (92–3). Juliet, too, is ready to defy family and custom, offering herself to Romeo frankly ('Take all myself' [91]), and with an ironic self-reflexivity that suggests an awareness of her own difference:

if thou think'st I am too quickly won,
I'll frown, and be perverse, and say thee nay,
So thou wilt woo; but else, not for the world. (135–9)

Moving toward self-realization, the young characters define themselves as lovers. In their union, Romeo and Juliet surpass a simple rebellion against parents and social mores, undertaking a process of becoming in which they rely on one another.

Indeed the play is full of moments where just such a self-recognition is made possible, moments where the young characters, 'bescreened in night' (2.1.93), 'untalked of and unseen' (3.2.5–7), try to make sense of who they are becoming. Private spaces in *Romeo* are disruptive not due to their sometimes domestic, feminized quality (after all, Juliet's private scenes with her mother do nothing to challenge the masculinist imperative that drives Verona), but in the sense that they disorder the stable subjectivity the play otherwise attributes to its young characters. In *Romeo*, writes Naomi Liebler, 'we hear much about walls — and about walls within walls: Verona's many small enclosures and little fortresses ("two households") subdivide and thus weaken the city'.⁴⁰ Verona, Liebler contends, implodes: its walls signify separateness and divisiveness; violence and disorder underlie the very structure of the city, and Romeo and Juliet are fatally ensnared in that structure. It seems to me, though, that they make use of that very divisiveness, exploring a sense of interiority from within the segregated spaces the play carves out. Indeed it is precisely *because* 'the structures of order and authority fail'⁴¹ that Romeo and Juliet find opportunities for self-fashioning. Juliet acknowledges that 'the orchard walls are high and hard to climb', yet Romeo can and does 'o'erperch' them, 'For stony limits cannot hold love out / And what love can do, that dares love attempt' (2.1.105, 108–10). Freedom from family, feud, and fixed ideas of 'who thou art' (106) lies in the private space beyond the orchard wall. As Kottman has recently argued, love in the play should be understood as a 'struggle for freedom and self-realization'.⁴² This sense of freedom — the freedom to acknowledge one's

individuality as a private subject — lies at the heart of Shakespeare's representation of youth in this play.

The shared space of the mausoleum is the most disruptive of all, for parents and authorities must penetrate this space, and the revelation of what has happened causes chaos and confusion: the Prince must quickly silence the grieving parents, instructing them to 'Seal up the mouth of outrage for a while, / Till we can clear these ambiguities' (5.3.215–16). The moment resonates powerfully, because the teens' story, thanks to the Friar, is finally told, and their hidden selves laid bare: 'For never was a story of more woe / Than this of Juliet and her Romeo' (308–9). The lovers' jarring tale is quickly contained, packaged carefully by the Friar ('I will be brief' [228]), and answered by the grieving parents with a hastily conceived solution: to turn their children into scapegoats ('sacrifices of our enmity' [303]) and erect elaborate statues in their memory. If life is to make sense again, they must superimpose a narrative of renewal on the dreadful scene before them. The suddenness of this resolution, though, while seemingly an effective act of containment and therefore an erasure of the sense of self the young people have pursued throughout the play, instead points up the extent to which the newly dead Romeo and Juliet, truly a 'pitiful sight' (172), have rewritten a script well known to their parents, forcing them into a knowledge they would rather not possess: a radical reimagining of the children they thought they knew. That their deaths have ended the feud is at any rate merely a Pyrrhic victory, for Romeo and Juliet are only children; the future for both families has died with them. The rest of the cast is now admitted to the private recesses that the audience has been privy to all along, and for them, as for us all, the final revelation proves far too much to bear.

A private language

Disruptive private spaces in *Romeo* make room for what is probably the most significant manifestation of a reimagined youthful subjectivity in the play: the teens' distinctive language, characterized by evasiveness, dissimulation, word play, and a predilection for storytelling. In the private space of the Friar's cell, Romeo and Juliet speak freely and lay bare their interior selves; in a word, they confess.⁴³ But confession here is not a matter of divulging sins and receiving absolution; indeed, Juliet lies outright to the Nurse about visiting the Friar's cell for this purpose (3.5.231–4). Rather, in his role as confessor, the Friar urges the young people to express their innermost thoughts. In doing so he reflects the early modern shift from public to private confession: for Romeo and Juliet the cell is a place to

express thoughts they must conceal from their families and friends. Juliet, forsaken by the Nurse, renounces her once-closest confidante in favor of the Friar:

Go, counselor!
 Thou and my bosom henceforth shall be twain.
 I'll to the friar, to know his remedy. (239–41)

The cell is one space in the play where Romeo and Juliet pursue the project of self-making: confession, writes Michel Foucault, is a 'ritual of discourse in which the speaking subject is also the subject of the statement ... a ritual in which the expression alone, independently of its external consequences, produces intrinsic modifications in the person who articulates it'.⁴⁴ While the agency in this mode of discourse rests with the interlocutor rather than the speaker, this 'discourse of truth finally takes effect, not in the one who receives it, but in the one from whom it is wrested'.⁴⁵ Just so do Romeo and Juliet begin to constitute themselves as subjects within the privacy of the Friar's cell; private 'confession', uttered in the secret space of the cell, helps the teens perceive themselves as individuals.

Long forced to bear the weight of the feud, Romeo and Juliet try, as they come of age, to shed this narrative and replace it with one of their own; they resist what Friar Laurence calls a 'certain text' (4.1.21). The Chorus foregrounds that text, opening the play with a sonnet that summarizes the story to come; the Chorus gives the play's opening 'a static quality, a frozen sense of events', until, in line 14, one recognizes the contingency of the Chorus's judgments and the possibility that its story is not complete: 'What here shall miss'.⁴⁶ It falls to Romeo and Juliet, ultimately the play's 'most reliable authority', to invalidate the determinism of the Chorus.⁴⁷ Romeo and Juliet rewrite the story that has scripted their lives and constitute themselves as subjects through the development of a private language: in narrative, dissimulation, and word play.

They are eager to establish a way of speaking that reflects their private experience, and that distinguishes them from the adult community around them. As Romeo informs Friar Laurence,

Thou canst not speak of that thou dost not feel.
 Wert thou as young as I, Juliet thy love,
 An hour but married, Tybalt murderèd,
 Doting like me, and like me banishèd,
 Then mightst thou speak (3.3.64–8)

Similarly, Juliet bemoans the Nurse's sluggish pace in returning from a visit with Romeo:

Had she affections and warm youthful blood
 She would be as swift in motion as a ball,
 My words would bandy her to my sweet love,
 And his to me. (2.4.12–15)

Were the Nurse young, Juliet fancifully imagines, rather than ‘unwieldy, slow, heavy, and pale as lead’ (17), the lovers’ youthful language could move her, sending her bouncing between them like a ball in a tennis volley.

Paul Jorgensen has argued that Shakespeare never raises Romeo and Juliet’s poetry above the level of their age; *Romeo* ‘shows pure, youthful, tragic love in a poetry consummately suited to that love.’⁴⁸ Witness Romeo, in the throes of his passion for Rosaline: ‘Tut, I have lost myself. I am not here. / This is not Romeo; he’s some other where’ (1.1.190–1); or Juliet, as loath to part with Romeo on the balcony as a present day teen to hang up the telephone (or send the last text message): ‘Good night, good night. Parting is such sweet sorrow / That I shall say good night till it be morrow’ (2.1.229–30). In its youthful ebullience, their diction suits these very young characters, tragic heroes ‘less complex and less grand’ than those Shakespeare would later create,⁴⁹ and it strikes a familiar chord for contemporary audiences, in the same way that their rashness and impetuosity does. Yet we cannot attribute the same sense of familiarity to our early modern counterparts. Indeed Shakespeare seems at pains to imagine a particular voice for his teen protagonists in this play, one that sets them apart from the familiar discourse of their community. At the level of language they are exiles, early examples of young people who set themselves in opposition to their parents, background, and community.⁵⁰ Anthony Low argues that a ‘separation from the community of discourse’ is closely related to the condition of exile; since people draw a sense of self from their discourse community, ‘enforced silence’ is the result of exile from that community.⁵¹ In the case of Romeo and Juliet, however, a detachment from the language of their parents and peers opens avenues for resistance.

In a play preoccupied with the telling of stories, the teenaged protagonists try to dispel the influence of the narratives that surround them. Levenson’s analysis of the play’s transformation of rhetoric demonstrates the extent to which the play makes possible the retelling of old stories. In its deliberately complex use of rhetoric (evident, for example, in the ‘elaborate array of rhetorical devices’ Mercutio offers in his Queen Mab speech), *Romeo* ‘reopens a book which writers of the previous generation had apparently closed.’⁵² Destabilizing the familiar narrative from which it takes its story, the play introduces ambiguity, thus releasing ‘the old narrative to tell a new story.’⁵³ Much of this retelling falls, I think, to the

protagonists: Juliet, for example, is a wildly imaginative storyteller and an accomplished liar. In her private conference with Friar Laurence in act 4, she indulges in a series of immoderate images detailing circumstances preferable to marrying Paris:

Chain me with roaring bears,
 Or hide me nightly in a charnel house,
 O'ercovered quite with dead men's rattling bones,
 With reeky shanks and yellow chapless skulls;
 Or bid me go into a new-made grave
 And hide me with a dead man in his tomb. (4.1.80–5)

Juliet often uses language to reinvent herself, opening her character to a range of interpretations. And while today we might feel dismissive of such language (the contemporary colloquialism 'drama queen' comes to mind), it seems important that the Friar receives her words seriously; indeed, his plan to help her will literalize the products of her imagination. Friar Laurence meets Romeo's theatrics — 'In what vile part of this anatomy / Doth my name lodge?' (3.3.105–6) — with a similar seriousness and sense of urgency:

Wilt thou slay thyself,
 And slay thy lady that in thy life lives
 By doing damnèd hate upon thyself? (115–17)

That the Friar takes seriously what we would quickly dismiss gestures toward the novelty of the teens' language and behaviour in Shakespeare's time.

To counter the entrenched narrative that has thus far dictated their lives and identities, Romeo and Juliet fashion their own publicly performed narrative: the young lovers show an aptitude for dissimulation. The balcony scene bears witness to Juliet's acting ability, a skill that reappears in her scene of false repentance, performed for the benefit of her parents. Kneeling before her father, she makes a convincing show of obedience and lies to him with practiced ambiguity:

I met the youthful lord at Laurence's cell,
 And gave him what becoming love I might,
 Not stepping o'er the bounds of modesty. (4.2.25–7)

Gratified to hear what he believes to be a recitation of an appropriate script, Capulet approves of his daughter once again: 'Why, I am glad on't. This is well. Stand up. / This is as't should be' (28–9). Juliet can even perform a version of her own death, a 'dismal scene' that she must 'act alone' (4.3.19), despite the Friar's worry

that her 'womanish fear' may 'abate thy valour in the acting of it' (4.1.119, 120). Her feigned death succeeds in that it both cancels her parents' wedding plans for their daughter and reverses her father's earlier imposition of silence upon his daughter when she attempts to resist his plans for her marriage ('Speak not, reply not, do not answer me' [3.5.163]), robbing him of language: 'Death, that hath ta'en her hence to make me wail, / Ties up my tongue, and will not let me speak' (4.4.58–9). Juliet's skill in performance, in dissembling, both invalidates the Friar's gender-based assumption and undermines her father's tyrannical authority.

Juliet herself calls attention to Romeo's skills in dissimulation, wondering, as she grieves Tybalt's death, if her new husband has deceived her:

O serpent heart hid with a flow'ring face!
 Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?
 Beautiful tyrant, fiend angelical!
 Dove-feathered raven, wolvis-ravens lamb!
 Despisèd substance of divinest show!
 Just opposite to what thou justly seem'st —
 A damnèd saint, an honourable villain. (3.2.73–81)

Carried away, as she so often is, by a frenzy of extravagant metaphors, Juliet yet strikes upon an important facet of Romeo's character, one that his family and friends note as well. While the Nurse is sure that 'there's no trust, no faith, no honesty in men; / All perjured, all forsworn, all naught, dissemblers all' (86–7), other characters point to such dissembling as particular to Romeo. Benvolio, for example, assumes he will have to work hard to extract from Romeo the true cause of his 'black and portentous' mood: 'I'll know his grievance or be much denied', he assures Montague, who imagines Benvolio will be disappointed in his efforts: 'I would thou wert so happy by thy stay / To hear true shrift' (1.1.134, 150–2). The Friar, in his first scene with Romeo, grows similarly irritated with Romeo's oblique responses to his questions: 'Be plain, good son, and homely in thy drift. / Riddling confession finds but riddling shrift' (2.2.55–6). This penchant for the performative is a linguistic strategy, a form of narrative that divides Romeo and Juliet from the forces that oppose them, because it amounts to a public posturing, a means of concealing an emergent subjectivity.

The lovers develop, then, what we might term a language of evasion, which to a significant extent inheres in lies, performance, and dissembling. But they press that evasion further still, attempting to evade even the language of family and feud itself. Sara Deats has noted Juliet's desire to dispense with the 'shopworn clichés that were *au courant* at the time',⁵⁴ she urges Romeo during the balcony

scene to ‘swear not by the moon, th’inconstant moon’ (2.1.151). Later, before they exchange vows, she informs him, ‘Conceit, more rich in matter than in words, / Brags of his substance, not of ornament’ (2.5.30–1). From Juliet, Romeo will learn that ‘true love speaks simply’.⁵⁵ Together they look for a way of speaking that reflects their sense of themselves as individuals, and that might disentangle them from the web of signification that constitutes language in Verona. The lovers are interested in playing on, and thus stripping the power of, words — and especially names — freighted with the expectations and mores of their culture: as Juliet cries out on the balcony, ‘O, be some other name! / What’s in a name?’ (2.1.84–5). Convinced that her enemy is not a man but a mere word signifying an old and meaningless feud, Juliet divides Romeo from his name: ‘Thou are thyself, though not a Montague’ (81). Romeo, overhearing her, concurs: he declines to utter ‘Montague’, informing Juliet instead, ‘I know not how to tell thee who I am’ (96). The teens’ way of speaking reflects their efforts to actualize a sense of private subjectivity outside the norms imposed by parents and society, and to live a private life of their own making.

Romeo and Juliet try elsewhere to strip words of their significance: following Romeo’s slaying of Tybalt, both are tortured by the words ‘banishèd’ and ‘banishment’. There was, says Juliet, some word

worser than Tybalt’s death,
That murdered me. I would forget it fain,
But O, it presses to my memory ... (3.2.108–10)

Just as she severs Romeo’s self from the word Montague, here Juliet divides the word ‘banishèd’ from what it signifies — her own profound sense of grief and loss — arguing that the word itself cannot name what she feels: ‘No words can that woe sound’ (126). Romeo, meanwhile, in conversation with Friar Laurence, attempts a similar deconstruction. ‘Banishèd,’ he insists, is actually ‘death mistermed’:

Calling death ‘banishèd’
Thou cut’st my head off with a golden axe,
And smil’st upon the stroke that murders me. (3.3.21–3)

Thus he implores the Friar, ‘Do not say “banishment”’ (14), and demands to know how he has the heart,

being a divine, a ghostly confessor,

A sin-absolver and my friend professed,
 To mangle me with that word 'banishèd'? (49–51)

Friar Laurence, interestingly, offers Romeo 'philosophy' as 'armour to keep off that word' (54–5). But Romeo, notwithstanding his own frequent philosophizing, rejects the offer forthwith: 'Yet "banished"? Hang up philosophy!' (57). The horror of banishment derives not so much from the loss of community, for, contrary to Romeo's belief, there is a world outside Verona's walls; but rather from the loss of the lovers' private community, the loss of their newly forged private life. The word 'banishment' does not signify to Romeo and Juliet the Prince's act of mercy, commuting what would otherwise be Romeo's death sentence; rather, like 'Montague' and 'Capulet', it bears the heavy imposition of cultural authority. As Romeo puts it, 'Tis torture, and not mercy. Heaven is here / Where Juliet lives' (29–30).

An attempt at a loosening of the referent from its signifier is part of Romeo and Juliet's development of a youthful subjectivity: their refusal to reify names and words that carry such weight in their community contributes to the play's destabilizing of youthful identity. When words cease to signify, the feud and its fallout lose their power. Thus, while Juliet, for example, favours a straightforward style of communication with Romeo, she prefers prevarication when dealing with her parents. Capulet, irritated and baffled by her wordplay, accuses his daughter of sophistry — 'chopped logic' (3.5.149) — when she plays on the word 'proud' in response to his demand that she be 'proud' (or gratified) to take Paris as her husband: 'Not proud you have, but thankful that you have. / Proud can I never be of what I hate' (146–7). Linda Woodbridge has argued for the presence of a 'magical grammar' in Shakespeare, and particularly in *Macbeth*, comprised of euphemisms, pronouns, passive verbs, and other 'substitutive devices', that causes 'unpleasant things to disappear'.⁵⁶ Sometimes the ambiguities created by such language are, she argues, 'very calculated indeed' and serve a particular function: to protect characters from their own self-scrutiny.⁵⁷ While Romeo and Juliet are interested in deploying just such a calculated ambiguity, they use it instead to protect themselves from the external assumptions and expectations that press upon them, and therefore to open a space *for* self-scrutiny.

The degree to which the lovers succeed in their efforts to speak their way into a private subjectivity is debatable. Pierre Iselin's account of language in *Romeo* suggests that, rather than stripping signifiers of their meaning, Romeo and Juliet — perhaps unwittingly — instead reify them, so that these signifiers appear to behave autonomously. 'Banish' can kill or mangle; 'the mere phoneme[ai] is

endowed with lethal efficacy: “Hath Romeo slain himself? Say thou but ‘Ay’, / And that bare vowel ‘I’ shall poison more / Than the death-darting eye of cockatrice” [3.2.45–7].⁵⁸ Their names in particular are impossible to shed; Romeo and Juliet, writes Jacques Derrida, ‘will not be able to get free from their name, they know this without knowing it [*sans le savoir*]’.⁵⁹ Juliet tries to call Romeo ‘beyond his name’, and yet she knows that ‘aphoristic though it may be, his name is his essence. Inseparable from his being’.⁶⁰ And yet, for the young lovers, the attempt itself, the effort to evade the meanings and significations that surround and restrict them, matters; for the sense these young people inaugurate of a private teenaged subjectivity far outlives them, its originators. Even if, in Derrida’s terms, the aphoristic nature of both Romeo and Juliet and *Romeo and Juliet* at once precedes (owing to the play’s numerous source tales) and supersedes the lovers’ attempts to reinvent themselves, it is also through aphorism that they ‘will have lived, and live on’.⁶¹ Their manner of speaking echoes still, to the point where it has now become familiar to audiences as that particular, peculiar language of the teenager.

Yet it is not a sense of familiarity that makes *Romeo and Juliet* Shakespeare’s premier representation of youth. More particularly, Romeo and Juliet make possible the interiorized young self by exposing, quite candidly, that very inwardness. *Romeo* destabilizes youthful subjectivity by staging the unsettling idea that young people might have inner selves at all, and, more troubling still, the possibility that they might conceal those same selves. The play does not stop at the mere provoking of questions: reading a teenaged character like Prince Hal, for example, we can acknowledge his self-imposed anonymity and wonder (all the while accepting the futility of the question) about the validity of the interior self seemingly on display, a questioning that itself creates a productive instability. But in *Romeo*, audiences witness the intelligible exposure of that self, are admitted into its private recesses, and are asked both to believe in it and to grasp that it likely reaches beyond their expected range of possibilities for youth. *Romeo*’s version of youth, while audiences and critics today may consider it foundational to our own, belongs to Shakespeare; and for his own viewers and readers, his portrait of the young must have been a very unsettling one indeed.

Notes

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- 1 All quotations from Shakespeare are taken from Stephen Greenblatt (ed.), *The Norton Shakespeare* (New York, 2008).
- 2 For example, Marjorie Garber's study of modern adaptations of the play in *Shakespeare and Modern Culture* (New York, 2008) stresses in particular the musical *West Side Story* as *Romeo's* 'most important intervention' in modern culture (47); she argues that the mid-fifties in America were, in Leonard Bernstein's words, the 'right time' for a musical about rival gangs in New York: the conformist yet restless fifties foresaw the 'sea change in youth culture and sensibility' (49) that would characterize the early sixties (young love, obstructed passion, drugs, peer pressure, parents who don't understand) and remains with us today. See also Sara Deats's essay, 'The Conspiracy of Silence in Shakespeare's *Verona: Romeo and Juliet*', in Sara Munson Deats and Lagretta Tallent Lenker (eds), *Youth Suicide Prevention: Lessons from Literature* (New York and London, 1989), 73, 74. Deats argues that *Romeo* has a continuing relevance in terms of what it can teach us about teen suicide: Deats relates (using such phrases as 'like so many parents today' and 'as so often happens today') the broken state of communication in the play, and the accompanying sense of profound isolation, to the experience of contemporary teenagers. *Romeo*, she points out, 'presents an all-too-familiar portrait of a disturbed adolescent with suicidal tendencies'; Tybalt similarly represents a 'familiar adolescent type' (ibid, 75 and 81).
- 3 Paul Griffiths, *Youth and Authority: Formative Experiences in England, 1560–1640* (Oxford, 1996), 20.
- 4 Diane Purkiss, 'Fractious: Teenage Girls' Tales in and out of Shakespeare', Mary Ellen Lamb and Karen Bamford (eds), *Oral Traditions and Gender in Early Modern Texts* (Aldershot, 2005), 57.
- 5 Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth in Early Modern England* (New Haven, 1994). See also Michael Mitterauer, *A History of Youth* (Oxford, 1992) and Konrad Eisenbichler (ed.), *The Premodern Teenager: Youth in Society 1150–1560* (Toronto, 2002). It is important to note the debt all these books on youth owe to earlier historians working on youth groups in early modern England. See, for example, Natalie Zemon Davis, 'The Reasons of Misrule: Youth Groups and Charivaris in Sixteenth-Century France', *Past and Present* 50 (1971), 41–75; Bernard Capp, 'English Youth Groups and The Pinder of Wakefield', Paul Slack (ed.), *Rebellion, Popular Protest and the Social Order in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1984), 212–18; and S.R. Smith, 'The London Apprentices as Seventeenth-Century Adolescents', Slack (ed.), *Rebellion*, 219–31.

- 6 Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth*, 17.
- 7 In 1612, for example, Anthony Stafford wrote his *Meditations and Resolutions, Moral, Divine, Political, Written for the Instruction and Bettering of Youth*, in which he insists that a ‘yong man is like a horse; who, if hee want a curbe, will runne himselfe to death. Those parents, therefore, are wise, who joyne correction, with direction, and keepe those in, who else would lash-out’ (*Early English Books Online [EEBO]*, 89–90).
- 8 Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth*, 20.
- 9 Thomas Powell gave a sermon in 1676 called *The Beauty, Vigour and Strength of Youth Bespoke for God*: ‘Remember your creator oh young men, while the evil dayes come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them. Is it not better to live than die, turn than burn? O Sirs, persist not till it be too late, but choose God your chiefest Good, onely Good, suitable Good, and everlasting Good’ (*EEBO*, 16).
- 10 Griffiths, *Youth and Authority*, 55–6.
- 11 *Ibid*, 233.
- 12 On Anne Page as a self-fashioning teenaged girl, see Rachel Prusko, “‘Who Hath Got the Right Anne?’: Gossip, Resistance, and Anne Page in Shakespeare’s *Merry Wives*”, Evelyn Gajowski and Phyllis Rackin (eds), *The Merry Wives of Windsor: New Critical Essays* (New York, 2014), 51–60.
- 13 Paul A. Kottman, ‘Defying the Stars: Tragic Love as the Struggle for Freedom in *Romeo and Juliet*’, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 63.1 (Spring 2012), 4, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/shq.2012.0007>.
- 14 Keith Thomas, *The Ends of Life: Roads to Fulfillment in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2009), 40.
- 15 Cynthia Marshall, *The Shattering of the Self: Violence, Subjectivity, and Early Modern Texts* (Baltimore and London, 2002), 13.
- 16 Cecile M. Jagodzinski, *Privacy and Print: Reading and Writing in Seventeenth-Century England* (Charlottesville and London, 1999), 6.
- 17 Thomas, *Ends of Life*, 188.
- 18 See, for example, David Aers, ‘A Whisper in the Ear of Early Modernists; or, Reflections on Literary Critics Writing the “History of the Subject”’, David Aers (ed.), *Culture and History, 1350–1600: Essays on English Communities, Identities, and Writing* (Detroit, 1992), 182. Aers finds evidence of an inward subjectivity in Augustine’s *Confessions*. Douglas Gray traces the backgrounds of self-fashioning in medieval literature and spiritual autobiographies in ‘Finding Identity in the Middle Ages’, A.J. Piesse (ed.), *Sixteenth-Century Identities* (Manchester and New York, 2000), 9–26. Others, including Jagodzinski in *Privacy and Print*, Anthony Low in *Aspects*

of *Subjectivity: Society and Individuality from the Middle Ages to Shakespeare and Milton* (Pittsburgh, 2003), and Charles Taylor in *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, 1989), while acknowledging the early roots of interior subjectivity, maintain that a change in worldview, characterized by a striking sense of the autonomous self, was apparent among the early moderns.

- 19 See Ronald Huebert, 'Privacy: The Early Social History of a Word', *Sewanee Review* 105.1 (Winter 1997), 21–38. Huebert discusses the sixteenth-century semantic relationship between privacy and secrecy, where 'privacy' could refer both to concealed items and to places of concealment.
- 20 Faith itself, writes Katharine Maus in *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Chicago, 1995), 'encourages a kind of mistrust: for what is most true about human beings in such a system is simultaneously least verifiable' (12). Linda Woodbridge, 'Impostors, Monsters, and Spies: What Rogue Literature Can Tell Us about Early Modern Subjectivity', *Early Modern Literary Studies: A Journal of Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century English Literature* 9 (2002), links the new interiority to the period's concern with imposture: 'that the unmasking of imposture, the shining of a bright light onto occulted identities and hidden practices, is a crucial trope in the period says much about subjectivity' (para. 2). In a similar vein, Jon R. Snyder, *Dissimulation and the Culture of Secrecy in Early Modern Europe* (Berkeley, 2009), xiv–xv, has written of the early modern culture of dissimulation, arguing that during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the mind was held to be impenetrable, its inner workings available to others only if its owner chose to make them known; secrecy was constitutive of self-representation.
- 21 Maus, *Inwardness and Theater*, 32.
- 22 Steven Mullaney, 'What's Hamlet to Habermans? Spatial Literacy, Theatrical Publication and the Publics of the Early Modern Public Stage', Angela Vanhaelen and Joseph P. Ward (eds), *Making Space Public in Early Modern Europe: Performance, Geography, Privacy* (New York and London, 2013), 31.
- 23 Paul Yachnin, 'The Reformation of Space in Shakespeare's Playhouse', Angela Vanhaelen and Joseph P. Ward (eds), *Making Space Public in Early Modern Europe: Performance, Geography, Privacy* (New York and London, 2013), 270.
- 24 Ibid, 264.
- 25 Mullaney, 'What's Hamlet to Habermans?', 19.
- 26 Mary E. Trull, *Performing Privacy and Gender in Early Modern Literature* (New York, 2013), 5.
- 27 Thomas Moisan, "'Now Art Thou What Thou Art"; or, Being Sociable in Verona: Teaching Gender and Desire in *Romeo and Juliet*', Maurice Hunt (ed.), *Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet* (New York, 2000), 49.

- 28 Bruce Young, 'Haste, Consent, and Age at Marriage: Some Implications of Social History for *Romeo and Juliet*', *Iowa State Journal of Research* 62.3 (1988), 465.
- 29 Jill Levenson, 'Introduction', Jill L. Levenson (ed.), *The Oxford Shakespeare: Romeo and Juliet* (Oxford, 2000), 17.
- 30 Coppélia Kahn, 'Coming of Age in Verona', Carolyn Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene, and Carol Thomas Neely (eds), *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare* (Urbana, 1980), 180.
- 31 E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541–1871: A Reconstruction* (Cambridge, 1989), 255.
- 32 Tine De Moor and Jan Luiten Van Zanden, 'Girl power: the European marriage pattern and labour markets in the North Sea region in the late medieval and early modern period', *Economic History Review* 63.1 (2010), 18.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Patricia Crawford, *Blood, Bodies and Families* (Harlow, 2004), 5, 89.
- 35 I owe my understanding of certain principles of Shakespearean staging, particularly directionality and territoriality, to the late theatre historian and Shakespearean John Orrell.
- 36 Arthur Brooke, *The Tragicall Historie of Romeus and Juliet*, J.J. Munro (ed.), *Brooke's 'Romeus and Juliet' Being the Original of Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet'* (New York, 1970), 74.
- 37 Ibid, 72.
- 38 Mariko Ichikawa, *The Shakespearean Stage Space* (Cambridge, 2013), 82.
- 39 Ibid, 119.
- 40 Naomi Liebler, "There is no world without Verona walls": The City in *Romeo and Juliet*, Richard Dutton and Jean E. Howard (eds), *A Companion to Shakespeare's Works*, 4 vols (Malden, 2005), 1.307–8.
- 41 Ibid, 309.
- 42 Kottman, 'Defying the Stars', 5.
- 43 The shifting nature of confession, and its eventual demise under Protestantism, is another important marker of the move toward inwardness. Confession in late medieval Europe and England was mainly social, a face-to-face encounter between the priest and his parishioners, as John Bossy, 'The Social History of Confession in the Age of the Reformation', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 25 (Dec. 1975), 21–38, <https://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3679084>, describes it; the private confessional booth did not appear until the sixteenth century. The fourteenth century saw the beginnings of private, inward confession, but theologians continued to stress the importance of the public canonical rite of penance, which forged reconciliation, 'not directly with God, but with the church; the effect of the sacrament is to restore a

- condition of peace [*pax*] between the sinner and the church' (Bossy, 'Social History', 22). Between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, the concept of sin as occurring in the mind gradually took hold (27); in the early sixteenth century, Luther carefully demarcated secret, interior sins from public transgressions, and was adamantly opposed to the formal confession of private sins. The emphasis shifted during early Lutheranism from a sinner's inner feelings of guilt, to sins felt within his own soul that he ought to confess only to God (Low, *Aspects of Subjectivity*, 66–7).
- 44 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, 3 vols (New York, 1978), 1.61–2.
- 45 Ibid, 62.
- 46 Arthur Kinney, 'Authority in *Romeo and Juliet*', Maurice Hunt (ed.), *Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet* (New York, 2000), 30.
- 47 Ibid, 31. Levenson also suggests, in 'Echoes Inhabit a Garden: The Narratives of *Romeo and Juliet*', *Shakespeare Survey* 53 (2000), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CCOL0521781140.004>, that the play's opening sonnet is not so fixed a narrative as it might seem, arguing that it destabilizes the well known sequence of the Romeo and Juliet story, circulating throughout England, Italy, and France during the sixteenth century, by rearranging the sequence of events and introducing ambiguities through its unstable diction. The Chorus 'emphasizes the passions which drive the narrative' and 'invites the spectators to participate in making the play' (42).
- 48 Paul A. Jorgensen, *William Shakespeare: The Tragedies* (Boston, 1985), 27.
- 49 Ibid.
- 50 Robert Bellah, in *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2008), traces our contemporary sense of autonomy to the Puritans, a group called by God but forced to rely on themselves as they 'left wealth and comfort to set out in small ships' (55). It was this value of self-reliance that eventually gave rise to the tradition of the young person leaving home and parental support to find his own way.
- 51 Low, *Aspects of Subjectivity*, 15.
- 52 Jill L. Levenson, 'Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*: The Places of Invention', Catherine M.S. Alexander (ed.), *Shakespeare and Language* (Cambridge, 2004), 122.
- 53 Ibid, 136.
- 54 Deats, 'The Conspiracy of Silence', 79.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 Linda Woodbridge, 'Shakespeare and Magical Grammar', Allen Michie and Eric Buckley (eds), *Style: Essays on Renaissance and Restoration Literature and Culture in Memory of Harriet Hawkins* (Newark, 2005), 86–7.
- 57 Ibid, 94–5.

- 58 Pierre Iselin, “‘What Shall I Swear By?’: Rhetoric and Attitudes to Language in *Romeo and Juliet*”, Michel Bitot (ed.), *Divers Toyes Mengled: Essays on Medieval and Renaissance Culture* (Tours, 1996), 264.
- 59 Jacques Derrida, ‘Aphorism, Countertime’, in Paul A. Kottman (ed.), *Philosophers on Shakespeare* (Stanford, 2009), 177.
- 60 Ibid, 176, 178.
- 61 Ibid, 171.

DAVID NICOL

The Peaceable King, or the Lord Mendall: A Lost Jack Cade Play and its 1623 Revival

The lost play The Peaceable King, or The Lord Mendall was recorded by Sir Henry Herbert in 1623 as an old play revived by Prince Charles's Men. Its title indicates that it was about Henry VI and Jack Cade, and like Shakespeare's Henry VI, Part 2, it may have explored the clash between a peace-loving king and a popular rebellion. Its revival in 1623 may have had a political subtext, since at this time King James too was known as a 'peaceable king' and was facing open hostility from a portion of the populace that objected to his pacific foreign policy.

Among the many lost plays known only from the office-book of Sir Henry Herbert, master of the revels, is the curiously-titled *The Peaceable King, or the Lord Mendall*. Herbert licensed the play on 19 August 1623, for Prince Charles's Men at the Red Bull. The entry reads as follows:

For the Princes servants of the Rede Bull — An oulde <play called the> Peacable Kinge or the lord Mendall former<ly allowed of by Sir> George Bucke & likewise by mee & because <itt was free from adition> or reformation I tooke no fee this 19th Aug^r. <1623>¹

Herbert's comments restrict the play's date of composition to 1606–22, the period of Sir George Buc's tenure as Herbert's predecessor,² and he clearly believed that the players had left it unaltered since its original licensing.³ Beyond these facts, G.E. Bentley concluded, 'nothing is known of the subject' of the play.⁴ Its title, however, in fact suggests a very specific subject — the Jack Cade rebellion — and as a result it raises fascinating, if unanswerable, questions about why Prince Charles's Men chose to revive such a play at a time when the peaceable nature of King James was a source of popular discontent.

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The Early English Books Online Text Creation Partnership database (EEBO-TCP) is proving to be a powerful tool for researchers intrigued by lost plays such as this one, as it enables users to search for words and phrases within over 25,000 texts from the early modern era.⁵ The database reveals that the primary title, *The Peaceable King*, was something of a cliché, appearing in numerous contemporary texts; it is especially often applied to Solomon (who was ‘a Type of the mirrour of perfection, Jesus Christ’, wrote Edward Topsell, ‘for he was the King of peace, or a peaceable King’),⁶ and to Edgar, who was typically referred to by chroniclers as ‘the peaceable king Edgar’,⁷ but was also applied to other kings and is thus of no help by itself in determining the play’s subject.⁸ The alternative title, *The Lord Mendall*, however, has a very clear meaning: it almost certainly refers to Jack Cade, leader of the peasant revolt of 1450. Early modern chroniclers frequently note that Cade went by the name ‘Mend-all’: for example, Raphael Holinshed reports that ‘his name was John Cade, or (of some) John Mend-all’; John Stow says ‘he was named of some *John amend all*’; and John Trussel says that he styled himself ‘Captaine *Mend-all*’.⁹ There are, to be sure, other uses of the name ‘mend-all’ in early modern texts: the *Oxford English Dictionary* notes that it was a nickname for one who mends things,¹⁰ and EEBO-TCP searches for ‘mend all’ or ‘Mendall’ reveal that the nickname (sometimes appearing as ‘Master Mend-all’) is given to characters in several works.¹¹ But the only ‘Mend-all’ who appears in the context of a peaceable king is Cade, for Henry VI was remembered as a pious and peace-loving monarch: in the words of Edward Hall, he was ‘a man of a meke spirite, and of a symple witte, preferring peace before warre, reste before businesse, honestie before profite and quietnesse before labour’ and ‘studied onely for the health of his soule’.¹²

If *The Peaceable King* was about Henry and Cade, Shakespeare’s *Henry VI, Part 2* may offer some hints as to its content, because Shakespeare dramatizes the clash between Henry’s peaceable nature and Cade’s anarchic violence. Henry proposes to end the rebellion with negotiation rather than force:

I’ll send some holy bishop to entreat,
 For God forbid so many simple souls
 Should perish by the sword. And I myself,
 Rather than bloody war shall cut them short,
 Will parley with Jack Cade their general. (4.4.8–12)¹³

Buckingham and Clifford duly visit Cade and his army, carrying the king’s offer of ‘free pardon to them all / That will forsake thee and go home in peace’ (4.8.9–10). Although this pacifist tactic certainly contributes toward persuading

the peasants to abandon Cade, their dispersal is also a result of Buckingham and Clifford appealing to nostalgia for Henry's warlike father, 'Henry the Fifth, that made all France to quake' (17), so that Cade is left lamenting that 'the name of Henry the Fifth hailes them to an hundred mischiefs and makes them leave me desolate' (56–8). The peaceable tactics of Henry VI are thus insufficient on their own to defeat the insurrection, and even Henry is ultimately relieved when he is presented with 'the head of Cade ... / That living wrought me such exceeding trouble' (5.1.68–70). The title of the lost play suggests that it may have focused on this clash between a violent rebel and a king who favoured diplomacy over violence.¹⁴

If this was indeed the subject of *The Peaceable King*, the decision of Prince Charles's Men to revive the play in August 1623 raises intriguing questions, because another king frequently described with the word 'peaceable' was King James himself, whose predisposition toward diplomacy over war was a source of friction at this time. In 1618, when Samuel Garey praised James for enabling Britain to 'leade a peaceable and quiet life, free from forraine feares' and linked him to him Solomon's ideal of the 'pious, prudent, and peaceable king', he was referring to James's preference for negotiation in his responses to the looming crises in Europe.¹⁵ By 1623, after the election of James's son-in-law Frederick and daughter Elizabeth to the Bohemian throne and their subsequent deposition by an invading Habsburg army, many English Protestants believed they were living through a crisis point in an apocalyptic conflict with the Catholic powers. In parliament, in the pulpit, and in print, outraged voices expressed incredulity at James's pacific response: his refusal to aid Frederick and Elizabeth militarily and his plans for a diplomatic marriage between Prince Charles and the Spanish Infanta.¹⁶ August 1623 was an especially bleak time for militant Protestants: Prince Charles was still in Madrid; only a month before the play was licensed, James and the privy council had agreed to abide by a marriage treaty formed with Spain, and rumours were swirling about its harsh terms;¹⁷ and on 9 August the 'miserable news' arrived that one of Frederick's key supporters, Christian of Brunswick, had suffered a catastrophic defeat at the Battle of Stadtlohn, information that produced dismay and disbelief from newsbook readers.¹⁸

In such a context, the very idea of a 'peaceable king' predisposed to diplomatic solutions was a politically fraught one. In 1621, the House of Commons used the phrase in a petition to James, expressing the hope

that seeing this inevitable necessity is fallen upon your Majesty, which no wisdom or providence of a peaceable and *pious* King can avoid, your *Majesty* would not omit this just *occasion*, speedily and effectually to take your Sword into your hand.¹⁹

In a speech to parliament in 1624, James himself used the term to defend his decisions:

It is true, that I, who have been all the Days of My Life a Peaceable King, and have had the Honour in my Titles and Impresses, to be stiled '*Rex Pacificus*,' should without Necessity imbroil Myself in War, is so far from My Nature, and from the Honour which I have had at Home and Abroad in endeavouring to avoid the Effusion of Christian Blood ... that, unless it be upon such a Necessity, that I may call it ... I should be loth to enter into it.²⁰

Outside of parliament, the pamphleteer Thomas Scott summed up neatly the contemporary debate over the value of James's peaceability:

I know some of you would answer me, King *James* was a peaceable Prince, and so loved to be at peace, and in amity with other Christian Princes: Yea, and it seemes your King himselfe, is much affected with the very name of Peace, alleading, that hee hath beene a peaceable King from his Cradle ... I must confesse, it is a happy thing for Christian, and Religious Kings, Princes, and States to be at peace, in unity, and amity one with another. But on the other side, it is as an unhappy and dangerous a thing to have league or amity with Romane-Catholique Kings, and Princes, who are, I say, sworne and profest enemies to God, and his Gospell.²¹

Attitudes such as Scott's reflect wider hostility among the populace in general, and James tried and failed to mute these criticisms with proclamations against hostile speech.²² Anger in the popular press occurred alongside physical violence in London. In 1621, a group of apprentices fought with the Spanish ambassador's servants in the street and a crowd tried to defend the boys when the authorities attempted to punish them; James subsequently condemned 'the inferiour and baser sort of people for acting many Insolencies of rude & savage barbarisme, which dayly are committed in the Streets' not only against foreign dignitaries but also against 'the whole Nobility and Gentry of our own Realmes'.²³ In September 1623, Londoners throwing stones besieged the Spanish ambassadors in their residence, and a brawl on Drury Lane left an English baker dead. These and other acts of violence were paralleled by outbursts of popular celebration in the streets

throughout that September, when false reports spread that Charles had returned from Spain without a bride. The sense that the populace was generally hostile to King James's preference for negotiation was strong, and the tension did not fully break until October, when Charles finally returned, brideless, from Madrid amid public joy.²⁴

The Peaceable King was thus revived at a time when the topic of a peace-loving king confronting violent hostility from the populace was extremely topical, so that if the play were about Henry and Cade, it may not have required any 'additions or reformatations' to enhance its contemporary parallels. Conceivably, the players deliberately revived the play in order to exploit its topicality, since it appeared at a similar time to a number of other plays with narratives that paralleled the events of the Bohemian Crisis, such as Phillip Massinger's *The Bondman* (King's Men, licensed 3 December 1623), Thomas Drue's *The Duchess of Suffolk* (Palsgrave's Men, licensed 2 January 1624), and, of course, Thomas Middleton's *A Game at Chess* (King's Men, licensed 12 June 1624).²⁵ Indeed, the company of Prince Charles's Men was no stranger to performing plays with anti-James material, intentionally or otherwise. In 1619 or 1620, the company offended the king by performing a play about a king who kills one of his sons and is then usurped by the second, in what James apparently interpreted as a satire on his relationship with Princes Henry and Charles.²⁶ More directly relevant to the subject matter of *The Peaceable King* was their masque *The World Tossed at Tennis*, apparently performed at a public theatre in 1620; for all its praise of 'a land of a most glorious peace' (880), the masque's court performance may have been abandoned because it required James to 'play along' with and thus publicly support a conclusion that proposes the 'absolute and complete man' to be both scholar and soldier and promotes Prince Charles as the exemplar of this model (865–71), ending with an unemployed soldier joyously leaving for 'the most glorious wars / That e'er famed Christian kingdom' (878–9).²⁷

Perhaps, then, the revival of *The Peaceable King* contributed to this tendency in the drama of the 1620s. This is not to say that a play about peasant rebellion would necessarily have been oppositional in its political stance. The plays on that subject from the 1590s — *Henry VI, Part 2* and *The Life and Death of Jack Straw* — are far from revolutionary in tone: as Richard Dutton puts it, they are 'effusively loyalist in their deprecations of riot and rebellion. Jack Cade is made to recognize the fickle and dangerous nature of the mob he has led, while Walworth [to whom *Jack Straw* wrongly attributes the killing of Straw] is treated as something of a folk hero'.²⁸ No doubt *The Peaceable King* echoed those earlier plays by portraying 'John Mend-all' and his mob as villainous. An interesting question for

a 1620s audience, however, would have been the extent to which the play depicted the tactics of the peaceable king as successful. As I noted above, pacifism alone does not save Shakespeare's Henry from Cade, and, given Shakespeare's ambivalent attitude toward the king who 'lost France, and made his England bleed' (*Henry V*, Epilogue, 12),²⁹ we can imagine that *The Peaceable King* too might have been sceptical toward the stance of its eponymous monarch, an attitude that would have been far more controversial in the 1620s than in it would have been in the post-Armada 1590s when Shakespeare was writing.

Without a surviving text, it is impossible to push such speculation any further. Nonetheless, the surprising amount of information about *The Peaceable King* that can be extracted from its revels license alone reminds us that the study of lost plays can flesh out our understanding of the subjects that appealed to audiences at particular times.³⁰ Reviving an old history play might seem an unfashionable choice for a playing company in 1623, but, as this study shows, there were compelling reasons to return the Lord Mendall to the stage.

Notes

This article arose out of work on the *Lost Plays Database*, a new collaborative project under the general editorship of Roslyn L. Knutson, David McInnis, and Matthew Steggle that is facilitating greater understanding of the lost plays of early modern England. Potential contributors to the project should visit its website at <http://www.lostplays.org>.

- 1 N.W. Bawcutt, *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama: The Records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels 1623–73* (Oxford, 1996), 142, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/actrade/9780198122463.book.1>. The angle brackets indicate words cut from Craven Ord's transcript by J.O. Halliwell-Phillips and written in by him during the process of pasting them into his scrapbook (19–20, 124).
- 2 G.E. Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, 7 vols (Oxford, 1941–68), 5.1393.
- 3 Bawcutt, *Control and Censorship*, 45.
- 4 Bentley, *Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, 5.1393.
- 5 For an example of the use of EEBO-TCP to identify the subject matter of a lost play, see Matthew Steggle, 'A Lost Jacobean Tragedy: *Henry the Una* (c 1619)', *Early Theatre* 13.1 (2010), 65–81, <http://dx.doi.org/10.12745/et.13.1.833>. For a detailed description of the database, including its strengths and limitations, see Matthew Steggle, 'The Cruces of *Measure for Measure* and EEBO-TCP', *Review of English Studies* 65 (2014), 439–42, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/res/hgt120>.

- 6 Edward Topsell, *The House-Holder: or, Perfect Man*. ([London], 1609; STC 24125), 5.
- 7 See, for example, John Stow, *The Chronicles of England* (London, 1580; STC 23333), 201; Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*, 3 vols (London, 1599; STC 12626a), 1.7; William Camden, *Remaines of a Greater Worke* (London, 1605; STC 4521), 90.
- 8 This conclusion is based on a search for the keywords ‘peaceable king’ across all texts in the EEBO-TCP database published between 1473 and 1700, with the ‘variant spellings’ option turned on.
- 9 Raphael Holinshed, *The Third Volume of Chronicles* (London, 1587; STC 13569), 632; Stow, *Chronicles*, 652; John Trussel, *A Continuation of the Collection of the History of England* (London, 1636; STC 24297), 151; for other examples, see D. Allen Carroll, ‘Johannes Factotum and Jack Cade,’ *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40 (1989), 491, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2870614>.
- 10 ‘Mend, v.,’ *OED Online*.
- 11 This conclusion is based on a search for ‘mend-all’ and ‘Mendall’ across all texts in the EEBO-TCP database published between 1473 and 1700, with the ‘variant spellings’ option turned on. When entering the search terms, capitalization, hyphenation, and the presence or absence of quotation marks make no difference to the results. Examples of the nickname in use can be found in John Deacon, *Tobacco Tortured, or, the Filthie Fume of Tobacco Refined* (London, 1616; STC 6436), 96, 100, and Samuel Rowlands, ‘As Wise as John of Gotehams Calfe: or, This Fellow Brought his Hogges to a Faire Market,’ *A Paire of Spy-Knaves* (London, 1620; STC 21404), B4v. In William Haughton’s *Englishmen for My Money*, the character of Vandalle is repeatedly referred to in error as ‘M. Mendall’; see *Englishmen for My Money*, ed. W.W. Greg (Oxford, 1912), l.1418 ff.
- 12 Edward Hall, *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Famelies of Lancastre & Yorke* (London, 1548; STC 12722), Clv. On Henry’s reputation in the early modern era for piety and peace, see Ralph A. Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI: The Exercise of Royal Authority, 1422–1461* (Berkeley, 1981), 1–8, and Roger Warren, ed., *Henry VI, Part Two* (Oxford, 2002), 28–9, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/actrade/9780198130000.book.1>.
- 13 Act, scene, and line references are to *King Henry VI, Part 2*, ed. Ronald Knowles (London, 1999).
- 14 I have quoted *Henry VI, Part 2* from an edition based on the Folio text. The wording is rather different in the 1594 First Quarto edition of the play, entitled *The First Part of the Contention Betwixt the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster*, but the overall effect is the same. As in the Folio, Henry offers to ‘come and parley with their generall’, but he sounds more belligerent when dispatching Buckingham and

- Clifford, telling them to 'gather / An Army up, and meete with the Rebels' (Knowles, ed., *Henry VI, Part 2*, 400). His intentions, however, are apparently still peaceful, because Buckingham and Clifford tell Cade's men that Henry 'mildly hath his pardon sent to you'. The lords do not mention Henry V by name when winning over Cade's men, but his presence is still implicit when they appeal to the rebels' bellicose patriotism, telling them that if they want honour, 'then haste to France that our forefathers wonne, / And winne againe that thing which now is lost' (402).
- 15 Samuel Garey, *Great Britains Little Calendar* (London, 1618; STC 11597), 66–7.
 - 16 For an overview of these matters, see Thomas Cogswell, *The Blessed Revolution: English Politics and the Coming of War, 1621–1624* (Cambridge, 1989), 12–20.
 - 17 Samuel Rawson Gardiner, *Prince Charles and the Spanish Marriage, 1617–1623: A Chapter of English History*, 2 vols (London, 1869), 1.361–6.
 - 18 Elisabeth Bourcier (ed.), *The Diary of Sir Simonds D'Ewes, 1622–1624* (Paris, 1974), 151; Jayne E.E. Boys, *London's News Press and the Thirty Years War* (Woodbridge, 2011), 159–60; on the devastating impact of Christian's defeat upon Frederick, see C.V. Wedgwood, *The Thirty Years War* (London, 1944), 185.
 - 19 John Rushworth, ed., *Historical Collections* (London, 1659; Wing R2316), 41; on the background to this document, see J.R. Tanner, ed., *Constitutional Documents of the Reign of James I, A.D. 1603–1625* (Cambridge, 1930), 274.
 - 20 *Journal of the House of Lords, Beginning Anno Decimo Octavo, Jacobi Regni, 1620, Vol. III* (London, 1771; ESTC T166603), 250; on the background to this document, see Tanner, *Constitutional Documents*, 276.
 - 21 Thomas Scott, *Robert Earle of Essex His Ghost, Sent from Elizian: To the Nobility, Gentry, and Commualtie of England* ('Paradise' [i.e. London], 1624; STC 22804), 4.
 - 22 On the popular criticism of James's foreign policy, and on his attempts at curbing it, see Cogswell, *Blessed Revolution*, 20–36.
 - 23 James F. Larkin and Paul L. Hughes (eds), *Stuart Royal Proclamations, Volume 1: Royal Proclamations of King James I, 1603–1625* (Oxford, 1973), 509, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/actrade/9780198223726.book.1>. On the violent events leading up to the proclamation, see Joseph P. Ward, *Culture, Faith, and Philanthropy* (New York, 2013), 34–5, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/9781137065513>. See also Larkin and Hughes, *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, 509n1.
 - 24 Cogswell, *Blessed Revolution*, 48–50.
 - 25 For a book-length study of these plays, see Jerzy Limon, *Dangerous Matter: English Drama and Politics in 1623/24* (Cambridge, 1986).
 - 26 On the various theories about this incident, see David Nicol, *Middleton and Rowley: Forms of Collaboration in the Jacobean Playhouse* (Toronto, 2012), 132–4; Matthew

- Steggle, 'King with His Two Sons,' *Lost Plays Database* (2012), http://www.lostplays.org/index.php/King_with_His_Two_Sons.
- 27 C.E. McGee, intro to *The World Tossed at Tennis*, Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (eds), *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works* (Oxford, 2007), 1405–8, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/actrade/9780199580538.book.1>. The masque is quoted from this edition. See also Nicol, *Middleton and Rowley*, 134–8.
- 28 Richard Dutton, *Mastering the Revels: The Regulation and Censorship of English Renaissance Drama* (Iowa City, 1991), 85, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199697861.013.0022>.
- 29 Act, scene, and line references are to *King Henry V*, ed. T.W. Craik (London, 1995), <http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781408159910.00000020>.
- 30 For a broader discussion of the value of studying lost plays, see David McInnis and Matthew Steggle, 'Nothing Will Come of *Nothing*? Or, What Can We Learn from Plays That Don't Exist?', David McInnis and Matthew Steggle (eds), *Lost Plays in Shakespeare's England* (Basingstoke, 2014), 1–16, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1057/9781137403971.0006>.

Book Reviews

Philip Butterworth. *Staging Conventions in Medieval English Theatre.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp 272.

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In this long-awaited book, Philip Butterworth seeks to explore ‘the nature of implicit and explicit staging conventions in the performance of medieval and early sixteenth-century English theatre’ (1). The book’s principal source material is based partly on the surviving texts of performances from the period, although Butterworth draws an overwhelming portion of the primary material discussed from civic records, ecclesiastical accounts, and other such material as that found in the *Records of Early English Drama* volumes. Butterworth’s investigation relies on showing how the extant dramatic records can inform the scholar’s understanding of performers, audiences, and practical elements of the performance including casting, rehearsing, and costumes. While some scholars have addressed most of these concepts in more specific contexts with relation to a particular group of texts, Butterworth’s broad investigation of these elements provides the reader with an overview of these elements across geographical and generic boundaries.

The book begins by problematizing several modern theatrical terms that are often used anachronistically by scholars to describe elements of medieval drama. As Butterworth rightly points out, terms such as ‘character’, ‘stage directions’, and ‘special effects’ are post-medieval and as such should be applied cautiously to medieval theatre, and to highlight this issue these terms are italicized throughout the book. The concern is not, however, with replacing these terms with other, more appropriate ones; rather, Butterworth endeavours to make the reader aware of the problems of using modern theatrical terms anachronistically. This, however, leaves the reader with the unresolved problem of how to discuss these

theatrical concepts without a language that is contemporary to the performances themselves.

The strength of the book lies in the sheer volume of primary material that Butterworth presents in each chapter and he offers a careful consideration of how the extant records can provide an indication of the practical elements of medieval performances. The book itself is not predominantly concerned with how to apply the primary sources to modern performances of medieval theatre — there are, indeed, many books that address this issue more specifically, including Margaret Rogerson's edited collection *The York Mystery Plays: Performance in the City* (Boydell & Brewer, 2011). Nonetheless, the chapter breakdown implies that the reader can employ the book as a kind of compendium of staging conventions in medieval English theatre. The chapter titles focus on specific elements of theatre from types of performance space ('Outdoors and Indoors'), actors ('Casting and Doubling' and 'Rehearsing, Memorising and Cueing'), movement ('Coming and Going' and 'Timing and Waiting'), as well as audience ('Hearing, Seeing, and Responding'). The chapter that presents material related to staging effects ('Effecting Effects') is especially helpful as an overview for those who are interested in modern reconstruction or reenactment of medieval drama. Butterworth challenges the modern naturalistic convention that staging effects — using lifting mechanisms, fire, sounds, or other effects to enhance a performance — are employed on stage to 'create the illusion of reality' (141). Instead, he approaches the extant records of staging effects with the understanding that these effects 'promote and affect agreed pretense' (140), and as such he reminds the reader that the cause (or execution) of these effects did not take place 'backstage' or even necessarily out of sight of the audience. This chapter on effects highlights Butterworth's desire to move beyond traditional approaches that apply the conventions of modern theatre to medieval performance.

The discussion about the varied use of performance space in the chapter titled 'Outdoors and Indoors' is also helpful for those interested in practice-as-research through medieval theatre since it addresses some varied forms of indoor and outdoor performance. The chapter lays out a sampling of the different types of performance spaces used in the context of medieval English theatre and some major elements that are characteristic of those performance spaces (such as, for instance, the use of pageant vehicles in Corpus Christi drama and civic processions). While it is crucial that a discussion about staging conventions concern itself with how performance space is employed in practice, the extant evidence in this area is complicated since some practices — such as the use of pageant vehicles or platform stages — are specifically linked to particular performances or texts, and

as such Butterworth's discussion can only cover a limited number of examples. Additionally, the section on performance space veers very close to issues of site-specific or site-particular performance and it seems a missed opportunity to not address how the choice to use certain performance spaces reflects on theatre's relationship to the wider social context.

The wide historical range of the material — theatre from as early as the twelfth century until the early seventeenth century — and the breadth of genres stretching across liturgical, university drama, civic performances, and processions is astonishing. One problem with such an ambitious sampling of the extant material is that Butterworth is only able to provide a series of extracts from the records without necessarily allowing enough space to analyze each record in relation to its associated performance text. While Butterworth provides references to allow the reader to explore a text or record in further detail, the lack of connections perhaps makes the book unsuitable for those who are less familiar with the performances to begin with, and thus the book appears to be geared to an audience that already has a good working knowledge of medieval English theatre. Butterworth is very careful to provide as much detail as possible about the historical period and geographical placement of each primary text that he addresses, but the broad geographical focus of the book — encompassing London, Kent, Oxford, Cambridge, York, Norwich, and other locations — combined with the wide historical context can sometimes imply that what may have been true for one particular text or performance in one location may also have been true for other performances at other times. This is perhaps a problem with producing a book that attempts to survey the varied practices of such a broad historical period through the very general lens of 'theatre'.

The overall structure of the book is perhaps its weakest attribute. The chapter format of the book could benefit from some minor restructuring so that broader terms such as 'audience' or 'players' might replace the current chapter headings while the current chapter titles could appear as subheadings within each section as a way of unifying some of the material under terminology that is conventionally used by scholars to discuss certain elements of a performance. The sections that broadly cover actors, for instance — 'Casting and Doubling' and 'Rehearsing, Memorising and Cueing' — could fall under the larger heading of 'Players' with the current chapter titles as subheadings within the longer chapter. The same could be said for the chapters titled 'Outdoors and Indoors' and 'Coming and Going' which could come under the heading of 'Using Performance Space' and, again, be broken into subheadings that discuss specific elements of how performance space is used in medieval English theatre. An epilogue or conclusion to the

book, summarizing how elements of theatre addressed within each chapter could be viewed in light of the primary records that are sampled throughout the book, would also have served to unify the chapters under the broad topic of medieval staging conventions.

While the problems with the structure can make it difficult to employ the book as a kind of reference source for staging conventions in medieval English theatre, the major contribution of this book is Butterworth's meticulous presentation of the extant dramatic records that inform the assumptions that scholars make about how theatre from this period works in a practical sense. Butterworth's rejection of the anachronistic imposition of modern theatrical conventions onto medieval English theatre is evident in his discussion of the practicalities of staging, and he purposefully does not rely on research from modern productions of medieval drama to supplement what can be gleaned from the extant records. While this may perhaps overlook the extent to which performance-based research can enrich the study and understanding of the extant records, the varied source material referenced in the book provides a broad overview of theatre from the period and will surely serve as a good starting point for those who are interested in the practicalities of performing theatre in the medieval period.

Anne Lancashire and David J. Parkinson (eds). *Civic London to 1558*. 3 vols. Cambridge: Records of Early English Drama/D.S. Brewer, 2015. Pp 1795.

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It is, I suppose, a cliché of book reviewing to begin by describing the work in question as ‘long-awaited’ but in the case of REED’s massive and beautifully presented *Civic London* trilogy the cliché is absolutely true. Through its publication of over twenty previous volumes on provincial and regional theatre (some sadly now out of print), REED has a justified reputation as one of the prime resources for the study of early drama in its various manifestations. The London records have long been a gap, albeit a daunting one, in REED’s oeuvre. *Civic London* has thus been a considerable time in the making and one only has to read Anne Lancashire’s acknowledgements (a number of which are to ‘late’ colleagues) to get a sense of a life’s work finally coming to fruition.

It is also something of a cliché to call a work ‘magisterial’ but for a three-volume publication that weighs in at almost 1800 pages there is no other suitable word. The last three-volume set produced by the REED project team was on the Inns of Court from ca 1400 to 1642, edited by Alan Nelson and John Elliott in 2011; although of course the topographic locations overlap to an extent, *Civic London* is of another magnitude altogether, both in terms of its enormous chronological scope from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries, and also for the sheer diversity of theatrical and musical performance history it encompasses. Two of the volumes comprise the actual records: volume 1 covers 1286–7 to 1520–3, and volume 2 (as a tangible reflection of the substantial rise in dramatic forms in the sixteenth century) 1521–2 to 1558. The third book provides translations of the early English, Latin, and Anglo-French entries (for which Abigail Ann Young was primarily responsible), end-notes, and glossaries. There are a handful of illustrations, two neatly drawn maps showing performance venues and City ward boundaries, a full and wonderfully illuminating introduction to the historical and cultural contexts of the records, written in Lancashire’s characteristically circumspect idiom, and a series of appendices containing material tangential to the main records such as short biographical notes on named individuals such as minstrels, an overview of saints’ days and festivals, and a list of mayors and sheriffs throughout the whole period under scrutiny. Where the civic record no longer survives, or is partial, the editors have mined chronicle histories for information about performances and entertainments. The overall intention is to provide as

much explanatory framework as possible, and accordingly volume 1 discusses the various processional routes, the nature of the pageantry employed on ceremonial occasions, the use of music and actors, and so on.

Handsome though they undoubtedly are, these are not books to be admired but to be *used*. It almost goes without saying that collectively they form a quite stupendous resource. As with visiting a physical archive, one has first to understand the remit of these volumes as well as the original function of the records they contain, and to learn to navigate the City's bureaucratic and quite ritualistic language. It would be brave indeed simply to dive into the records. Lancashire and her collaborators have done a fine job of orientating the reader: the introduction outlines the various civic roles at play and carefully explains how the City's governmental structures had an impact on its culture; and the numerous glossaries aid the reader in interpreting as well as situating the records, the meaning of which might otherwise be sometimes opaque (the general reader is unlikely to know offhand what a 'cresset' or a 'targett' is, for instance). The full gamut of the civic archive — the City Corporation, its constituent guilds/livery companies 'Great' and small, and the Bridge House — has been forensically excavated. Indeed, such completism can appear intimidating at first. I would therefore encourage the reader of these volumes to use the appendices (especially the invaluable chronological survey) and the superbly useful index in tandem with the records as Lancashire and her collaborators intended. The bias in the volumes is (understandably) historical, although despite the copious number of secondary sources cited there is a relative absence of *literary* treatments of civic theatricality beyond a brief reference to Lawrence Manley's work. There is just the occasional minor niggle, which in such an enormous undertaking is probably inevitable: Lancashire does not appear to be aware, for instance, that Middleton's 'commission' to write entertainments in the early 1620s was not ad hoc but part of his formal role as city chronologer (liv). These are minor issues, though, and they do not detract in any significant way from the achievement of these volumes.

Civic London does convey information that transcends local detail, though. Fascinating as the individual entries are, they don't always seem on the surface to amount to much: what is one to glean from a passing line in the 1556 Pewterers' memorandum book detailing the purchase of silken trumpet banners, one might wonder? Taken together, however, these fragments do comprise a kind of narrative; in particular, one can see across this large sweep of time the emergence of professional, secular drama out of its medieval religious traditions. 1558, the end point of these volumes, also stands as a moment just before the annual mayoral inauguration took on its fully fledged form. As a whole, these collated records

will surely facilitate further, more discursive research on the development of civic culture over time and in the context of tremendous social, demographic, and religious change. A vivid picture emerges too of a city that took culture very seriously and devoted considerable resources to its realization: Philip of Spain's arrival in London in 1553, as an example, was accompanied by a pageant 'at the Condyt [conduit] in Gracechurche streate', 'singing and playinge by the peryshe [parish] clerkes and chyldern' 'at saynte margarettes Churche in newe fyshestrete', numerous other pageant stations, and a requirement that 'the Stockes [Market] [be] goodely hanged with ryche hangynges' (2.784). As these instances show, the REED team's transcription of the records is at pains to capture *all* forms of 'theatre' in this period, not just scripted plays performed with actors in established venues, but anything that drew an audience and which has left archival traces, including bear-baiting and the 'rough music' prescribed as part of legal punishments.

The underlying message of *Civic London*, then, is that London was throughout this long period of time an intensely theatrical space, not the dourly mercantile realm peopled with the anti-theatrical 'puritans' of misinformed popular opinion. Its citizens could experience entertainments ranging from grandiose ceremonial royal entries to the torchlit Midsummer Watch processions to pious play-lets performed at Clerkenwell to ephemeral entertainments in company halls. One learns with delight that in sixteenth-century London the Christmas season stretched from 31 October to 2 February, and that yes, on occasion the city conduits did run with wine. REED's stated aspiration that these volumes will 'allow scholars to analyze relationships amongst the city's various hierarchies of power — royal, noble, mercantile, ecclesiastical, artistic, educational, and civic' has been truly realized.¹ Medievalists, musicologists, Reformation scholars, theatre historians — all will find riches here, and I, for one, cannot wait for *Civic London from 1558* to appear.

Notes

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- 1 'Forthcoming: *Civic London to 1558*', REED. <http://reed.utoronto.ca/print-collections-2/forthcoming/>

Richard Preiss. *Clowning and Authorship in Early Modern Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp x, 287.

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How funny was the Elizabethan stage clown? Reading what we have left to judge that question does leave one wondering. As I write this review a cartoon in the current *New Yorker* shows a jester being dragged out of a throne room by a hooded executioner; he shouts back towards the king ‘What about the writers? Nobody ever blames the writers!’ This both is and isn’t Richard Preiss’s subject in this lively book, which pays serious and telling attention to early modern comic performance and how it altered, or was modulated, in the late Elizabethan period. His version of what the clown did is intimately related to what the audience did, and what we have left to decide *that* question is disproportionately antagonistic, so that it is hard to strike a balance in speaking or writing about early modern audiences today. This is particularly the case as the folk assumption has been that they were normally noisy, unruly, and interventionist, an assumption played up by both actors and some audience members at the modern rebuilt Globe, as if historical duty obliged them to. Preiss, then, immediately confronts two problems of evidence. In his introduction he writes that his book ‘has two axes of enquiry, an archival and a theoretical one’ (7), and that the first two chapters deal with the evidence. On the strength of my own reading of his book I would say that the division is not quite that sharp: the examination of the evidence begins with a strong hypothesis, and a theoretical approach is there from the beginning, while Preiss gives certain theoretical received wisdom a refreshing roughing up quite late in the book. I found myself wishing that other theoretical frameworks had been given a similarly cold eye, but Preiss advances his own arguments strongly, and for the most part clearly.

We begin with two clear claims, the first of which is unlikely to be contentious: ‘A playbook is not a performance: it is the retrospective fantasy of one, abstracted from the play’s synchronic and diachronic stage lives’ (6). Yes, certainly, but. The but I’ll return to, yet it is absolutely central to recognize that early printed dramatic books are not an easy key for unlocking early stage performances. For Preiss it is the emergence of the printed play as a common by-product of show business in the 1590s and thereafter that marks the important cultural movement in what he calls authorship, concretizing the shifting forms of theatre in authoritative black and white. As for the theatre itself, it was an agonistic space: ‘the playhouse

environment was one of authorial competition, wherein spectators vied aggressively with both players and each other for possession of the stage' (7). This is a more startling claim, but it is a refreshing idea, and gets at an important ingredient of what clowns probably did, and perhaps still do. So the contention over authorship might be taken as a war of the theatres which the book won and the audience lost: I over simplify drastically, but the cultural change that the arrival of published dramatic literature in English effected is a matter Preiss keeps in view.

The book, of course, — and here comes my but — was a thing very important to actors. Playing companies assembled two valuable commodities as the basis of their common stock, into which sharers bought: apparel, or costumes, and books, manuscripts of the texts they put on stage. For actors, books were prospective rather than retrospective and private rather than public. As 'allowed books', signed by an officer of the Revels, they were a passport to public performance, and possible profit. Given the enormous number of performances as against the relatively small number of plays printed between 1580 and 1640, there were once a great many more of such books than dramatic texts in print, and they were there from early on. In the early 1570s a (failed) writer called Rowland Broughton was contracted to write and deliver eighteen plays over thirty months — an average of a new play every six to seven weeks — to the Dutton brothers, actors with a variety of companies: he didn't deliver. How actors saw the book, or what became the book, is nicely caught in a 1601 letter from the actor (and author) Samuel Rowley to Philip Henslowe; note the fascinating variety of language used: 'Mr. Henslowe, I have heard five sheets of the play of the Conquest of the Indies and I do not doubt it will be a very good play ... take the papers into your own hands and on Easter eve they promise to make an end of all the rest'.¹ Whatever the theory about parts, without the book the play was not available for production, hence the rest of Queen Anne's Men sued their former colleague Robert Lee in 1619 to get their playbooks back. The work of most players most of the time was circumscribed by text, in books that, mostly, were handwritten rather than printed.

Thus Preiss's theory about books needs some verbal adjustment, based on contemporary evidence. As regards clowning I feel he is not quite sceptical enough regarding the hypothetical histories of David Wiles, but he is very good on the energies and tensions of comic performance, particularly the unscripted parts of it. (It might of course be argued how far improvisation, either in comedy or in music, is actually thought up in the moment.) For Preiss, the clown was a lightning rod, drawing down the excited surplus energy of an exuberant audience who might otherwise attack other parts of the entertainment, fracturing the fictional

containment of the play. The antagonistic audience is also in itself funny: witness Statler and Waldorf vs. Fozzie Bear. In that case the would-be comic bear is, in his incompetence, both an object of derision and, in failure, pathos and resulting affection: affected incompetence, then, might be a performative tactic. Aggression, at any rate, is always an important spice in the comic soup, and Preiss has its measure, particularly in the case of Richard Tarlton. The posthumous stories about Tarlton feature frequent attacks from the direction of the audience: yelled remarks, missiles, even horses. But was such behaviour part of the game that comedians like Tarlton encouraged? Stand-up comedy is still a battle for dominance; the audience waits for the comedian to stall, then to drown him or her out with booing, and the comedian, who in the language of the profession is there hoping to 'kill' or 'destroy' the audience, attempts to keep up the energy and prevail through wit, not infrequently directing insults or mockery at chosen individuals among the spectators, diverting the collective energy. In this instance of performance and reception, noisiness and interruption are part of the etiquette. Audiences in comedy clubs may not have changed so very much from those responding to Tarlton's solo numbers.

Theatre audiences, naturally, have changed a lot over the last century and a half. No longer do we hiss, boo, whistle, hum, thunder (*Henry VIII*), or clap and shout before the house lights come up for the interval, although the mere entry of star actors cast in a play can still produce an outburst of (inappropriate) applause. If less challenging, we are undoubtedly more boring save in comedy, where actors expect or hope to be interrupted by the noise of laughter. The evidence for early audiences actually derailing plays, however, I find to be fairly limited. It is quite likely that Shrove Tuesday shows were particularly lively, and equally likely that actors prepared a program to suit, more like a variety show than *King Lear*. The theatre stories retailed after 1642 belong precisely to that genre: aside from his often cited tale of the unruly and capricious audience, Gayton, for example, also tells a story of a theatre audience at a bad play intimidated into silence by a band of heavies planted among them: *caveat lector*. The limitations of what we might agree on as reliable evidence — Rowley's letter, for example — lead us all into storytelling in giving accounts of early theatre. Although he might be challenged in some particulars, Richard Preiss tells his own story, much of it original, with conviction and sophistication; this book is necessary reading for anyone attempting to make sense of the extra-dramatic parts of Elizabethan and Stuart entertainments, and of the clown's role within the contemporary acting companies.

Notes

- 1 Glynne Wickham, Herbert Berry, and William Ingram (eds), *English Professional Theatre, 1530–1660* (Cambridge, 2000), 238.

David McInnis and Matthew Steggle (eds). *Lost Plays in Shakespeare's England*. London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014. Pp 295.

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Mark Twain famously compared writing a biography of Shakespeare to reconstructing a brontosaurus from three bones and three tons of plaster of Paris. Anyone wishing to study the lost drama of early modern England is faced with an equally daunting task. No wonder those venturing into this cloud of unknowing must often pause to flash their hazard lights in the form of caveats and rhetorical questions.

Misha Teramura's chapter in this collection, for instance, concludes with the resounding query, 'Can there be criticism without a text?' (142). Judging by this assembly of essays, the answer is an emphatic yes, and in part because each of the contributors exhibits such a commendable self-awareness of the perils of the enterprise. The book's elegant architecture also adds to its persuasiveness: the seven chapters attempting to draw modest inferences about non-extant drama are book-ended by six which are more methodological, establishing the prevalence of lost plays and even scattering breadcrumbs to suggest where scholars might find them.

In their scrupulous introduction, David McInnis and Matthew Steggle make the case that wilful blindness about lost plays is no longer tenable. A chief reason is that the census numbers have grown exponentially over the past century: the 74 identified by E.K. Chambers jumped to 187 thanks to W.W. Greg; Alfred Harbage upped the tally to 500; which, in turn, Andrew Gurr escalated to 744. Martin Wiggins has recently hiked up the estimate to around 1100. And these figures only include plays *we know* existed at one time. If we count 'unknown unknowns' (to borrow the immortal phrase of a former U.S. Secretary of State) the number of non-extant plays may be as high as 2400. Lost plays are to early modern drama what dark matter is to astrophysics. Hence the first collection to dare to grapple with them should be warmly welcomed by theatre historians.

In the opening chapter, William Proctor Williams proposes a useful four-part taxonomy for classifying missing plays according to degrees of lost-ness: from 'Chimeras' — the product of scribal error or alternative titles for surviving plays — to Class 3, which — mentioned in manuscript catalogues or Stationer Register entries — just might turn up in the dusty nook of an archive someday. Roslyn Knutson (who along with McInnis is a co-editor of the monumental *Lost Plays Database*) casts a withering gaze on Ur-Play scholarship. By disentangling

its reckless conjectures from the painstaking labors of the *LPD* contributors, she aims to establish the 'discrete legitimacy' (44) of truly lost plays.

Steggle and Andrew Gurr both usefully expand the parameters of what theatre historians mean by 'lost'. Gurr reminds us that the 'same play' may have existed in widely variant versions at different times and on different stages. Amplifying this point, Steggle cavils with the 'misleading dichotomy' (74) of lost and found: just because a text was printed does not mean that it is entirely 'unlost'. Revision was commonplace and a published play preserves only a snapshot of it at a particular moment. So even though they appear in the 1623 Shakespeare folio, early versions of *Macbeth* and *Measure for Measure* must be listed in the roll call of the fallen. Moreover, drawing on the seminal work of Tiffany Stern, Steggle insists that the play-script is only one 'performance document' among many. Much can be gleaned from artefacts like promptbooks, plots, cast lists, and property inventories. So rather than approaching lost plays 'solely in terms of unfound manuscripts, we should instead be concentrating on the content from them that we do have' (81).

This challenge is taken up by many of the contributors in Part II. John Astington notes the tendency in recent scholarship of 'splitting' plays with deceptively similar titles — such as 'Richard II', 'Samson', and 'Valentine and Orson' — into discrete texts. Scavenging for clues among plots and jigs, he shows how the former supports this trend while the latter might warrant lumping. In the ensuing chapter, McNinnis reveals how much gold can be mined from the seemingly scanty plot of '2 Fortune's Tennis'. Misha Teramura examines the cluster of lost Troy plays in the Admiral's repertoire while Paul Whitfield White gives an equally thorough treatment of the company's missing Arthurian drama. Lawrence Manley accumulates a magpie's hoard of ascertainable facts about the titular protagonists in some lost plays in the Strange's repertoire: 'Harry of Cornwall', 'Mandeville', 'Titus and Vespasian', and 'Tamer Cham'. Michael Hirrel's chapter argues that Thomas Watson may have introduced metrical innovations and Italianate elements to Elizabethan drama in the early 1580s. Although the evidence is necessarily circumstantial, Hirrel makes the powerful case that Watson's lost drama would have filled the sails of Marlowe and Kyd. Christopher Matusiak spotlights the procession of friars in early modern play titles and property inventories, while Christi Spain-Savage focuses more closely on the wise woman Gillian of Brentford, arguing that her appearance in a lost Admiral's play could have been an important intertext for Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor*.

After following Gurr's and Steggle's advice to clutch the 'icicles' (57) from the iceberg of lost plays and suture together fragmentary records, the book concludes

on a more empiricist note, with Martin Wiggins's overview of recent discoveries in the archives. Almost all of these have been manuscripts rather than printed books, and Wiggins presents them as object lessons on how to unearth more. His approach, in other words, is the diametrical opposite of the prescription followed in Part II. Such tensions within the collection could perhaps have been addressed with greater candour. But as Astington's chapter posits, methodological diversity can be healthy. If it is good to have both 'lumpers' and 'splitters', the tent should be large enough to host both manuscript hunters and reconstructors. Some archaeologists must dig for pot-shards and others draw inferences from them based on historical and cultural knowledge. Thanks to digital archives like Early English Books Online (EEBO), of which many contributors to this collection avail themselves, tracking down obscure references to possible analogues for lost plays has become much easier than ever before. There is of course a danger in conjuring with these shadowy titles or fragments: like Harry Potter's Mirror of Erised, lost plays might show us what we most wish to see. But when anchored in facts and executed with the kind of caution and integrity on display in this collection, it is possible to forge responsible conjectures. Such plausible speculation would make for a welcome supplement to the understandably restrictive, fact-gathering entries in the *Lost Plays Database*. Given the scope of the challenge, the more scholars who begin to probe and limn the body of missing drama from early modern England the better.

Readers who pick up this book expecting ground-shaking revelations about, say, the final resting place of *Love's Labour's Won* may come away disappointed. But one of this collection's achievements is to demonstrate why grandiose expectations and overconfident assertions would be misguided. Instead it outlines and enacts a *modus operandi* for finding fragments and carefully placing those we already have into narratives of theatre history. If lost plays have hovered like a cloud of unknowing over Renaissance drama, then this collection makes a graceful and mist-dispersing leap into the thick of it.

Charlotte Scott. *Shakespeare's Nature: From Cultivation to Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. Pp 257.

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In *Shakespeare's Nature* Charlotte Scott looks to illuminate the importance of the language of husbandry to the literary works of Shakespeare. Beyond this, Scott looks into the depths of Shakespeare's engagement with agrarian culture and the impact it had not just as metaphorical ammunition, but as the foundation for a particular understanding of self and society. Scott seeks to recover the deep connection between early modern writers and agrarian practices that has, perhaps, been lost to a modern reader.

As Scott astutely points out at the start of the book, Shakespeare's family heritage was firmly rooted in agricultural occupations, and this 'agrarian landscape to which Shakespeare belonged defined both the social and economic values of Elizabethan England' (1). Building on considerable scholarship in the field of early modern agrarian studies (by Andrew McRae and Joan Thirsk to name but two), Scott performs the important task of returning a significant and often overlooked context to the study of Shakespeare.¹ Looking in detail at the evolving religious and social resonances of agrarian connection to the land through the analysis of a variety of pamphlet material, Scott charts the evolving language of husbandry and its deployment as social and moral commentary in the Shakespearean canon and beyond.

Chapter 2 begins this study with an analysis of the sonnets, focusing on a humanist tradition of self-mastery and potential that connects mastery over self/body to mastery over the land. Scott works to establish the importance of the discourse of cultivation in creating a moral obligation to ensure that both landscapes and (female) bodies become sites of production, as well as establishing them as sites through which to display personal legacy and achievement. Both the land and the female body become 'sites of duty in which yield and fertility represent a moral turnover' (64); failure to achieve this yield or to show ample fertility positions both the land and the body as sites of personal and social failure, as well as missed opportunities for moral and social gain. With an interesting analysis of the gender dynamics at work in the inscription of the female body as site of economic (re)production, Scott convincingly shows the moral, economic, and social connections that a discourse of cultivation forges between the womb and the landscape as sites of production.

Chapter 3 focuses specifically on the latter half of *Henry V*, and lingers with particular nuance on Burgundy's speech in act 5. Looking to establish the centrality of husbandry to 'the terms of both war and peace' (84), this chapter argues for the important connotations of agrarian order to those of social order and security. Henry's development from a wild youth to a cultivated, productive adult finds its culmination in Burgundy's speech and his subtle directives for Henry to cement his and his nation's stability through his correct husbandry of the country following military victory. Through her analysis of the play, and Burgundy's speech in particular, Scott explores the intertwining of the morality of military, agrarian, and social interventions through the language of husbandry, and the importance of these interventions in establishing national identity and the success of a nation's leaders.

The most surprising, but also perhaps most interesting, selection and analysis of material comes in chapter 4, which offers an analysis of *Macbeth* and the 'Poetics of the Unnatural'. In this chapter Scott charts the increasing use of nature as a tool to express human values and, through the lens of *Macbeth*'s protagonists, shows the rejection and testing of the boundaries of the natural as the ultimate expression of cultural superiority and individualism. Scott's analysis of Lady Macbeth marks the second extended engagement with gender and, whilst not one of the book's central concerns, indicates that the work begun here could be continued to look further at the engagement of discourses of cultivation with those of gender. With some truly novel insights into the unnatural actions of the Macbeths as a framework through which the tension between individual will and human nature is explored, this chapter offers a refreshing analysis of a play that is not often associated with the agrarian.

In her analysis of *The Winter's Tale* in chapter 5, Scott explores the transition from religious to more consumerist understandings of cultivating the land. Early modern authors begin to co-opt religious discourses of hard work on the land as atonement into a new discourse of production associating this hard work with financial rather than spiritual reward. Scott suggests that, within literature of the early modern period, the pastoral moves away from escapist fantasies towards fantasies of consumerism driven by the growing 'purchasing potential of the rural class' (152). Scott explores the interrogation of these competing discourses in *The Winter's Tale*, as well as continuing the investigation begun in previous chapters into the relationship, and sometimes conflict, between organic nature and human intervention.

Chapter 6 offers a reading of *The Tempest*. Particularly interesting is Scott's analysis of the masque within *The Tempest* and its use of a cultivated English

landscape as a framework through which Prospero can express legitimate desire and social order in his otherwise chaotic, unstructured surroundings. Developing the connections between cultivation and religion, Scott also explores further the notion of cultivation as increasingly becoming shorthand for civilization and morality. In an extended study of the differences between Gonzalo's and Prospero's relationships (both real and speculative) to the landscape, Scott eloquently illuminates the relationship between human intervention on the landscape and evidence of the moral fabric of society in early modern English thought. In the context of *The Tempest* this relationship obviously has colonial overtones, and has the potential for further exploration as early modern literary studies return increasingly to analysis of American colonial landscapes. Recent studies by Gavin Hollis and David McInnis, for example, have offered fresh, innovative approaches to early modern literature's engagement with the English colonial endeavour, and with the language and practice of husbandry being so central to English presence in the new world, Scott's analysis could add further depth to the new directions being explored in this field.²

Scott's close readings of the differing linguistic registers of the discourse of husbandry across a wide variety of genres and texts illuminate the complexity and richness of agrarian language in early modern literature. Although the focus on Shakespeare means that Scott's work is inevitably far from exhaustive, what Scott has achieved here is a thorough and cohesive study that confidently asserts the importance of the language of husbandry and cultivation to Shakespeare's work, while opening up future directions for research. The implications of Scott's approach beyond Shakespeare, for example to the presence of agrarian language in city comedies, or as noted above in relation to colonial discourses, gender, sexuality, and racial discourses, mean that the work here offers the potential for new and exciting insight into other, long standing areas of study.

Notes

- 1 Major studies include Andrew McRae, *God Speed the Plough: The Representation of Agrarian England, 1500–1660* (Cambridge, 1996); Joan Thirsk, *Agricultural Regions and Agrarian History in England, 1500–1750* (Basingstoke, 1987).
- 2 Gavin Hollis, *The Absence of America: The London Stage, 1576–1642* (Oxford, 2015); David McInnis, *Mind-Travelling and Voyage Drama in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, 2014).

Deanne Williams. *Shakespeare and the Performance of Girlhood*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. Pp xi, 277.

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Shakespeare and the Performance of Girlhood is a strikingly rich addition to the growing body of scholarship on Shakespeare and early modern childhood. Deanne Williams fully demonstrates ‘how Shakespeare created girl characters and defined the idea of girlhood over the course of his career, shaping and inspiring subsequent literary and cultural representations of girls and conceptions of girlhood’ throughout late seventeenth-century English culture (2).

As Williams explains, ‘Shakespeare typically uses the term “girl” when a character’s relationship to authority is complicated or troubled’ (4). In Shakespeare’s early plays, ‘girl’ is ‘a label for a young woman’s independence, willfulness, and resistance’, but by the end of his career, ‘girl’ becomes a character ‘who exhibit[s] bravery and integrity in the face of misfortune’, as well as an insult for males (6). Thus, for Williams’s purposes, girl ‘is not limited to chronology or biology’ (6). Rather, ‘the variety of meanings attached to “girl” in the early modern period offer [*sic*] a range of possibilities and contexts ... that were not so much contradictory ... as creatively and imaginatively enabling’ (5–6). Such a capacious definition allows Williams to study an entire range of girls, including Joan La Pucelle, Ophelia, Queen Isabella, and even Romeo and Macbeth, as well as historical girls inspired by Shakespeare’s works.

Williams’s purposes are threefold: to examine ‘girl characters (usually performed by boy actors), historical girls (both as they are represented by Shakespeare and how they represent themselves), and the idea of the “girl” itself as a rhetorical construct’ (6). She accordingly divides her study into three sections: ‘Shakespeare’s Girls’, ‘Stages of Girlhood’, and ‘Writing Girls’. Williams begins by focusing on those girls who are ‘peevish and perverse’, which is to say girls who not only ‘perform their status as girls, but also, through resistance and mutability, ... become themselves’ (25). She first considers the contradictory representation of Joan La Pucelle (Joan of Arc) in *1 Henry VI*. In wearing a soldier’s armour, La Pucelle recalls the origins of ‘girl’ as a term for both female and male children (23). ‘La Pucelle’s identification as a “girl” through her acts of resistance’, explains Williams, ‘highlights the enabling variety of possibilities and associations attendant upon girlhood in the early modern period’ (24). Silvia and Julia in *The Two Gentleman of Verona* are characterized as ‘peevish’ and ‘perverse’ by disobeying

their father, as is Bianca in *The Taming of the Shrew*, whose independence frustrates ‘an expectation of daughterly submission’ (36–7). Williams concludes the chapter by turning to *Romeo and Juliet*, suggesting Shakespeare introduces a ‘new’ kind of girl: while Juliet is a ‘character whose mutability and movement, flexibility, resistance, and transformative creative imagination, dramatize the limitless possibilities of girlhood itself’, Paris and Romeo too emphasize such possibilities when they are ‘transformed into “girls” through their relationship with Juliet’ (50). It is these characters’ love that is peevish and perverse, since as Williams avers, ‘Romeo’s experience of love for Rosaline serves as a set of variations on a theme of perversity, ... the Nurse compares him to Juliet’, and ‘[i]maging Romeo apotheosized after her death, Juliet turns him into a figure associated with the feminine night, as opposed to the traditionally masculine sunlight’ (50).

Chapter 2 is an historical and biographical study of the child-bride as depicted by Queen Isabelle de France in *Richard II*. After reminding readers that the historical Queen Isabelle married Richard II in 1396, when she was seven and he twenty-nine, Williams invites us to imagine ‘Shakespeare’s version of this character through her historical counterpart, no longer glossing over the reality of her age, and instead consider how Shakespeare’s dramatization of medieval child marriage both challenges our expectations about girlhood and broadens our understanding of medieval and early modern girls as dramatic characters, as well as historical individuals’ (53). After a clear and fascinating discussion of medieval child-brides in England, Williams provides a close reading of the queen as a girl. In the end, her convincing analysis reveals something refreshingly new about the play, that to ‘deny the historical Isabelle the dignity of her own experience [is to] overlook a key element in Shakespeare’s *Richard II*’ (71).

Chapter 3 centres on a stage direction from the first quarto of *Hamlet* (1603): ‘Enter Ofelia playing on a Lute, and her hair down, singing’ (73). For Williams, the lute, hair style, and singing evidences an Ofelia who is a ‘more accomplished, more forthright and expressive’ girl than the Ophelia of Q2 and F. Though her lengthy catalogue of lute representations in early modern culture convinces me of the frequency with which the instrument is associated with girlhood, I am less convinced this single Q1 stage direction communicates as much about girlhood as we have thus far come to expect from Williams’s contextualization. Certainly artists throughout the Renaissance depicted women and girls playing the lute, but there also are numerous portrayals of men and boys playing the lute, including the boy performing Ofelia. I am not sure this stage direction can support some of Williams’s larger claims in the chapter: ‘A simple prop, Ofelia’s lute props up the psyche of this vulnerable girl character. It transforms our understanding of this

character beyond the familiar paradigms of hysteria and passivity, and allows us to associate her instead with the mastery of musical technique and the *sangfroid* of performance. Her lute suggests a character that is truly informed about the ways of the world, but is not as compromised by them' (91). However, Williams's use of Q1 to explore further her topic is typical of the book's strengths. Her close reading of *Ofelia* reminds scholars how important it is to take seriously the so-called 'bad' editions of Shakespeare.

In chapters 5 and 6, Williams turns to the second part of her project, a focus on the 'complex, multi-authored genre of the Jacobean and Caroline masque, in which girls occasionally performed' (7). Having previously mapped out girls in Shakespeare, she now attempts to explain how historical girls found models of girlhood in Shakespeare. At the start of his career, Shakespeare depicted a girl's rebellion as peevish and perverse, yet by the end of his career 'this independence [was] key to their identities' (124). Such independence surfaces, for instance, in Queen Anne's involvement in court masque and Princess Elizabeth Stuart's participation in *Tethy's Festival* (1610). For reasons not fully explained, Williams shifts her focus away from Shakespeare at this point to dramas performed by the princess's own company, the Lady Elizabeth's Men; plays such as *The Maid's Tragedy* and *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* 'dramatize a girl's wronged experience' (137), fairly akin to Elizabeth's own girlhood. She argues, however, that such texts 'speak to Elizabeth's theatrical experiences, and engage with the evolving dramatic representations of girlhood that we have seen in Shakespeare's work' (136). In chapter 6, Williams demonstrates how John Milton's *A Mask Presented at Ludlow Castle* is also invested in girlhood, especially regarding its dramatization of virginity. As Williams explains, '[t]hrough the discourse of chastity, the debate between the Lady and Comus explores what it means for a girl to appear on state, ultimately constituting a defense of the girl performer against popular antitheatrical commonplaces about the immorality and lewdness of the stage' (149).

In the final section, Williams turns to historical girls who authored their own versions of girlhood based on Shakespeare. Chapter 7 considers Lady Rachel Fane (1613–80) who, writing as a girl, turned to the court masque and closet drama as a way to celebrate her theatrical family and personal interests in the theatre. Her *May Masque* (1627) finds inspiration in the dramatization of family in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, though Fane's specific depiction of dramatic girlhood reveals Fane's own fashioning of childhood. Chapter 8 considers texts written by Lady Elizabeth Brackley (1626–63) and Lady Jane Cavendish (1621–69) as girls in exile during the civil war. Their play *Concealed Fancies*, written while the Cavendish sisters were in captivity, depicts civil war politics from the perspective of its

girl coauthors. Dramas such as *As You Like It* and *The Taming of the Shrew* influence *Concealed Fancies* as these sisters reclaim their domestic space and expectations within a wartime context.

Some readers may find the division between the first and final four chapters in *Shakespeare and the Performance of Girlhood* too significant for a single monograph, though most, as myself, will be generally pleased by the connections Williams makes to non-Shakespearean girls who exhibit Shakespearean characteristics of girlhood. Nevertheless, one does wonder why Williams passes over so many girl characters in Shakespeare. One especially notable peculiarity is the absence of Margaret Plantagenet from *Richard III*, a character who has the distinction of being the only prepubescent girl in the Shakespeare canon who speaks. Miranda, Juliet, Ofelia/Ophelia, and others are girls as Williams rightly defines the term — ‘girl ... is not limited to chronology or biology’ (6) — but it seems odd to omit the sole character who perhaps best fits the contemporary conception of ‘girl’. Further, the choice to define Juliet, Miranda, Bianca, Silvia, and Ofelia/Ophelia as girls, in part because of their ‘peevish’ and ‘perverse’ behaviour, raises unanswered questions about the study’s exclusions. Are characters such as Margaret, Desdemona, Cordelia, Lavinia, and Imogen not girls in these terms? If so, why?

Despite these limitations, *Shakespeare and the Performance of Girlhood* opens new doors for future studies of the legacy of Shakespeare and childhood. It is a text invested in Shakespeare studies, social histories, literary theory, and feminist studies that advances each of these fields. Williams’s analyses and contextualizations of the works in question offer original ways of understanding the girls in Shakespeare’s works and how such works went on to influence the modern understanding of girls and girlhood.

Lisa Hopkins. *Renaissance Drama on the Edge*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2015. Pp ii, 191.

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In *Renaissance Drama on the Edge* Lisa Hopkins returns to — but significantly extends — the topic of her earlier book, *Shakespeare on the Edge: Border Crossing in the Tragedies and the Henriad* (Farnham, 2005). As the titles suggest, this newer book turns towards a wider body of drama than the Shakespearean tragedies and histories that are the subject of the earlier work. But *Renaissance Drama on the Edge* expands upon the idea of edges in other ways too. Drawing upon her earlier study, Hopkins considers British and French geographic boundaries but also examines an array of different edges, from the material partitioning of walls to the invisible boundaries between heaven and earth. Marshalling a wide variety of non-dramatic material to contextualize her case, Hopkins contends that Renaissance culture ‘was both profoundly interested in the idea of edges and borders and also profoundly anxious that all edges and borders were in fact potentially illusory or unstable’ (172). In eight chapters, divided into three different sections, Hopkins attends to material and immaterial divisions as they are conceived of in the wider culture of early modern England and in the more specific culture of the commercial playhouses.

The first section, comprising two chapters, is entitled ‘What is an Edge?’. The first of these chapters focuses on different ways in which the material division of the wall is represented in plays by Shakespeare and Marlowe; the second examines the invisible border between the secular and the spiritual by reading Shakespeare’s plays in the context of Pauline theology. The second section, entitled ‘The Edge of the Nation’, takes a fresh look at the general subject of *Shakespeare on the Edge* by considering the complex representations of civic or national borders. Chapter 3 examines cross-border relationships and focuses mainly on British borders as represented by a range of playwrights, while chapters 4 and 5 take as their subjects the southern and northern borders of France in Shakespeare’s plays. The book’s final section, ‘Invisible Edges’, features three chapters which meditate on the intersection of the material and the spiritual. In focusing on the Celtic fringe, chapter 6 continues the investigation of national borders undertaken in previous chapters, but it advances into new territory by attending specifically to ‘the eschatological charge which may accrue to the edge of Britain’ (116) in Renaissance plays. The next chapter approaches the material/spiritual boundary through the ingenious

idea that jewels might function not only as beautiful adornments but also as extensions of the human body. For Hopkins, Renaissance drama testifies to a surprisingly complex relationship between bodies and material accessories in which jewels have a quasi-magical quality that renders permeable the human boundary of the skin. The final chapter analyzes the divine associations of ruins in plays by Webster and Shakespeare and suggests that such stage locations collapse the divide between the physical and the spiritual.

In her introduction, Hopkins describes her approach as 'eclectic' (7) and cites cultural geography, British/archipelagic studies, and 'the turn to religion' as key influences on her analysis. This varied approach correspondingly requires a wide body of primary material and Hopkins deftly navigates an impressive collection of sources. In addition to plays, Hopkins also discusses early modern historiographical accounts, devotional tracts, prose fiction, and poetry in her bid to reveal the pervasive cultural interest in edges. Indeed, the non-dramatic sources are among the most fascinating aspects of the study: in chapter 3, for example, Hopkins cites an intriguing poem by the Scottish author William Lithgow which reflects upon the morality of the citizens of Berwick-upon-Tweed. These non-dramatic materials are often illuminating and allow Hopkins to make a number of sharp and incisive connections between different plays: in chapter 4 she provides a detailed discussion of the contexts for the naming of Helena in *All's Well That Ends Well* by addressing a number of accounts of the life of St Helena. Furthermore, the book advances some persuasive readings of individual plays — perhaps especially so in chapter 7, in which the dual function of jewels is particularly productive — and it also makes a number of enlightening dramatic connections. In the first chapter, Hopkins compares Caliban and Coriolanus interestingly; in chapter 5, *Soliman and Perseda* (attributed to Thomas Kyd) and *The Four Prentices of London* (by Thomas Heywood) provide useful context for *As You Like It*.

At times, however, the admirably broad scope threatens to undermine the argument. The book moves quickly — sometimes too quickly — from one point to the next, and this means that some areas feel underdeveloped or unhelpfully gestural. In chapter 1, for example, Hopkins claims that *Coriolanus* shows 'the edge of the domestic blurring into the edge of the civic' (20), but this implies that the boundaries were not already blurred to begin with: in fact, the domestic was routinely politicized in Renaissance society. The domestic encounter between Coriolanus and Volumnia is an intensely political moment — Volumnia is speaking not only as a mother, but as a representative of Rome — but Hopkins's argument obscures the scene's political charge. Equally, while the range of source material is impressive, the relationship between the theatrical and the non-theatrical is not

always teased out effectively. In the main Hopkins is content to read the plays for their cultural politics and rhetorical dexterity, but this means that plays risk becoming forms of cultural evidence indistinct from the poems, historical narratives, and theological tracts she cites as contextualizing material. Non-dramatic material is politically complex and often rhetorically skillful, of course, but theatre (depending as it does on some sort of distinction between the staged world and the real world) might be especially well placed to offer new insights into the study of edges. Chapter 8 attempts to acknowledge the particularities of dramatic form by observing how the ephemerality of performance makes the idea of the dramatic ruin more poignant, but the full implications of this interesting claim remain unexplored. Later, the chapter nods its head to the fact that the Blackfriars was a dissolved monastery, but there is no discussion of any of the possible effects this might have had on the theatrical performance of ruins. Chapter 7, interested as it is in props such as rings and in the materiality of skin, might also have benefited from greater attention to the materiality of the theatre.

Yet while the fast pace and wide-ranging approach sometimes pose problems, perhaps the biggest disappointment is the book's comparatively narrow sense of what counts as Renaissance drama. The book does assess some rarely-studied plays and makes interesting connections between canonical and non-canonical texts, but it is surprisingly Shakespeare-centric. Shakespeare features in all of the chapters and he dominates several of them; as the index demonstrates, his name reverberates throughout the book. Certainly Shakespeare has a place — maybe even a prominent place — in the study of Renaissance drama, and attempts to ignore him completely risk endorsing the unfortunate ramifications of the Shakespeare/non-Shakespeare divide, but it is a shame that this book should venerate him at the expense of his less-celebrated contemporaries. When the introduction describes how Shakespeare 'and some other dramatists' (7) found ruins fascinating, Hopkins employs a subtly dismissive tone which does damage to the cause of Renaissance drama. Tellingly, in this locution, only Shakespeare is granted a name. Taken on its own this might be excused as a minor oversight, but the cumulative effect of such oversights serves constantly to cast non-Shakespearean drama as subordinate.

In chapter 2, for example, Hopkins endorses the long established (yet questionable) assessment of Queen's Men's plays as 'crudely anti-clerical' (42), and in chapter 6 she cites John Kirke's *The Seven Champions of Christendom*, William Rowley's *A Shoemaker A Gentleman*, and James Shirley's *St Patrick for Ireland* in relation to Shakespeare only to deride them, in the chapter's evocative final flourish, as 'much cruder' (128) than anything Shakespeare wrote. The reinforcement

of dated canonical assumptions is all the more disappointing given that the chapter had promised 'to show what Shakespeare does and does not do' (116); instead of finding out that other writers might offer perspectives beyond those available in Shakespearean drama, the conclusion uses the considerable force of its rhetorical weight to denigrate rarely read and rarely studied plays. Hopkins seems happy to suggest that non-canonical plays might illuminate Shakespeare (as in the aforementioned discussion of *As You Like It*), but it seems to be a one way process: non-canonical plays are rarely allowed to be interesting in and of themselves. Marlowe, Ford, and Webster do receive extended attention, but these writers are canonical in a way that Shirley, Kirke, Heywood, and Rowley are not. They are also usually implicitly (and occasionally explicitly) secondary to Shakespeare in Hopkins's analyses. That it might have been useful to have kept Shakespeare on the periphery of the discussion is suggested by the success of the less Shakespeare-centric chapters. In chapter 3, for example, Ford's *Perkin Warbeck* is paired with Milton's *Comus* to yield a fascinating reading of cross-border relationships. While the decision to make Shakespeare the sole focus of chapter 2 results in a series of interesting readings of *Henry V*, *Measure for Measure*, *Julius Caesar*, and *King John*, it feels like overkill to dedicate both of the French chapters to Shakespeare. Indeed, it is a shame that George Chapman — the most French-influenced of all English Renaissance dramatists — should not be mentioned anywhere in the book; after all, Shakespeare was not the only writer to set his plays in the French borderlands.

On the one hand, then, the title of this book is misleading. Despite protestations to the contrary, it is primarily a book about Shakespeare in which some Renaissance dramatists provide additional context. On the other hand, though, the title is oddly, and sadly, appropriate for a book that keeps the wider corpus of Renaissance drama on the edge of the discussion.

James Knowles. *Politics and Political Culture in the Court Masque.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015. Pp vii, 288.

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This monograph is a remarkable achievement both for the originality of its approach to the study of the masque and for the breadth of scholarship that is required to meet the demands of that approach. Investigations of the masque have proliferated in recent years but the focus of these volumes has tended to be specialized: the contribution of dance or of music and song; the poetics involved; scenic apparatus and the mechanics of staging. Essays have been devoted to ascertaining the political ideologies underlying particular examples of masque, and to studying these ideologies in their precise historical contexts. Knowles chooses to address the politics of masquing by examining how individual masques are situated by their authors and sponsors in relation to politically inflected aspects of culture at the time of composition. He argues that masques are politically multi-valent and shows how this can be determined not only from literary aspects of the texts but also from the choice of venue for their presentation; the re-scripting that often accompanied repeat performances in different venues; the composition of audiences, where known; and the selection of performers for specific roles and of dancing partners, when required. Intertextuality abounds within the songs and dialogue of the masques, and one of the strengths of the study is Knowles's pursuit and interpretation of the many levels of cross-referencing that become apparent once one reads masques in relation to other current forms of political literature: private correspondence, tracts, libels, news culture, royal and parliamentary edicts, poetry, the increased publication of masque texts and their collection into private libraries, and, most importantly, the contemporaneous performance of masques by playwrights of differing ideological persuasions. In consequence, this becomes a profound study of reception, which challenges many orthodox assumptions that tend by comparison to pursue (on Knowles's showing) rather simplistic oppositions and binaries, where authoritarian pronouncements are seen as suppressing dissent and radical questioning, as the masque-proper radiantly eclipses the darker elements of the anti-masque.

Knowles argues cogently and persuasively that intertextual strategies, by giving space, playing-time, and a voice to opposing viewpoints on the nature and expected duties of the king and senior courtiers, were a means to give such viewpoints status whether within masque or anti-masque: these opposing viewpoints

enjoyed a definite hearing before audiences, thereby demonstrating that the issues presented in the masque were open to discussion. Masque in this interpretation becomes less a toy for regal delectation than a prompting to urgent debate. The range of materials currently available for that discussion is laid out to view for the perceptive spectator, even if the finished performance seemingly privileges one (kingly) view over the many. A spectator who had been subtly alerted to such complexity of perspectives on the central argument of a masque would in all likelihood respond to any flashy rhetorical triumphalism in its ending with an element of unease or dubiety, however conservative his or her personal values might be. Despite the pressures of the form seeking to impose the sense of a particular, ordained ending, an audience of *understanders* (to use Jonson's term for his ideal spectators) would clearly have experienced no such sense of absolute closure. Knowles interprets that tension rather as a product of the difficulty within court culture under both James and Charles of offering well-reasoned good counsel without being deemed impertinent, rude, and uncivil, or accused of offending codes of honour, courtesy, and obedience. Masquerado's observation at the start of *Love Restored* expresses the dilemma precisely: 'Though I dare not show my face, I can speak truth under a vizard' (4–5). Endings in this context are to be viewed repeatedly as canny negotiations between honesty and tact, given what Knowles demonstrates was a deep-seated uncertainty about the limits of free speech.

Knowles makes good his approach by studying in considerable detail a selection of texts and performances that relate to five major political disturbances within court culture: the libelling and demise of Cecil while attempting to mediate between king and parliament over royal finances and to determine what constituted sufficiency (*Love Restored* of 1612); the marriage of Robert Carr and Frances Howard and the intricately ambivalent sexual politics this fostered (*The Irish Masque*; *The Somerset Masque*; *The Challenge at Tilt*; and *Hymen's Triumph* of 1613–14); the advent of news culture and with it an increased potential for scurrility and sedition (*News from the New World in the Moon*; *The World Tossed at Tennis* of the early 1620s); George Villiers's meteoric rise to prominence through royal favour (*The Gypsies Metamorphosed* at Burley and at Windsor in 1621); and civil harmony versus martial preparedness (*The Triumph of Peace* in its two stagings in the Banqueting House and in Merchant Taylors' Hall in 1634). What emerges from these discussions is the growing sophistication of the masque as a form and as a performance text in incorporating an ever-increasing plurality of ideas, concepts, and ideologies as responses to a chosen theme. Reception for spectators seems continually to have involved sharpening their powers of discrimination to enable them (ideally) to take a wider, detached view of political circumstance that

avoided the biases of factional manoeuvring. This approach sees the masques as encouraging flexibility by promoting openness to changing modes of political awareness rather than threatening exclusion for failures in right-thinking (in both senses of the word 'right'). All this supposes audience members with a sufficiently quick intelligence to pick up intertextual allusions, some perhaps only fleetingly experienced in the lyrics to a song. This might have been a stumbling block for Knowles, but he takes care in each chapter to analyze the wealth of printed and widely circulated materials available to literate spectators that would seemingly have shaped (or at least coloured) contemporary responses to masques in performance. He interprets the masques as they might be viewed by *knowing* spectators and shows the form as respecting audiences' diverse political sensitivities even while proffering debate as a viable form of progress rather than protest.

A felicitous by-product of Knowles's approach is the light it sheds on Jonson's ability to re-shape masque form as he grew more familiar with its potential. Two examples must suffice here. *The Irish Masque* is quite stark in the requirements for its staging compared with many of its predecessors: there is no scenographic coup, and the climactic transformation here is a matter of changing attitude and effected as a willed choice on the part of the characters involved. *The Gypsies Metamorphosed* works to a similar scheme, but its agenda is more teasing and subversive, since one is left uncertain where the anti-masque ends and the masque proper begins or whether there is any significant distinction between those component elements. A change of costume reveals Buckingham's clan as the former gypsies, but are the courtly costumes the sum of the transcendence here? Are the performers always role-players whatever their exterior appearances, defined only by the material concupiscence that motivates their actions? To read Knowles's accounts of Jonson's works is to see the playwright interrogating a form he has largely created, often in response to rigorous and satirical dismantling of that form by the likes of Middleton, and pushing at the limits of its expressiveness, as if wrestling with the opposed demands of patronage and his own creative integrity. For Knowles, masque is to be seen as an expanding and expansive form in consequence of its engagement with the changing political culture of its time and its search for informed and intelligent debate. His conclusion is admirably substantiated by the foregoing analysis that the masques under review not only question 'the idealised consensus of Caroline culture' but suggest 'the subtle, suave, yet strong ways' to 'articulate difference and even dissent' (209).

Heather Hirschfeld. *The End of Satisfaction: Drama and Repentance in the Age of Shakespeare*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014. Pp 239.

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The relationship between religious change and the early modern theatre continues to prove fertile critical ground in Heather Hirschfeld's book, which follows Sarah Beckwith's *Shakespeare and the Grammar of Forgiveness* (2011) in exploring the consequences for drama of the Protestant rethinking of repentance. Of the two, Hirschfeld's is by far the darker book — as Hirschfeld says, 'I treat the plays as less recuperative in their sensibilities than Beckwith does' (14) — a consequence of a shift in focus from forgiveness to satisfaction, and from romance to tragedy. But like Beckwith's, Hirschfeld's is an insightful book that repays close attention.

Hirschfeld begins with two chapters on the theory and history of satisfaction. The introduction distinguishes two aspects of satisfaction, the third part of the Roman Catholic sacrament of penance. On the one hand, there is 'econo-juridical satisfaction' (5), a 'principle of commensuration' (3) arising from the need to calculate whether one had 'done enough' to compensate for sin. On the other, there is appetitive satisfaction, 'a synonym for the simple ... fulfillment of needs and wants' (3). Part of Hirschfeld's argument is that the sacramental model held the two together. But the Reformation attacked Catholic understandings of the first, contending that, like good works in general, satisfaction had no power to effect salvation. Hirschfeld argues that the resulting shock waves were felt not only in theology and penitential practice but in other fields where satisfaction played a role.

Chapter 1 reviews the history of penance with special attention to satisfaction. Roman Catholics struggled to define the amount individuals needed to do in order to pay for their sins, but never doubted the possibility of such payment. But for Protestants 'the problem of enough' was its impossibility: the belief in total depravity and the doctrine of justification by faith meant that individuals could do nothing to repay God, and to believe otherwise was to succumb to the temptations of a religion of works. In practice, however, Protestants emphasized the pain and sorrow of contrition, where an affective 'enough' tended to slide into excess.

Chapter 2 explores fault lines in understandings of Christ's own satisfaction through a reading of *Doctor Faustus* as 'a contorted harrowing of hell play' (40). As hell was 'the culture's most aggressively imagined experience of the promise and impossibility of punitive satisfaction' (42), so the harrowing of hell was a

'model of Christian triumph' (62). But the validity of this model was challenged by Protestants who increasingly attacked the literal descent to hell as superfluous, since the crucifixion had fully satisfied God's justice. The debate about Christ's descent to hell therefore 'extends the problem of human satisfaction ... to *Christ*' (54). Against this backdrop, Hirschfeld understands Faustus as adding 'a special fantasy of Christological imitation' (43) to the dramatic tradition: he, too, wishes to harrow hell. But instead of descending, Faustus conjures souls from hell, and his conjuring 'comes to look like a pale version of Christ's release of righteous souls from the underworld' (57). Ultimately, satisfaction of all kinds eludes Faustus: his appetitive dissatisfaction is 'a corollary to what he senses as his inability to *make* satisfaction penitentially' (55), and his despair reflects contemporary uncertainties about Christ's own expiatory satisfaction: how it works, and how sinners might gain access to it.

The remaining chapters take up revenge, economics, and marriage. Chapter 3 argues that 'Revenge and repentance, as responses to wrong-doing, are structurally analogous pursuits' (66). Hirschfeld unearths a tendency in the period to refer to the self-punishment of contrition as revenge, while arguing that, conversely, revenge sometimes served as a form of self-punishment. 'Elizabethan revenge tragedy's great theological and theatrical contribution to the dramatic tradition', she contends, was 'to accommodate the contemporary theological suspicion about doing and feeling enough in the punishment of an offending self to the classical Senecan impossibility of doing and feeling enough in the punishment of an offending other' (75). She pursues this thesis through *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Hamlet*, and *The Revenger's Tragedy*. 'Hieronimo's explicit revenge stratagems on Lorenzo and Balthazar ... start to look like Hieronimo's penitential revenge on himself' (76). Hamlet doesn't kill the praying Claudius because Claudius's apparent penitential satisfaction means retaliatory dissatisfaction to Hamlet, who can find satisfaction neither through penance nor through revenge. Vindice parodies and perverts the confessional process, using it not to make penitential satisfaction to those he has injured but in an attempt to increase the satisfaction he gains from his revenge. In general, Hirschfeld finds a 'terrible irony embedded in the structure of revenge, whose promise of restitution and equivalence can only be accomplished through amplified, excessive punishment and pain' (136).

Chapter 4 considers the relationship between economics and penitential exchange. Hirschfeld charts a tension between an economic morality that emphasized the virtue of 'enough' and a Protestant theology that attacked the same idea in penitential contexts. She follows this tension through William Wager's

Enough Is as Good as a Feast and into *The Merchant of Venice*. Wager shows the difficulty of being content with enough, illustrating Hirschfeld's large claim about the form his play represents: 'The late medieval morality play depended upon the possibility that its characters could atone for their misdeeds and sins; the Tudor homiletic drama depends upon the assumption that its characters cannot' (103). In *Merchant*, the theological separation of abundant grace from penitential satisfaction supplies a logic that is played out largely at the economic and legal level of the play. Shylock's bond, representing 'the principle of calculation and proportionate adequation that marks the lost penitential satisfactory' (111), falls victim to the Christians' plenty. As legal authority, Portia must 'sever the relationship between gratuitous mercy and the adequations of the law, between plenty and enough' (115). The play, Hirschfeld ends by suggesting, 'can be read as an allegory of the Protestant dismantling of the sacrament of penance and the place of *satis* within it' (118), but it is an ironic one that 'exposes not only the conditionality of supposedly unconditional mercy but also the lingering attraction and reliance on the economies of satisfaction in the face of their disavowal' (118).

The final chapter posits 'a special connection between marriage and repentance' (123), both of which had lost their sacramental status but were still seen as redemptive. In addition, marriage presented an occasion for sin, and could be repented *in toto* if one made a poor choice. The focus of the chapter is on the last of these connections, beginning with a reading of *Othello* as a play about repented marriage. Hirschfeld argues against readings of satisfaction in the play as appetitive and epistemological; such readings 'do not ... recognize the profound confluence between the possibilities of sexual and penitential satisfaction' (135). Othello initially appears satisfied, but repents his marriage when Iago persuades him that Desdemona has already repented hers. The murder of Desdemona attempts 'to reestablish Othello in a world in which precise atonement ... is possible' (136–7). But 'Protestant revaluations of penitential efficacy' (138) finally dominate the play, and in Shakespeare's domestic tragedy as elsewhere there is no satisfaction to be found. The chapter ends with a reading of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Love's Pilgrimage*, which both mocks the idea of satisfaction and betrays 'a lingering fascination with ... the possibility of satisfaction in penitential and marital economies' (140).

This is a painstakingly historicist book, attentive to both continuities and breaks with the medieval past. Much of its energy is directed at tracing conceptual and affective parallels across numerous cultural discourses. Hirschfeld rejects reading such discourses as simply analogous or homologous. Instead she places religion first among cultural equals: repentance 'needs to be seen as organizing

or intervening directly in other forms of exchange' (11). Her efforts to treat repentance as a master discourse find, I think, varying degrees of success. I'm not entirely convinced by the arguments linking marriage to repentance, and the repented marriage doesn't seem a distinctively Protestant phenomenon. On the other hand, the connections between economics and the calculations of satisfaction seem rich and suggestive.

Perhaps because most of the plays she considers are tragic, Hirschfeld's argument presents a version of the subtraction theory of the Reformation: Protestantism ended penitential satisfaction but not its 'residual allures' (3) or 'lingering appeal' (38), creating a tragic void where attempts to find satisfaction were doomed to fail. Hirschfeld pays relatively little attention to Protestant alternatives to penance. For example, although she identifies assurance as the affective replacement for satisfaction (17) and acknowledges the role of the church courts in 'making satisfaction to others' (150) — a surprising revelation at the end of a book dedicated to the proposition that the Reformation ended satisfaction — neither is a factor in her analysis. A study of romances — in which genre Beckwith uncovers the forms that forgiveness took after the Reformation — or comedies might lead to very different conclusions. Nevertheless, Hirschfeld's readings are consistently imaginative and challenging. Her book is the product of wide reading and deep and sustained thinking, and does enough to satisfy this reader.

Laura Estill. *Dramatic Extracts in Seventeenth-Century English Manuscripts: Watching, Reading, Changing Plays.* Lanham: University of Delaware Press, 2015. Pp xxviii, 254.

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Laura Estill's new book enriches and extends scholarly interest in early modern reading practices and shows how those practices can help us understand dramatic texts of the era. Many of us were introduced to early modern reading practices through the quirks of Gabriel Harvey annotating his Livy; this left the unfortunate impression that reading was an altogether idiosyncratic art. Laura Estill's survey of dramatic extracts in the manuscripts of seventeenth-century England provides a corrective to that very singular picture. Using drama as her focusing genre, and examining an impressive array of archival materials, Estill methodically itemizes and evaluates the ways in which early readers recorded the plays of early modern England.

Because this book chronicles the labours of many hundreds of hours in rare books rooms, Estill's task is to stage a double act of reading: what it is like, on one hand, to turn the pages of seventeenth-century manuscripts that attend to early plays, and, on the other, imaginatively to recreate — on the basis of such reading — the ways in which those responsible for these manuscripts themselves turned the pages of printed and transcribed texts. Owing to its historical sweep (the six chapters of this study cover the era from approximately 1580 to 1680), *Dramatic Extracts* offers a thin description in which close reading serves to illustrate rather than organize historical narrative and analysis. The book's variety of approaches to its subject — sometimes dwelling on particular dramatic texts, sometimes on particular readers and manuscripts, and even, in its final chapter, on a particular proverb from Shakespeare — serves to introduce material that, as Estill observes, remains promisingly open to further study.

This book's initial chapter connects the rise of dramatic extracting — the recording of words from the text or performance of a play or masque — to the practice of commonplacing and the increase of published playbooks during the 1590s and after. Early plays were formally fragmented in their very composition, of course, and their readers were only too happy to continue the practice. We are generally familiar with the form of such printed collections as *Englands Parnassus* (1600) and *Bel-vedere or the Garden of the Muses* (1600), where flowers from the plays of Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Kyd, among others, are presented to the

reader for their literary quality and philosophical import. In this first chapter Estill expands this picture of what was recorded from such plays and why, showing a variety of motivations for copying and transcribing the words of dramatic texts and a variety of ways of doing so. Significantly, songs would prove to be the most attractive subgenre for extracting throughout the era. This must have been in part because of the compelling nature of lyrics: songs both then and now have a way of suggesting complete, concentrated moods, even universes. Songs often had the further attraction, Estill points out, of being typographically distinct — presented on the page in a form that encouraged attention and sponsored retention.

Remarking that ‘selections from masques and entertainments follow a separate yet parallel trajectory to those from plays’ (43), Estill turns, in her second chapter, to representative instances from a variety of masques and courtly entertainments. Two prominent examples are Jonson’s *The Gypsies Metamorphosed* (1621) and Milton’s *Comus* (1634). Estill shows how real-life scandals surrounding Lady Purbeck (Frances Coke, 1599–1645) influenced the initial extracting of her ‘fortune’ from Jonson’s masque and perpetuated its transcription in subsequent years. In relation to *Comus*, Estill identifies and explores an instance of Milton setting himself up as an author: sometime in or around 1639, Milton signed the *album amicorum* (‘friendship book’) of an Italian visitor named Camillo Cerdagni. A quotation Milton chose for the occasion came not from Homer or Virgil but from Milton himself: ‘— *if Vertue feeble were / Heaven it selfe would stoope to her*’. Evidently proud of the closing couplet from *Comus*, Milton thus extracted material from his own dramatic production, commenting, in this way, on what must have seemed a promising career.

In her third chapter, Estill looks at dramatic miscellanies during the closure of the playhouses (1642–60), arguing for both continuity and change in the way that plays were extracted at the time. Here Estill includes more printed extracts than elsewhere in her study, in part because such texts as John Cotgrave’s *English Treasury of Wit and Language* (1655) illustrate the growing stature of drama as a literary form. Prior to the civil wars, Estill points out, collections had interspersed extracts from drama with extracts from other forms, such as lyric poetry. During and after the Interregnum, the institutionally enforced separation from dramatic performance created a nostalgia for the plays of the public theatre that solidified drama’s standing as a genre of note. We can feel the winds of another change in Estill’s description of the attention that Cotgrave’s treasury gives to various of its commonplace headings. As she points out, the entries for ‘Of Warre’ run less than a page and half long, while those under ‘Of Whores’ occupy more than five pages (92). It is understandable that war would seem less attractive a topic in 1655

than earlier; what remains fascinating is the way in which Cotgrave's distribution anticipates the shape of literary and court cultures to come.

What Estill refers to as 'particular moments of play reading' (116) in the Restoration contribute to her fourth chapter. It was during this time, as *Dramatic Extracts* makes clear, that readers had growing options between two eras, and thus types, of plays from which to record attractive matter. The new popularity of such playwrights as Dryden, Behn, and Wycherley was reflected in the commonplace book of 'PD', an anonymous reader responsible for what is now Bodleian MS Eng. misc. c. 34. In its copious extracts this text, according to Estill, 'has the potential to be as important to early modern literary reception as Samuel Pepys's diary is to the discussion of Restoration audience response' (136). As Estill points out, PD values wit, and the wit of the Restoration over that of the Elizabethan era. PD wishes, in various places, that *Othello* had featured the wit of 'a greasy Cook' instead of that of Iago and Roderigo, and finds the otherwise witty *The Merry Wives of Windsor* 'so plain, that 'tis scarce worth reading' (137). PD is far from the only extractor here to read Shakespeare in a puzzling manner: earlier in the study Estill quotes the dramatic extracts of Abraham Wright during the 1640s; Wright calls *Hamlet* 'But an indifferent play, the lines but meane, and in nothing like Othello' (83).

The evocative fifth chapter, which could itself be extracted for use in graduate seminars, traces the voluminous transcriptions of Archbishop William Sancroft (1617–93). Sancroft is familiar to historians of the era for his resistance to changing political authority during the non-juring episode. As Estill demonstrates, however, Sancroft is equally significant for his indefatigable extraction from the texts he read; he is remarkable for 'his roles as academic, manuscript compiler, theatre enthusiast, discerning reader, rhetor/writer, and literary analyst' (162). Sancroft shared PD's enthusiasm for wit but, unlike PD, valued Renaissance playwrights over those of the Restoration. Like Gabriel Harvey, Sancroft seems rarely to have laid his pen down. Also like Harvey, Sancroft treated his reading as something 'to be adapted for personal use' (191). As Estill shows, this approach becomes clear in his use of *Measure for Measure* as a 'customized statement of religious martyrdom' (190).

Dramatic Extracts closes by focusing on a single proverb from *Love's Labour's Lost*. This consists of a couplet uttered by Longaville early in the drama which few readers today may have thought twice about, but which was endlessly repeated in the play's wake: 'Fat paunches have lean pates, and dainty bits / Make rich the ribs, but bankrupt quite the wits' (1.1.26–7). It is an appropriate sentiment for Estill to scrutinize, for 'wit' is indeed the central value of the humanist era treated

by her study. With meticulous analysis, Estill shows how Longaville's utterance was dispersed into various printed and manuscript collections before finding its way into still further books, both printed and transcribed. It is a strong ending to the study, and the selection of a seventeen-word passage allows Estill to consolidate her central insight: that dramatic texts were always already fragmented and open to transposition; readers and writers in the seventeenth century both followed textual leads in how they recorded playwrights' words and also fashioned independent ways of acknowledging the utility of written, printed, and performed dramas.

At one point in *Dramatic Extracts* Estill notes that 'There are hundreds of manuscripts that contain extracts from and commentary on early modern drama, most of which have been overlooked to date' (140). It is one of the many virtues of this admirable study that it encourages, even as it paves the way for, future inquiry into its rich archive.

Thomas L. Berger and Sonia Massai (eds), with Tania Demetriou. *Paratexts in English Printed Drama to 1642*. 2 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014. Pp xx, 614 (vol. 1); x, 430 (vol. 2).

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What do you call a dramatic paratext without a play? That question is either the start of a very niche joke for book historians, or a puzzle to tease the curious reader of Thomas L. Berger and Sonia Massai's two-volume compendium of *Paratexts in English Printed Drama to 1642*. The term 'paratext' was coined by Gérard Genette in *Palimpsestes* (1981) and elaborated by him in *Seuils* (1987; translated as *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* in 1997), a title that puns on the name of Genette's publisher, Éditions de Seuil, and makes richly present the interpretive force of details of publication and presentation. For Genette, the paratext consists of those features which 'surround and extend' the text proper, 'precisely in order to *present* it, in the usual sense of this verb but also in the strongest sense: to *make present*, to ensure the text's presence in the world, its "reception" and consumption in the form ... of a book'.¹

What Berger and Massai have gathered in these two volumes, then, are all those materials — title-pages and head titles, dedicatory epistles, addresses to the reader, commendatory poems, lists of dramatis personae, prologues, epilogues, conclusions, act and scene divisions, colophons, endnotes, and errata lists — that served to translate plays performed at the universities and on the streets, in public and private theatres, at court and in noble houses, into printed books. The editors have included neither manuscript plays nor neo-Latin drama, a venture which, they point out, would have demanded the perilous navigation of a still contested and expanding field. The structure, and much of the bibliographic description, of these two volumes follows W.W. Greg's influential *A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration* (London, 1939–59), with further details quarried from the *Database of Early English Plays (DEEP)*. Where Greg listed plays which were part of larger collections alongside separate editions of the plays, however, Berger and Massai usefully distinguish collected editions, placing them together at the end of each volume (with collected editions to 1623 in volume 1, and later *Works* in volume 2). On display are the monumentalizing ambitions of such writers (and/or, as Genette would have it, of their 'allies') as William Alexander, Thomas Carew, Samuel Daniel, George Gascoigne, the now obscure Robert Gomersall, Fulke Greville, Thomas Heywood, Ben Jonson, Thomas Killigrew,

'the onely Rare Poet of that Time, The Witie, Comicall, *Facetiously-Quicke and vparalelld*' John Lyly, John Marston, Thomas Middleton, Thomas Newman, Thomas Norton, Thomas Randolph, John Tatham, the various translators of Seneca, Sir Philip Sidney, and, of course, William Shakespeare.

Inevitably, some readers will quibble with what Berger and Massai have chosen to include and exclude. Prologues and epilogues which were not routinely performed on stage but preserved in or composed for print are included, but arguments, dumb shows, and choruses are generally, though not universally, omitted. Songs are included for masques but not usually for plays. Such fine distinctions highlight the difficulty of demarcating paratext from text, and demonstrate the extent to which the printed book serves at once to immerse the reader in the world of the play, and to draw attention to the artifice of both performance and print. Details of running titles (the titles at the head of the page; on this page, 'BOOK REVIEWS') are included occasionally, as for example, in the entry for John Webster's *The White Devil*, whose running titles direct the reader to the fate of the play's complex female protagonist, 'Vittoria Corombona'.

Perhaps the most obvious omission is of illustrations which, though the editors dutifully record them, can scarcely be captured by brief descriptions. '[Engraving of a masquer]' cannot convey the elaborate costume that accompanies Thomas Campion's *The Masque at Lord Hay's Marriage* (1607), whilst it would be impossible to imagine the pictures themselves from the complex descriptions of the engravings that preface Thomas Middleton's notorious *A Game at Chess* (1625). Perhaps ironically, the constraints of modern print mean that it is almost impossible to form a mental image of these play-texts from the assembled descriptions and transcriptions. Even the best-informed reader will be unable to pick up on subtle visual cues and the niceties of *mise-en-page*, including, for example, how printers' devices visually tied together disparate plays, or how the use of ornaments and printers' flowers shifted over the period.

What these volumes do give us is a cornucopia, a mass of information relating to the presentation of drama in print; the canons and corpuses of playhouses and printers; the use (and abuse) of dedications and approaches to patrons; and the ways in which plays were corrected, altered, expanded, and reflected upon during the process of publication. Paratexts, as the editors note, give us invaluable clues to how plays were to be acted, ranging from the comically common sense announcement attached to R. Wever's *Lusty Juventus* (1565) that 'Foure may play it easely' as long as no one attempts to play two parts at the same time, to the careful bracketing of paired parts in the smash hit *Mucedorus and Amadine* (1598). These volumes will also be a precious resource for students of translation,

and of how classical authors were imagined and repackaged in early modern England. Several of these authors appear as garrulous personifications in the prefatory materials to early translations. In this context, the numerous translations of Greek and Latin material provided by Tania Demetriou are an essential resource. These collected materials also allow readers to chart debates surrounding the emergence of English as a literary language. As early as 1566 Thomas Delapeend wrote in praise of his friend John Studley's translation of *Agamemnon*, boasting of Studley's deserved place alongside such established (if now, in some cases, largely forgotten) talents as John Heywood, Arthur Golding, Barnabe Googe, Richard Edwards, and William Neville.

Errata lists provide evidence of the difficulty of producing a correct and final print. At the end of James Shirley's *The Bird in a Cage* (1633), the printer concludes: 'many other Errors ... thou shalt meete, which thou canst not with safetie of thy owne, interpret a defect in the Authors Iudgment, since all bookes are subiect to these mistfortunes [*sic*]' (1.731). The error in the final word is, unfortunately, that of the transcribers rather than the printer; as scrupulous as Berger and Massai have been, some errors have crept in, and it would be an unwary scholar who did not return to the play to check essential details. The assembled paratexts frequently take to task the printers and booksellers who brought these plays to market, even as stationers' own estimations of the plays they publish occasionally, and fruitfully, emerge. The anonymous drama *Band, Cuff, and Ruff*, a lively dispute between three items of fashionable clothing, expends a great deal of paratextual energy besmirching the printer, who is supposed in turn to have besmirched the text: 'The *faults* in *Ruffe, Cuffe, Band*, are whose, doe you thinke? The *Printers*? I. He spoild them with his *Inke*' (1.446). Though this particular complaint seems laboured in its liveliness, it points to *Paratexts*' further function as a treasury of energetic and inventive writing. Who could fail to be charmed by John Stephens's elaborate culinary metaphors, addressed to the reader of 'The Authors Epistle Popular' that fronts his *Cynthia's Revenge* (1613), which mock the increasingly stale formalities of the genre, promising not to '*discant*' on the difference '*betwixt Readers, and vnderstanding Readers*' or set '*formall limitation who should, with my consent, sur-vey this Poem*' (1.427).

Berger and Massai's own paratexts are slender but to the point, with a pithy introduction and essential user's guide explaining how to navigate the bibliographical conventions of each entry. The notes are functional, and though it would have been a Sisyphean task to attempt anything else, readers may sometimes wish for more detail. A very useful finding list at the end of volume 2 allows the user quickly to identify which plays feature which paratextual trappings, whilst four

indices point users to People, Places, Plays, and Topics. This last category is the most suggestive, offering some important categories of analysis including ‘Continental European models’, ‘copy’, and ‘correction’, but also, inevitably, the most frustrating, given the vast range of topics that could be pulled out for consideration. So, while Martial appears in the People index, readers of the Topic index will search in vain for ‘mackerel’, one of his most popular bibliographic tropes. In the end, then, this is a volume not simply to be navigated through its own paratexts but to be read; even a casual browse will unearth new treasures, frequently sending readers to remarry paratext and play and explore some still-neglected early dramas. Despite the frustrations and repetitions of reading this mass of paratexts without the accompanying drama, it is a rewarding exercise, shedding light not only on the shifting shapes of the dramatic paratext but on the obsessions, the *mores*, the knowledge, and the habits of thought of generations of English playwrights, translators, printers, booksellers, commentators, and readers.

Sadly, Tom Berger passed away shortly after the publication of these two volumes. ‘Books’, he once reflected, ‘are fun to hold, to smell and of course to read’. Tom’s passion for print and its possibilities shines through in this project, and its encyclopaedic ambitions capture something of his generosity and joy as a scholar. Among so much else, there are many moments of sly wit and ebullient humour gathered in this volume; it is fitting that Tom was so much part of a project to share and revel in these gems.

Notes

- 1 Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge, 1997), 1, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511549373>.