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Literary Studies

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Edited by John Lee

# A Handbook of English Renaissance Literary Studies

Edited by  
John Lee

**WILEY** Blackwell

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# Contents

Acknowledgments	viii
Notes on Contributors	ix
Introduction <i>John Lee</i>	1
<b>Part I Conditions of Subjectivity</b>	<b>13</b>
1 Gender <i>Catherine Bates</i>	15
2 Love and Friendship <i>James M. Bromley</i>	29
3 Race and Colonization <i>Jean E. Feerick</i>	43
4 Agency and Choice <i>John Lee</i>	56
5 Religion and the Religious Turn <i>Julia Reinhard Lupton</i>	70
6 Desire and Representation <i>Simon Ryle</i>	86
7 Service <i>David Schalkwyk</i>	101
8 The Body and Its Lives <i>William W.E. Slights</i>	115
9 Objects and Things <i>Julian Yates</i>	130

<b>Part II</b>	<b>Places, Spaces, and Forms</b>	<b>145</b>
10	The Market <i>David J. Baker</i>	147
11	Nature and the Non-Human <i>Bruce Boehrer</i>	159
12	Nation and Archipelago <i>Willy Maley</i>	173
13	London <i>Ian Munro</i>	190
14	The Church <i>Anne M. Myers</i>	206
15	The Republic of Letters and the Commonwealth of Learning <i>Joanna Picciotto</i>	220
16	Romance <i>Benedict S. Robinson</i>	235
17	The Court <i>Lauren Shohet</i>	249
18	The Household <i>Mary E. Trull</i>	265
<b>Part III</b>	<b>Practices and Theories</b>	<b>279</b>
19	Rhetorics of Similitude <i>Judith H. Anderson</i>	281
20	Publication <i>Joshua Eckhardt</i>	295
21	Authorship <i>Jane Griffiths</i>	310
22	Reading <i>Mary Ann Lund</i>	324
23	Science and Early Modern Literature <i>Howard Marchitello</i>	337
24	Representation <i>Patricia Phillippy</i>	353
25	Historiography <i>Nicholas Popper</i>	368

*Contents*

vii

26	Devotion	382
	<i>Timothy Rosendale</i>	
27	The Book	396
	<i>Helen Smith</i>	
28	Travel and Chorography	411
	<i>Angus Vine</i>	
	Index	426

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# Introduction

*John Lee*

The disciplinary area covered by Renaissance studies is of a size and variety to inspire wonder, or bafflement, or both. This *Handbook* offers an enabling map of that critical landscape, and aims to be a good guide to some of the most admirable and significant work that is currently taking place. That “some” is a significant qualification; given the size and variety of the area, and the constraints of space even within a relatively substantial volume such as this, the map offered must be selectively representative. This one is drawn up around a founding belief in the benefit to the disciplinary area of its engagement with theory.

“Engagement” is an important word in this context. It is tempting to talk of the “impact” of theory but that would, at this point in time, mislead. Theory, in one form or another, has always been with us. Looking to the classical past there is, most famously, Aristotle’s *Poetics* (350 BCE) and Horace’s *Ars Poetica* (10 BCE). In the period covered by this *Handbook*, that is the English Renaissance, or the Early Modern period (the first term tending to look at the period in terms of what shaped it, the second in terms of what it went on to shape), a recent *selection* of English literary criticism between 1530 and 1650 runs to over 600 densely printed pages, and contains many theoretical accounts of literature, its nature, kinds, and functions (Vickers 1999). But when “high” theory arrived in the 1970s (or thereabouts, such dates being always subject to challenge), it was both unusually systematic and unusually, by that time, extra-disciplinary. Large changes, fundamentally reshaping the disciplinary area, were brought about as theoretical approaches were applied to the objects of study, which were then usually literary texts; and as those approaches were systematic and largely novel, those applying them tended to form identifiable groups. “Impact” was sought; and gained; debate grew polemical and confrontational (Bergonzi 1991); commentators spoke of “theory wars” and novelists fictionalized them (Lodge 1975; 1984; 1988).

Many of those changes are discussed within the *Handbook's* chapters. In the last 20 years or so, however, the situation has become less antagonistic and less clear-cut. There are many reasons for that; one of the most significant is that the objects of study have, so to speak, answered back. In the earlier years of high theory, it sometimes seemed as if the objects of study were there to prove the validity of the theory; a deconstructivist reading, for example, might prove in text after text the nature, and slipperiness, of linguistic meaning, with little respect to how one text might differ from another, or what it aimed to do, and how well it did it, let alone what was thought to be the significance of the achieved end. But more recently, a kind of dialectical process between theory and the objects of study has been allowed to take place, as critics have sought better to fit theory to the objects of their study. This process might be imagined in quasi-scientific terms, as a sequence of practical observations by which an initial hypothesis is refined to give improved predictive validity or understanding of the object of study. "Engagements," though, seems a more helpful and accurate depiction of these interactions. For they are essentially *ad hoc* and local: literary critics, unsatisfied, say, with their current understandings of parts of texts, try out one or a number of different theoretical approaches; or they look to see what happens if they combine theoretical approaches, perhaps to understand better the questions that the texts seem to be asking them; or perhaps they look to find ways by which to make the texts more responsive to the questions they believe should matter at this moment. If that all sounds rather unsystematic and messy, and rather self-interested, this need not necessarily be a problem; what justifies such engagements is the richness of the accounts given of the objects of study or the questions under consideration. And it seems to me we are lucky to be working and reading at a time of increasingly rich accounts, largely thanks to such theoretically-informed engagements.

Recent years, then, have seen the fragmentation of systematic theories, and the growth of theoretically informed competencies for different areas of study. The representative map of the disciplinary area offered in this *Handbook* has been drawn up to give a sense of some of the richest of those engagements. These have been divided into three parts: engagements that deal with the conditions of subjectivity; those that deal with some aspect of place, space, or form; and those that deal with Renaissance and Early Modern practices and theories. These divisions are partly a matter of convenience, but that they *are* convenient is a function of what remains the largest impact of the period of high theory within the disciplinary area: the questioning of the nature and centrality of the human subject. The chapters within Part I: "Conditions of Subjectivity" consider various ways of approaching what is seen to constitute a person or a fictional agent; those within Part II: "Places, Spaces, and Forms" consider a person's or agent's interrelationship with his or her physical, intellectual, and artistic habitations; and those within Part III: "Practices and Theories" consider what it is that persons and fictional agents do, and how they picture to themselves and others what it is they do. The *Handbook* is fundamentally shaped by the impact of high theory, as it marks out a new stage in the disciplinary area's responses to it.

## I

Within the three parts, each chapter looks not to give a historical survey of the presence of theory in its particular area of interest, but rather to describe the theoretical authorities that shape its own approach and, at the same time, to demonstrate the benefits such a theoretically informed competency may bring – by advancing new arguments on issues of particular current significance, or by directing our attention to new areas of and for research, or by suggesting theoretical issues that may face us in the future. Catherine Bates's chapter opens the volume with a discussion of gender studies, and what it owes to feminist theory. At the same time, she focuses on the "distinctly uncomfortable" (22) position gender studies finds itself in, as its largely deconstructivist mode of inquiry threatens to imperil its ability to contribute meaningfully to the feminist project of recovering an explicitly female history of experience. To Bates it seems that gender studies may have to abandon the notion of gender, as a category of stable meaning, and explore instead scenes of "radical gender incoherence" (25). James Bromley, in the following chapter, considers recent debates about the role of utopianism within queer theory. He cautions against what seems to him the unjustified optimism of some critical readings of texts of the period; trying to challenge the foundational role of heterosexual desire, he notes, is particularly difficult as it challenges "the legibility of the self" (36). The period's sexual heteronormativity is disappointing to Bromley as it is seen to champion a politics opposed to his own; yet he stresses the political usefulness of the personal experience of disappointment if one wants to bring about change.

Both Bates and Bromley are happy with the "promiscuous mingling" (40) of ethical and political praxes, and regard their sharp sense of embeddedness in the ideological discourses they present as a "major asset in their analysis and understanding of the past" (17). David Schalkwyk, by contrast, is not happy to "risk anachronism" (31) in his dealings with the past. His chapter on service is a historically informed attempt to recognize properly the importance of the concept and practicalities of service in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and yet it is not historicist, but conceptual in its approach; celebrating literature's ability to deal with the complex relationships among service, desire, love and reciprocity, he refuses to see these relationships as "examples of historical causality" or "the repositories of hierarchies of power" (103). Instead he looks at how differently each play handles the imbrication of social relations of service with the erotic relations of service found in the courtly love tradition. Such a resistance to historicist paradigms is also to be found in my own chapter on agency and choice, which turns to some recent philosophers of ethics to suggest why it is that dramatic literature, as a mode, thinks so well and compellingly, even compulsively, about the multi-dimensional nature of personhood in its own particular terms. For Simon Ryle, drawing on both post-structuralist and Renaissance theories of mimesis, there is something, or rather some lack, in the nature of Shakespearean dramatic representation itself which describes the "structure of desire" (91) and which, in its monstrous incommensurability, anticipates modernity. Julian Yates's chapter on objects and things sees matters, and

matter, rather differently; he invites the reader to consider not only how objects resist any easy narrative of the sovereignty of the subject (or the subject's depiction of the object), but also to what extent it is those very objects that call us into being as subjects. Matters and matter become complicatedly bound up with time and place and person, to the extent we may wish to ask questions of poetry such as "what" and "when" is a poem.

One related development of this literary-critical turn to *things* – perhaps the most influential of the last two decades – has been the emergence of the importance of the human body as a subject in its own right. William Slights, generously appreciative of that transformative critical work, resists a post-modern and totalizing current within it which takes an "*all wholes barred*" (121) position in celebrating the fragmentary and discontinuous nature of the body. Instead, he points out the degree to which Renaissance literature speaks a coherent language of embodiment, in which "terrifyingly raw encounters with the flesh" (124) are frequent and meaningful occurrences. A more cooked set of encounters is discussed in Jean Feerick's chapter on race and colonization. She insists on the dissonance between biological, and more recently genetic, modern ideologies of race and the early modern equivalent, the notion of bloodline. In the early modern culture of blood, all bodies were seen to need the intervention of culture to be properly ordered, and so were neither innately "superior" or "inferior," but rather mutable, and often rather troublingly so.

Religion, in its very various forms and practices, provides the groundwork on and through which much of the thinking of the period takes place. Recent years have seen a resurgence of critical interest in the nature and forms of the relationship between the secular and sacred. Julia Lupton, in her consideration of this religious turn, suggests how we might "creatively combine historical and philosophical analysis in order to approach drama as a resource for living" (71). At the risk of seeming paradoxical, she argues for the usefulness of considering Shakespeare as a post-secular thinker, both to contemporary pedagogical and contemporary political engagements. That risk-taking allows her to write illuminatingly about the female protagonists of Shakespeare's late romances. Marina and Imogen, she argues, may usefully be seen as "post-secular saints," drawing on religious discourses to create new shared spaces displaying "environmental attunement" via various kinds of "cosmopolitan translation" (79).

Such shared spaces may be particularly necessary in the religiously and politically diverse world of today, if the kind of liberal and pluralistic culture envisaged by Isaiah Berlin ([1947–1990] 1990) as a best defense against the various authoritarian "utopias" of the mid-twentieth century, whether communist, fascist or Maoist, is to be sustained. And while it is an optimistic reading, and not one advanced by any of the contributors here, the variety within Renaissance Studies, which the representative nature of this *Handbook* showcases, might itself be seen to manifest its own kind of shared space. On the one hand, the chapters can be quite different from one another, not only in the nature of their theoretical engagements, or their subject matter, but also in their style. On the other, there are often, especially in terms of theoretical engagements, substantial overlaps or communalities between chapters;



and, to complicate matters, it is often in those communalities that some of the most fundamental disagreements are manifested.

Whatever the cultural importance of such an academic space may be, it is in its demonstration of just such a mix of diversity and communality that the *Handbook* hopes to be most enabling. That Renaissance Studies are no one thing, but rather a wide variety of practices, and values, and aims, many of which are opposed the one to the other, is seen here in terms of opportunity: Renaissance Studies are “catholic” in one of that word’s older modern senses, that is “having sympathies with, embracing, all” (*Oxford English Dictionary*, sense 3b). Readers of this volume, particularly undergraduates and postgraduates, should find examples enough to refine their sense of what kind of critics they would like to be, and what kind they would not want to be, and why.

In my experience, that is a key, and difficult, question for those setting out within the disciplinary area; and the question of “why” is a particularly important aspect of that process of identity formation. While the authors of the *Handbook’s* chapters do not make great claims for the cultural importance of their work, each has a clear sense of the importance of what they do, and of why their chosen approach matters; and though that importance is often modestly argued for (if argued for at all), such explicit or implicit claims to importance should not be downplayed. Critical practice should matter to the critics; it is, after all, a substantial, and sometimes consuming, part of their lives. For some of the *Handbook’s* authors, that importance is quite personal, and remains largely a scholarly matter within the academic community. For others, that importance is explicitly public and political, and they see their practice as making a direct contribution to the improvement of the society in which they, and others, live. In the case of both groups, these chapters show how their engagements with theory have enriched their professional and personal lives and also, if to a lesser and less obvious extent, how it has enriched the places and cultures in which that critical practice takes place.

What such a pluralism of practices and aims also means, of course, is that a handbook of critical theory is not going to be anything like, say, a handbook of bicycle maintenance; it is not going to provide a “how to” guide to particular critical ends; or at least it will not if it wishes to reflect its disciplinary area, rather than to promote a critical or theoretical project. As Francis Bacon warned in “Of Studies,” the opening chapter of the first edition of his *Essays* ([1597] 1996): “Crafty men contemn [studies], simple men admire them, wise men use them. For they teach not their own use; but that is a wisdom without them, and above them, won by observation” ([1597] 1999, 134).

## II

In my earlier brief comments on Lupton’s chapter, I mentioned the particular objects of critical attention – Shakespeare’s late romances – in the context of which her theoretical engagements occur. Lupton’s chapter is not unusual in that; most chapters

contain new readings. In “Conditions of Subjectivity,” these readings are largely of texts. So, for example, Bromley looks at Lady Mary Wroth’s *Love’s Victory* (c.1620); Feerick at Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* (1609) and *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (1633); myself and Ryle at Shakespeare’s *1 Henry 4* and *Hamlet*, and *King Lear*, respectively; Schalkwyk at Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613–14), Middleton and Rowley’s *The Changeling* (1622), and Ford’s *Tis Pity She’s a Whore* (c.1630); Slights at Jonson’s *Sejanus* (1604); and Yates at Donne’s “The Relique” (1633). This is, in other words, a *Handbook* of critical theory in practice, and its implicit thesis is that critical and theoretical interests are, in the end, indivisible. That I am not generally mentioning the objects of that practice here is simply owing to the constraints of space. And, for the same reason, the particular theoretical authorities that the authors discuss and cite go unmentioned. Lupton alone, for example, discusses Jürgen Habermas, Charles Taylor, Talal Asad and Rosi Braidotti. The *Handbook*, then, offers essays that readers of Jonson, say, or Habermas, will want to consult. To facilitate this, the index lists both authors and works, and critical authorities and theoretical concepts.

Part II, “Places, Spaces, and Forms,” opens with David Baker’s chapter on the market. Drawing on new economic criticism, Baker notes that the shortage of cash available in England around 1600 challenges Marx’s timeline of the arrival of the “cash nexus.” Instead, Baker argues, credit remained king, and in place of a single cash market, there were a number of socially mediated markets, equally but differently devilish to the old cash-based market. One, presumably more godly place of economic transaction was Norwich Cathedral, where rent was paid and the genuineness of coins tested. Anne Myers, writing on the church, seeks to enlarge our appreciation of just how complex and meaningful a space it was for those in and around it, and to move our attention from the focus on theological controversy. The Cathedral is read as a site of “ever-accruing collections of personal and communal stories” (208).

Turning to the Court, Lauren Shohet sees courtly literature as both celebratory of, and offering challenges to, sovereign authority: power both appears to flow outward from the center and to be granted from the margin. The kinds and forms of fictive ambiguity which lie at the heart of such complicated presentational dances are seen to give rise to a particular kind of elusive literary aesthetic, whose influence permeated the literary culture of the age more generally. The “eccentric” (255) orbits of influence that Shohet traces for the Court have something in common with Ian Munro’s sense of the competing epistemologies of space at work in the accounting for and presenting of London. Beginning by juxtaposing nomadic and political understandings of the city, he shows at the end of his chapter how the theatre might almost found itself on the movement between the two mutually antagonist epistemological strategies, and in so doing capture aspects of a distinctly fluid, and non-rational, set of urban experiences. Expanding geographically to the level of the nation, Willy Maley identifies an exemplary case study of the “protean” nature of the polemic of Archipelagic identity politics at a key moment in the creation of the multi-national British state. He argues for its importance to all students of the early

modern period, sketching out in particular what it has to say to Cultural Materialist, New Historicist, Deconstructive, Postcolonial, and Animal Studies critics – an importance that is particularly acute, perhaps, to readers from those countries (England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales), as the multi-national British state goes about the business of redefining itself.

Bruce Boehrer's chapter on nature and the non-human is equally explicitly engaged with present politics. It considers the relationship of early modern green sensibility both to modern ecological anxieties and to current attempts in the sociology of science to rethink our relationship with those conjoined twins, technology and politics. Early modern habits of mind, largely religious and anthropocentric, are seen to bear responsibility for aspects of our ecological crisis, but also as shaping and helping our attempts to reset our relationship with the natural world. For Benedict Robinson, Romance itself is a "technology" through which a culture imagines and re-imagines its forms of affective sociability. Within such a sociological approach to literature, the genre, until recently unfashionable, emerges as central to the notion of fictiveness itself. Robinson suggests that the fully fictive worlds of Romance thrive in an early modern period distinguished by imperial expansiveness and growing cross-cultural contacts.

Sociability is often, by contrast, in very short supply within the objects of attention in household studies. Mary Trull looks at some of the ways in which the ideal patriarchal households of early modern domestic theory are challenged by their theatrical depictions. Whether comic or tragic in outcome, social spaces are seen – as they are represented – to be created largely through conflict, and are far more diverse than is generally allowed. As Tolstoy said, "Happy families are all alike; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way" ([1878] 1901). Such a diffusion of ruling authority and creation of a new space of crisis is examined on a far larger scale by Joanna Picciotto, in her discussion of the consequences of the communication revolution taking place in the period. This revolution led to a redistribution of intellectual authority to a previously unseen degree. Examining the use of the metaphor of "the commonwealth of learning," Picciotto argues that this can be usefully analyzed in terms of the "public sphere" – a relatively recent concept coined to describe a cultural phenomenon seen to have emerged in the very late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Picciotto sees the usefulness of such a seemingly anachronistic term to speak to the radical and revolutionary potential that lies ready to be activated within tradition, and which gives tradition its liveliness and relevance. Cultural foundations, it would seem, hold up, until they throw down.

### III

In many of these chapters, the groundbreaking and clear critical narratives with which new areas of disciplinary activity are opened up by new theoretical engagements, or new applications of theory, are later seen to become more diffuse and

nuanced, as they themselves become subject to critique and objection, and better register the complexity of the objects of their study. This often involves a greater recognition of the dynamic interconnections, both among and between objects of study and areas of critical activity – what might be seen in Deleuze’s and Guattari’s terms ([1980] 1988) as the rhizomatic nature both of study and the objects of study within the disciplinary area. The *Handbook* provides good evidence of this: to read a number of chapters is to begin to get a sense of the rather strange and subterranean ways in which different authors share interests, work in discrete but parallel ways, and influence one another.

In Part III, “Practices and Theories,” such movements can be seen particularly in aspects of the chapters’ relationships with chapters from Part I. “Agency and choice” might be read alongside the chapter on authorship, though in Jane Griffiths’s chapter the notion of a “paradoxical” self-authorizing poetic independence arises not through dramatic play but through the play of ludic and multiple textual (and marginal) personae. Or as companion to “religion and the religious turn” there is Timothy Rosendale’s chapter on devotion, which finds in the liturgy of the Book of Common Prayer a shared space of negotiated and dialectical submission. When Joshua Eckhardt argues that the publication of a sonnet is a complicatedly social act, a product not just of stationers and printers, but of those collectors who copied it into their manuscript collections, one can see the presence and pressure of many of Julian Yates’s concerns in “objects and things.” The situation is similar in Mary Lund’s chapter on reading, in which she looks at the methods and purposes of seventeenth-century reading, and suggests a slight move away from the dominant materialist paradigm of the study of the physical nature and circulation of books, by arguing for the imaginative and compositorial importance of the figure of the author as reader.

In both Eckhardt’s and Lund’s chapters, the social and multiple nature of the acts of reading and publication is central, an emphasis that may also be seen in Howard Marchitello’s consideration of the ways in which science studies, and its understanding of both literature and science as social forms of knowledge-producing activity, have reshaped contemporary critical practice by reshaping our understanding of the relationship between early modern science and early modern poetry. The relationship between literary, visual, and the cosmetic arts is of concern to Patricia Phillippy, who draws on second-generation feminist art theory to explore ways in which the early modern English “beauty industry” granted to women, within a performative understanding of identity, a right to self-determination, and a sense of the feminine as constructed not by nature, but by productive act. Angus Vine looks at the recent interest in the relationship between literature and space, the so-called “spatial turn,” and argues for the particular importance of chorography, with its “distinctive narrative style” placing historical events on a geographical axis (415), to the imagination and politics of the age. Nicholas Popper’s chapter enlarges on the ever-increasing importance and number of historical narratives,

seeing the sixteenth century, in its literature and politics, being reshaped by a “rage for history” (380), which produced new patterns of causation and made the past ever more pertinent and politically authoritative within English culture as it looked to deal with present and future concerns.

That these chapters are all, to greater and lesser extents, multi- and interdisciplinary is a rather self-evident observation. What is of more interest is the variety and interest of the transfers that go on as one matter is modeled in terms of another. Not, of course, that such transferring across domains is either novel or distinctive of critical practice. In her chapter on the rhetorics of similitude, Judith Anderson explores the centrality of metaphor to both allegory and analogy. Her explication of its early modern theory and practice shows how it is a trope of constructive change in setting up new ways of seeing (and so of doing) and also how it is characterized, among other qualities, by its respect for difference and avoidance of any “false assertion of identity”; metaphor and its rhetorics emerge as a very delicately poised perceptual balancing act (291). Books may be seen in similar terms. Helen Smith leads us through the many places of book production the better to understand the complicated imaginative acts behind books’ physical embodiment (or, perhaps, to grasp more fully their liveliness, their embookment). The book, with its own shaping structures and disciplines, becomes itself an experimental and cognitive resource. The object is seen once again to integrate and reshape the subjects who use it. One might ask of the book what Montaigne ([1580] 1963) famously asked of his cat: “When I play with my cat, who knows if I am not a pastime to her more than she is to me?” (331). Or note his belief, in a later chapter of the *Essays*, that he had “no more made my book than my book has made me, a book consubstantial with its author” – and note also the religious resonance of that “consubstantial,” pointing as it does towards the intermingling of the spiritual with the material ([1580] 1963, 504).

#### IV

Above all, this is a volume that hopes to be useful. Putting aside the cornucopia of marvelous single-authored volumes that awaits those interested in Renaissance studies, this is the volume I would most like my students to read, cover to cover, to give them a better sense of the kinds of academic work being done at the moment, and what work they might choose to do, and the forms and variety of knowledge and practice that would then be expected of them, and where they might find further resources towards a better understanding of that knowledge and those practices. To that end the authors have been asked to be generous in their citations and to provide, at the close of each chapter, a selection of the five texts they would recommend to be read next.

There have been few such handbooks in the past. Or, to look at that another way, there have been plenty, but they have nearly all tended to take Shakespeare's works as their sole or central object of study. If one elaborated the metaphor of the volume as map offered at the start of this introduction, and saw the volume as a map of England, Shakespeare might be seen as London, and James I's worry, voiced in a 1616 speech, that soon "England will only be London", might be seen to be well on the way to having come to pass (Heal 1990, 119). However, such a Shakespearean London is, in fact, only one part, if by far the largest single part, of a much greater whole. And, of course, if one was going to elaborate the map in such a way, it would have to include Ireland, Scotland and Wales, continental Europe, Asia, the Americas and beyond. This volume leads the reader into that larger archipelagic and European intellectual country, with its own towns and landscapes, in the knowledge that this is where most of those engaged in Renaissance studies do their research. Shakespeare remains, but as a proportionate presence within the volume, reflecting the actual practice of the daily business of the discipline, as opposed to the commercial viability of its various parts.

The constraints of size have meant, of course, that choices have had to be made; in one sense, a simple expansion would have allowed the volume to have been more thoroughly representative. It would have been desirable to have had individual chapters on, for example, writing, law, the Islamic world, high theory and criticism as an area in itself, the impact of cognitive studies, and so on. But it is of the nature of handbooks to be selective. As Willy Maley teasingly reminds us in his chapter, handbooks, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, are books "small enough to be easily portable and intended to be kept close to hand." The present volume already pushes the definition of "portability" hard. The *OED's* definition goes on to note that handbooks are especially books "of religious instruction." Concerning that aspect of the definition this handbook is more equivocal. Readers may note that more dates, of persons and their works, are provided than is usual. In part this is simply another effort to be of use to the reader, but it is also helpful in the way in which it draws attention to what an interestingly multilayered and multitemporal, and challenging, text an academic essay may be, a richness and difficulty into which academic writing is often led by the multilayered and multitemporal nature of the cultural objects of study. Dates of first publication in languages other than English (distinguished from the dates of publication in English) are also given. Again, this is thought to be both useful, and helpful in drawing attention to the European and increasingly global nature of Renaissance Studies. Such details, in a way, represent one aspect of a theoretical engagement handled in the volume's chapters; if one asks the when and what of poems, might it not also help to keep those questions in sight in our academic writing, in asking the when and what of our present practice? Such questions, given their complex and sometimes incompatible answers, militate against notions of instruction.

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Part I

Conditions of Subjectivity



# Gender

*Catherine Bates*

If it was customary even 30 years ago to describe the topic of women and the English Renaissance as “gargantuan” (Woodbridge 1984, 1), then the size into which it has since grown can only defy hyperbole. Indeed, questions of the historical, cultural, and literary role that women played in the period – and the issues of gender politics, and sexuality to which these gave rise – have had a directive, defining, and arguably field-shaping impact on the discipline. It was the women’s movement, of course, and academic feminism of the 1960s and 1970s in particular, that brought the question of gender in Renaissance literature fully out of the closet and positioned it center stage (Greer 1970; Millet 1971; Mitchell 1971; Moi 1985). Since then, the un-self-consciousness with which an earlier critic such as C. S. Lewis could present the literature of the English Renaissance as an almost entirely male preserve – of the 150 authors he listed, 149 were male (Lewis 1954) – has come to stand as a cautionary marker of the distance traveled, never to return. Indeed, it has become something of a rhetorical gesture to cite such older readings – in which Renaissance literature was presented as the depiction of some kind of universal human experience, addressed to and appreciated by a readership blithely generalized as “we” – in order to “measure the full distance” between a world view in which gender was effectively rendered invisible and “the one we inhabit today” (Garner and Sprengnether 1996, 4). This way of looking, in which gender has come to assume its central position in determining questions of canon-formation and the interpretation of literary texts, has depended in large part on the immense work of recovery – undertaken by generations of critics and still, of course, ongoing – by which material written by women hitherto “lost” or considered unworthy of attention has been brought back into view and, by means of scholarly editions, anthologies, and archival resources, made widely accessible (Bogin 1976; Greer 1989; Stevenson and Davidson 2001;

Pulter [1645–1665?] 2014).<sup>1</sup> Since much of this material previously existed only in manuscript, its availability has also contributed significantly to the new bibliography and its important re-negotiation of the relation between manuscript and print in the early modern period, one effect being to revise the very notion of what a “text” might be said to constitute in the first place (e.g. Heale 2012). At the same time, the introduction of material such as recipes, prescriptions, health manuals, commonplace books, letters, translations, personal memoirs, diaries, and religious confessions – alongside what might be identified as more traditionally “literary” material – has, in re-balancing the canon, altered it beyond recognition (Graham *et al.* 1989; Masson and Vaughan 1974; Spurling 1986; Herbert [c.1588–1600] 1998; Moody 1998). The process of recovery, moreover, has extended to the inclusion not only of women as writers but, as part of the larger imperative of establishing a corrective women’s history, to the study of women as readers (e.g., Lucas 1989; Hackett 2000), as playgoers (e.g., Findlay 1999), and as the addressees of and respondents to a culture whose models and prescriptions they may have received and been shaped by but did not necessarily absorb passively or adopt without challenge.

That it was feminism that first put gender decisively at the center of critical attention brought with it, in turn, the necessity for certain accommodations and adjustments. One example that might be cited was the need to balance the importance of extending the canon by including more female writers within it against the competing view that the “author” as such was well and truly dead or at best existed only as a disembodied “author function” (Barthes [1967] 1977; Foucault [1969] 1977). “[O]ne effect of the project to revalorize women’s writing and to reclaim forgotten or neglected texts,” writes Kate Chedgzoy, “has been a reaffirmation – against the grain, as several feminists have noted, of some influential strands of literary theory – of the significance of the author as subject of her own writing” (Chedgzoy, Hansen, and Trill 1996, 1). That is to say, there is a (fundamentally political) decision to be made if not traded between any skepticism that might be harbored toward the notion of an autonomous, sovereign, self-identical, and ontologically stable author, on the one hand, and the merits of celebrating women writers whose previous invisibility or relegation to the margins testified to nothing so clearly as a repressive regime of silence and subordination, on the other. I use this as an example because the issue has been a critical one in feminist studies of gender in the early modern period, where scruples about methodological practice registered from early on. While the hugely important work of recovery serves to restore women to their rightful place in history and to give a voice to what has been silenced for centuries, it can also run the risk (if they are left unexamined) of perpetuating certain assumptions about authorship – notions of autonomy, ownership, privilege, mastery, agency, authority – that had led to canon-formation of the most traditional and institutionalized kind in the first place (Ezell 1993). As Danielle Clarke articulates the dilemma, “[e]ither women can be situated as historical subjects, or we interrogate gender in such a way as to negate not only the specificity of the female subject, but its very possibility” (Clarke and Clarke 2000, 10). The aim of much feminist criticism concerned with issues of gender in the Renaissance has thus been to find a

politically acceptable way of negotiating this double bind: a means by which it is still possible to celebrate women and their writing – and to accord them their due place within literary and cultural history – while at the same time fully acknowledging the constructedness of gender and the evanescence of the author function.

One advantage of shifting the debate from a discussion of “women writers” to one of “women written,” so to speak – that is, to an understanding of gender as an ideological discourse in which the definition, role, and social function of women (not to mention men) is inscribed by means of norms, custom, and law – is that it neatly sidesteps any danger of essentialism. Another benefit, equally important, is that it respectfully acknowledges the limits of recoverability. That is to say, the actual experience of so-called “real” women (or men) in the historical past is manifestly not recoverable. The discourse of gender, however – which can be traced and analyzed in a myriad materials from literary texts to historical documents to cultural practices and events – is not only most definitely recoverable but, more to the point, links the past with the present in an unbroken historical continuum. Contemporary critics (female and male) are no less inscribed within an ideological discourse of gender in the twenty-first century than men and women were in the Renaissance, even if the terms of that discourse may have changed over time. The unalterable otherness of that past can be fully acknowledged and respected, therefore, while the structures that shaped the worldview, experience, and self-understanding of its inhabitants can at the same time be fully scrutinized by critics equipped with all the know-how that issues from being no less shaped by ideological structures themselves, however different those structures might be. The critic’s sense of his or her own “self-fashioning” by the ideological discourses of their own time – discourses within which they live, move, and have their being – is, consequently, a major asset in their analysis and understanding of the past. As Gary Waller noted, this was something that feminist studies of gender in the early modern period acknowledged early on:

this particular kind of feminist criticism is not only determined to discover, revive, and publish writing by Renaissance women, but also to raise questions related to women’s own discourse, the linguistic and discursive structures of women’s writing, and even the gender-specific nature of our own scholarly or critical discourse. (Waller 1985, 238–239)

Seen thus, the question of gender in the early modern period becomes something that can be read – as a discourse inscribed within the inexhaustible material that historians and literary critics continue to unearth from the past, it is perfectly legible – by readers who have every reason to be fully apprised of the mechanics of ideological interpellation themselves. In her now foundational essay, for example, Joan Kelly-Gadol noted that “the relations between the ideology of sex roles and the reality we want to get at are complex and difficult to establish,” not least because “[s]uch views may be prescriptive rather than descriptive” (Kelly-Gadol 1977, 176–177). The point, however, is that prescription and description are both equally “scripted”

and, as such, eminently readable. Only the most naïve of readings would assume that either kind of script could open a window onto “reality,” whatever that is, or somehow make such a thing miraculously accessible centuries later. Rather, those scripts provide the raw material for analyzing the workings of ideology in action: in this case, the ideological discourse of gender. In his study of sex and gender in the Renaissance period – which, as he acknowledges, is heavily indebted to didactic and prescriptive material such as sermons, conduct manuals, and advice literature – the historian Anthony Fletcher writes that “[t]he necessary link between ideology and experience or practice is prescription”, and concludes that “[t]he best hope we have of testing the relationship between prescription and practice in the life and conduct of adult women is through the study, which is beginning to be properly undertaken, of writings by women themselves which are personal and reflective” (Fletcher 1995, 98, 409). Many literary critics would, I think, balk at such a description of “writings by women” – or anyone else, for that matter – and would opt, rather, for the more nuanced version of the job in hand such as that offered, for example, by James Grantham Turner:

The task of the literary historian, then, seems to involve a balancing act between empirical history and a discourse-centered rereading of the past. She appeals to demonstrable historical reality when it proves real violence and injustice, when it supports a suspicious reading of masculine writing and a realistic or transparent reading of the female-authored text. But such documentation must not undermine the fundamental belief that discourse and language play a supremely important role. Consequently, the appeal to context normally involves not archival evidence, but prescriptive treatises, a form of discourse midway between traditionally “literary” and “historical” realms and presumably accessible to both. (Turner 1993, 4–5)

Properly speaking, then, the focus of discussion about gender is not “women” as such but rather ideology: the structures of definition and difference, that is, by which a section of the population, classified according to characteristics of a largely biological and morphological nature, come to be written into and largely erased by the dominant ideological discourse of the time, namely, patriarchy. From this perspective, the object of inquiry becomes a relational one: a question, first, of how a group categorized according to gender comes to be positioned as politically and culturally subordinate, and second of the ways in which individuals categorized as such may (or may not) submit to, negotiate, or contest the various roles and models assigned to them. To Turner’s mind, scholars of the Renaissance still remained “profoundly divided . . . between a history of empowerment and a history of victimization” (7), with some affirmative, proto-feminist studies celebrating ways in which the patriarchy had been overcome in that period, citing examples of “strong” women or high-value cultural discourses such as humanism or Neoplatonism that appeared to prize female virtue and learning (e.g., Dusinberre 1975; Davies 1986; Berry 1989), while others – generally more pessimistic in tone and inclined to take a distinctly skeptical view of such discourses – argued that the patriarchal oppression of women was all too much in evidence and remained, therefore, the legitimate target of

ongoing correction and protest (e.g., Kelly-Gadol 1977; Jardine 1983; Callaghan 1989). For the most part, however, studies of gender in the Renaissance period tend to take a position between these two poles, analyzing ways in which the poles are themselves mutually constitutive, and tracing if not negotiating the dialectical relations that operate between them. Ann Rosalind Jones, for example, proposes a highly mobile mode of analysis that takes on board the entire “range of interpretative positions through which subordinated groups [might] respond to the assumptions encoded into dominant cultural forms and systems of representation”: a gamut that extends from positions of passive non-resistance at one end (an unthinking absorption and reproduction of the cultural *habitus*) to those of forthright and public opposition at the other (a wresting of the ideological message from its dominant frame and re-appropriating it for subversive if not revolutionary effect). Depending on the numerous other factors that affected the Renaissance women writers of her study (education, class, and so forth), Jones demonstrates just “how variously they negotiated their subordination to men’s social power and masculine orders of language”: a flexibility that extends to the literary critic’s own *modus operandi* itself (Jones 1990, 2, 10). Such dialectical reasoning has the advantage of moving away from supposedly fixed constituencies (“men” and “women”) to more abstract considerations of the dominant and subordinate positions through which power operates and within which the very designation of such constituencies is itself a strategic ploy. To be sure, gender comes to be one if not *the* primary instance of how such power relations operate in action – “[o]nce we begin to investigate all relationships of power (‘political’ in its broadest sense),” writes Merry Wiesner, “we find that gender was a central category in the thinking of early modern Europeans” (not to mention moderns) – but thinking about the matter dialectically in this way avoids simply replicating those power relations by presupposing them within the terms of the argument (Wiesner 1993, 252). Such dialectical thinking, moreover, has the added benefit of extending the reach of the topic exponentially. For, as Wiesner concludes (5), if gender remains a key way of signifying relationships of power, then men are no less legitimate an object of study – since they too, after all, were (are) no less immune to the dynamics of domination and subordination, and nor were (are) gender roles any the less prescribed for them – thus justifying, as a corrective to the corrective, the development of what was still, at that time, the relatively new field of “men’s history” (e.g., Breitenberg 1996; Foyster 1999; Shepard 2003).

The critical discourses that, it is probably true to say, have dominated the field of Renaissance studies for the last 30 years – namely new historicism, cultural materialism, and various adjuncts thereof – fairly embraced, popularized, and perfected this dialectical mode of argument, and one of the reasons it has held the critical stage for so long is that it shows early modern culture to be a field of dynamic, fluid, reciprocal, reversible, plural, and constantly changing relationships through which power, far from hardening into fixed or rigid formulations, operates in all directions and at all times by means of flows or, more famously, “circulations” of social energy. As a result, this mode of argument opened up for analysis a capacious, indeed, almost infinitely elastic field in which any aspect of Renaissance culture might be

examined in complex and mobile relation to any other. In the area of gender studies, for example, this dialectical thinking made it possible to move more nimbly between the paradigms of victimization, on the one hand, or empowerment, on the other, so that it no longer became a question of men oppressing women or women defying men but, rather, of individuals – who might line themselves up on one side or the other of the gender divide – freely trading culturally produced and culturally recognized models of “maleness” or “femaleness,” “masculinity” or “femininity,” precisely in order to negotiate those models, whether the effect of that negotiation was to reinforce the status quo or to demonstrate its vulnerabilities, or (not uncommonly) both. Thus, to cite one example that must stand for many, Wendy Wall describes her project in *The Imprint of Gender* as follows:

I first articulate how the new literary marketplace inspired writers and publishers to define reading, writing, and publishing by generating various representations of women. The “feminine,” it seems, often provided the unauthorized ground on which authorship could be established. But in order to prevent the category of “woman” from becoming visible in this work solely as a metaphor for the insecurities of a patriarchal order, I conclude with an exploration of how women writers themselves tackled both the gritty problem of publication and the fact that cultural expressions of that problem relied on women as *tropes*. Gender thus provides a focal point throughout this work for querying the issues of authorship, privacy, and class energized by the spread of print technology. (Wall 1993, 7)

For all this flexibility, however – for all the dizzying possibilities that are opened up for critical analysis by individuals (whether persons or literary personae) being shown to cross gender borders, to assume alternative gender characteristics, or to occupy a multiplicity of possible positions within a constantly mobile field – for all this, in those studies that identify their critical position as broadly new historicist or cultural materialist, a particular model of power relations nonetheless remains stubbornly intact: one that, once the dialectical nature of its functioning has been duly acknowledged, remains thereafter strangely unexamined. Even if, to continue this example, such studies of early modern gender no longer theorize patriarchy in terms of “men” oppressing “women” in any straightforward way, and even if individuals so named are shown to be all too capable of occupying positions of dominance or subordination or both, it does not change the fact that, within this dialectical model of power relations, these positions of domination and subordination remain fixed in polar opposition. Flexible this dialectical model of power relations may be – and it has certainly proved itself thus – but within the terms of its dominant/subordinate binary, those relations are, in being reciprocal and self-constituting, always the same and destined ever to remain so. This model of power – derived from Foucault and ultimately, of course, from Hegel and Marx – may well have opened up for critics a hugely spacious field for analysis but, expansive as it may be, that field remains a thoroughly closed one in which (regardless of what or who occupies them) the positions of dominance and subordination are locked in permanent combat: in the “perpetual battle” that was Foucault’s chosen model for how power should be

conceived (Foucault [1975] 1977, 174). One effect of this circular enclosure is to make that field, spacious as it is, feel at times distinctly claustrophobic, and for the critical operations undertaken within it to run the risk of becoming repetitive, predictable, and ultimately even boring. It is not just that within this model subversion is effectively “contained” – an objection made and dealt with long ago (e.g., Sinfield 1992) – but rather that the entire field of relations, subversive or otherwise, is effectively bounded and enclosed, as if by some un-disprovable law of physics the dialectical structure of dominant and subordinate, master and slave, constituted the sole model for all relations, the sum total for all possible ways in which human interactions might occur.

Although this mode of thinking continues, by and large, to hold sway, alternatives were proposed from the beginning and in particular by critics who were chary of its apparent love affair with “power” and alert to the risk that the dominant/subordinate binary could all too readily be mapped back onto the gender divide and its “perpetual battle” simply entrench the old battle of the sexes or *querelle des femmes* that had been the object of critical inquiry in the first place (in Wall’s case, for example, the “feminine” is still identified with weakness and vulnerability, even if it is a trope that male or female writers might utilize or reject). Critics who are anxious to avoid such duplications, by contrast, draw for the most part on (generally French) schools of poststructuralist, psychoanalytic, and feminist thinking that sink their philosophical roots in Nietzsche and Freud as much as Hegel and Marx. For Alice Jardine, for example, whose work draws in particular on Derrida, Kristeva, and Barthes, a wholesale “redefinition of the dialectic” and a thorough dismantling or deconstruction of its mode of argument is a political necessity, for – since negotiating, moving between, or even reversing the stated positions of dominant and subordinate have no effect on the system’s overall “economy of violence” – then that systemic violence can only be tackled by means of a resolutely “non-dialectical” mode of thought in which positions are no longer conceptualized in binary or oppositional terms (Jardine 1985, 120, 139). Naturally enough, a logical consequence of this move is to eliminate the question of gender altogether – or at the very least to “throw both sexes, and their sexual organs, into a metonymic confusion of gender... [in which both] ‘men’s’ and ‘women’s’ bodies become truly cut up, fragmented bodies” (139) – a step which has predictable consequences for any feminist thinking that takes the existence of women as its starting point. Indeed, as Marguerite Waller illustrates in a reading of *Richard III*, the modes of feminist and deconstructionist inquiry prove to be fundamentally incompatible with one another, or asynchronous at best. For her, “the dream of a female self that appears to itself as autonomous and authoritative as the male selves of Shakespeare’s Lancastrian and Yorkist courts would sustain rather than undermine the kinds of position the male characters in the play are portrayed as occupying,” for it is precisely such an essentializing and ultimately illusory discourse – a belief that the self is a given (can be “strong,” grounded, invincible, and so forth) rather than a rhetorical construct that is equally prone to deconstruction – that brings about the destruction of Lady Anne and Richard alike (Waller 1986, 166). As Danielle Clarke similarly observes, the

difficulty of “regarding the notion of difference, as used gynocritically as opposed to deconstructively, is that it leaves the very binarism it is designed to displace or unsettle wholly intact” (Clarke and Clarke 2000, 8).

The accommodations and adjustments between feminism and gender studies that I mentioned earlier, therefore, can, when it comes down to it, be distinctly uncomfortable if not acute. Choosing to analyze the discourse of gender ideology as opposed to writing by “women” may solve the problems entailed in too pat an assumption of a sovereign, integral, writing self, but the dialectical thinking that makes this solution possible at the same time risks enshrining the dominant/subordinate binary and with it – since gender has proved a/the key means by which that binary has operated historically – the oppression of women. The most “feminist” position of all, therefore, would arguably be to opt for what promises to be the most effective way of abolishing that dialectical thinking for ever – namely, deconstruction – even if the latter necessarily brings with it the elimination of gender as a category of difference (in which case, feminism and women would also disappear as valid categories of debate). This is, admittedly, a high price to pay, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick is not alone in fearing that to split feminism apart from gender would be to ignore the fact that “gender analysis per se became possible only under the pressure of the most pointed and political feminist demand”: a political demand that undeniably continues and needs to be made (Sedgwick 1992, 272). Nevertheless, it is the development of queer theory (something she, of course, is largely responsible for leading) that has pointed the way out of these various dilemmas and double binds perhaps most effectively: its rethinking of the relation between sex and gender showing that the latter need not be conceptualized only in binary terms and that political engagement – the most sincere desire to uphold the rights of the “subordinate” – can therefore be preserved intact while the self-made trap of perpetuating the oppression of a definitionally gendered group can be avoided (Butler 1990; Halperin 1990; Lauretis 1991; Sedgwick 2008. See also Jagose 1996). For her part, Sedgwick effects this solution by combining a default “Marxist feminism” with what she calls “radical feminism” – which in turn includes “French” feminism, itself an amalgam of “deconstructive and/or Lacanian-oriented feminism” (Sedgwick 1985, 11) – and one might say that it is the influx of the latter that makes a break from those otherwise endlessly dialectical “circulations” of power possible. Similarly, as Bruce Smith notes, where new historicism analyzes the ideology of a given historical period by reading its cultural texts (with a view to recording and understanding that ideology), it still operates, by and large, “within traditional discourse.” Queer theory, by contrast, takes a deconstructive approach that analyzes how ideology comes to be constructed in the first place (with a view to exposing the manipulations and manifest contradictions internal to that ideology), and for that reason “establishes an adversarial position ‘outside’ traditional discourse” from the outset (Smith 1994, x). Although Smith seeks to combine both approaches in his own work, it is clear that, politically, the latter methodology carries the more radical agenda of the two, and it is this agenda that promises, in turn, to lead toward a re-appraisal of the prevailing view of Renaissance culture that has become otherwise all but institutionalized



(Greenblatt 1980; 1988; Ferguson, Quilligan and Vickers 1986; Strier and Dubrow 1988; Veese 1989). Richard Strier, for example – who has his own frustrations with the way the trademark dialectical argument that new historicism has made its own appears to stifle any bid for perversion or radicalism that might appear in Renaissance texts with a countering anxiety and conservatism – notes that the parallel field of gay and queer studies has served as a happy exception to this rule (Strier 2011). And, if this is the case, it is largely because deconstruction has been the strategy of choice in those studies of Renaissance sexuality and gender that have contributed to queer theory and that have kept in sight, at the far end, the radical possibility that gender might one day disappear from the critical and ideological lexicon for good. The self-confessed goal of Gregory Bredbeck's project, for example, is "not so much to establish the place of homoeroticism in a critical practice as it is to use homoeroticism as a way of forging a critical practice that finally effaces the manifest validity of gendered and sexualized meaning altogether"; the aim being, however idealistic or still far-off, an imagined future that might be "free from the tyranny of gendered meaning in general" (Bredbeck 1991, 22, 23).

That studies of gender in the early modern period should arrive at or at least look ahead to a point at which gender would all but disappear as a category of meaning may seem a surprising outcome, but – when competing theories of gender are submitted to rigorous analysis and the various compromises or self-contradictions to which they can give rise put to the test – it is a logical result. In addition to Sedgwick's celebrated analysis of homosocial relations, Judith Butler's work on gender melancholy has been a crucial intervention here. Her argument is extraordinarily rich and subtle, but put most briefly her analysis bases itself on the view that gender formation, such as it is, emerges from complex processes of identification and desire (Butler 1990, 1993). The Oedipus complex serves as the starting point: that is to say, the "complete" version of the complex as Freud came to theorize it in *The Ego and the Id* (1923), whereby the familiar scene in which the child comes to identify with the parent of the same sex and to desire the parent of the opposite sex is argued to exist alongside an alternative scene in which the child simultaneously identifies with the parent of the opposite sex and desires the parent of the same sex. The former is said to constitute the "positive" version of the complex insofar as it serves the ideological end of heteronormative gender construction (and to that extent is socially approved), while the latter is said to constitute the "negative" version insofar as its counter-identifications work in the opposite direction (and to that extent is for the most part socially tabooed). A basic contradiction internal to the "positive" version, however, means that its "negative" counterpart is always in play, for where desire for the parent of the opposite sex might meet with the demands of heteronormative gender construction, it also comes up flat against the incest taboo. The "positive" complex, that is to say, requires the "boy-to-be" (although this gendered outcome is thereby thrown into question) to direct desire toward a maternal object that the injunction against incest at the same time requires him to renounce, while the same fate awaits the paternal object-choice of the "girl-to-be" (a gendered outcome now no less in doubt). For Butler, these contradictory requirements are typically met by means of a

melancholy compromise. The desired parent of the opposite sex is duly renounced but it is not completely parted with (as in the supposedly “healthy” process of mourning in which a loss is eventually accepted and can be replaced by substitutes). Rather, through a process closer to the contrastingly pathological melancholia, that lost object of desire is somehow held on to – preserved, taken into, absorbed by, installed within, in a word, identified with – thus opening up a permanent absence or lack within the subject that, un-mourned, un-substitutable, and therefore incurable, bears all the hallmarks of melancholia. Thus, if becoming a “boy” requires identifying with the father and desiring the mother, then the demand that the desired mother also be renounced is met by means of identifying with her – and vice versa in the case of the “girl” – contingencies that have already been fully prepared for in the form of the “negative” complex. In this tortuous model of heteronormative gender formation, then, male gender identity seems to rest on the simultaneous existence of a female-identification, while female gender identity, conversely, rests on a male-identification.

While allowances must be begged for so drastic a foreshortening of Butler’s thesis, its predication of identity on something that is absent or other clearly signals its allegiance to the anti-foundationalist principles of French psychoanalytic (specifically, Lacanian and Laplanchean) thought. These principles put paid to any sense that a stable or “consolidated” gender identity – female or male – is something that might be achieved since, as Lynn Enterline writes, “[t]he only mechanisms available for negotiating the losses necessary to the cultural regulation of desire produce a fissured, contradictory ‘ego’ that saves itself, maintains itself, at the price of the very unity and disposition demanded of it” (Enterline 1995, 23). At the same time, of course, these psychoanalytic principles also definitively deconstruct as a sentimental illusion the notion of an authentic or “centered” self and thereby sweep away the idea that identity per se might lay claim to any kind of ontological stability. In other words, as Butler is at pains to point out, there is no “voluntarist” subject lurking behind the free play of gender roles: no at-bottom male or female subject who, for a reason or a season, might take the trope of the “feminine” upon him- or herself (to continue with this example), the assumption being – as the model of ventriloquism, fashionable in some quarters of Renaissance gender studies, could appear to imply – that they would revert to their natural self thereafter (Harvey 1992; North 2003). Similarly, identity cannot be grounded or stabilized by any reference to the body. On the contrary, far from serving to guarantee some kind of fixed and authentic gender identity, appeals to the “body beneath” those transvestite disguises that appear so regularly in Renaissance texts more often than not prove nothing of the kind but “only the limited relevance of empirical facts” (Schwarz 2000, 181, referring to Pyrocles’ disguise as an Amazon in Sidney’s *Arcadia* [1581]; see also Stallybrass 1992). Congruent with this, moreover, the model of identity formation here described also stretches the gender binary to breaking point and with it, in turn, the dialectical thinking that is its traditional companion. Thus, while it may appear from the preceding paragraph – with its references to boy and girl, mother and father, male and female, positive and negative, hetero- and homosexual – as if the

gender binary has been well and truly reinstated, such references serve the purposes of explanation only (and make the risks of too glib a summary all too manifest). In fact, the “mother” and “father” misleadingly presented there as the objects with which the subject-to-be identifies are themselves the product of no less complex and convoluted identificatory processes. A more accurate account of the case would state that what the subject-to-be actually identifies with are the equally enigmatic and asymmetric identifications (positive/negative, male/female, hetero/homosexual, and so forth) of the beings socially marked as its parents: such that the “mother” with whom a “boy-to-be” might identify, for example (being the product of her own “negative” and “positive” complexes), would include, among other things, a “lesbian” identification with her “father”; the latter in turn being an amalgam of his cross-identifications with his own parents, they with theirs, and so on ad infinitum (Bates 2007). In these circumstances, the hope that anyone might achieve a stable gender identity of any kind is remote indeed. That chimera, rather, disappears down ever receding and exponentially branching paths that effectively dissolve for good binary distinctions that might be kept in play in a bid for some kind of temporary theoretical coherence so long as it is recognized that a scene of radical gender incoherence is, logically, where that theory ends up.

### What to Read Next

Davis (1998); Gold, Miller, and Platter (1997); Knoppers (2009); Poska, Couchman, and McIver (2013); Sanchez (2011).

### Note

1 See also the *Perdita Project*. This database comprises over two hundred manuscript texts by women writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries: <http://www.amdigital.co.uk/m-collections/collection/perdita-manuscripts-1500-1700/> (accessed March 3, 2017).

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## Love and Friendship

*James M. Bromley*

Like many Renaissance texts that have been tagged as pastoral, Lady Mary Wroth's original pastoral drama *Love's Victory* (c. 1620) delivers its social critique by imagining modes of life that are impossible or unthinkable within the prevailing order of early modern culture.<sup>1</sup> Early modern writers readily acknowledged that pastoral was politically engaged with the very culture from which its *locus amoenus*, the idyllic conventional setting of pastoral literature, seemed so removed. In *The Defence of Poesy*, Wroth's uncle Sir Philip Sidney wrote that poets "mak[e] things either better than Nature bringeth forth, or quite anew, forms such as never were in nature," and that pastoral "under the pretty tales of wolves and sheep can include the whole considerations of wrongdoing and patience" (Sidney [1595] 1983, 108; 127).<sup>2</sup> George Puttenham's view, in *The Art of English Poesy*, that pastoral "treat[s] by figure matters of greater importance than the loves of Tityrus and Corydon" echoes that of Sidney on the political engagement of pastoral via figuration (Puttenham [1589] 2007, 128). Wroth's pastoral drama, however, does not exclude love as a matter of political import in itself, but rather Wroth insists on politicizing the lack of agency that early modern women have over their intimate lives, a subject of significant critical interest in early modern literary studies (see Dolan 2008; Quilligan 2005; Sanchez 2011; and Schwarz 2011). As Barbara Lewalski writes, *Love's Victory* "challenges the norms both of the genre and of Jacobean society in its emphasis on female agency, egalitarianism, female friendships, and community" (Lewalski 1993, 297). In this pastoral drama, according to Lewalski, Wroth critiques the limited affective possibilities for women by conjuring a community in which "friendships within and across gender ... are strong enough to survive even rivalries in love" (Lewalski 1993, 299–300). Many readers of the play have also found in it this oppositional optimism; Wroth is seen to imagine women enjoying everything they want but cannot have

within early modern patriarchy: agency, friendship, choice of husbands (Miller 1996, 210–212; Roberts 1997; Swift 1989; Wynne-Davies 2008). From this perspective, the titular victory in the play is a victory for women in love.

Venus is the first to use the phrase “love’s victory” in the play in act 1, scene 1. The goddess of Love is clear that the human characters must recognize her sovereignty before she will permit this new order for women in love to emerge. Margaret McLaren argues that the play looks back with nostalgia to Elizabeth’s reign as a time of greater empowerment for women because of the female monarch (1990, 285–286). In addition to oversimplifying the complicated and sometimes tense relationship between the Sidney family and Elizabeth, this argument overlooks the way Venus orders the suffering of the female characters as a precondition of the happy ending afforded to a subset of those characters, which is hardly a depiction of a female sovereign benevolent to other women. Joyce Green MacDonald rightly cautions us that this pastoral community is contingent: “the play’s somber understanding of courtship’s perils – loveless marriages, surrender of independence, loss of reputation – works against understanding it as a triumphalist feminist fable of women’s romantic empowerment” (MacDonald 2011, 455). MacDonald goes on to suggest that this optimism about alternatives for women in the text derives from an ahistorical approach to the play, and she urges readers to engage with Wroth more “as a Renaissance woman poet” and “less as the invention and the property of our own times” (MacDonald 2011, 460). I would add to this caution that by reading the play in light of work on the history of sexuality we can see that any romantic empowerment that there may be for women in this text is located entirely within the realm of heterosexual coupling. Mapping the historical status of same-sex desire for men and women, scholars in the field of early modern sexuality studies have shown that while the regime of organizing sexual identity around gender of object choice that is dominant in modern western culture is the result of a historical process that largely post-dates the early modern period, early modern England nevertheless had its own way of parsing the affordances and anxieties generated by same-sex relations (Bray 1982; Foucault [1976] 1978).<sup>3</sup> Yet even within a culture that has been shown to recognize, albeit in an asymmetric way for men and women, the value of same-sex alliances, Wroth’s play shows women and men suffering from foreclosure of the “homoerotic space” that Stephen Guy-Bray persuasively shows was opened up for men in Renaissance pastorals written by men (Guy-Bray, 2002). Wroth’s play represents female agency and same-sex friendship for men and women as permissible only insofar as they serve to extend heterosexual coupling’s dominance over the intimate sphere, the set of affective relations valued and narrated as providing access to a good life and therefore protected within a culture. In this reading, “love’s victory” is the victory of Venus and Cupid in asserting the sovereignty of the heterosexual couple. Thus criticism of the play that views it as celebrating new possibilities for women assumes the very connection between heterosexual relations and agency that Wroth’s play shows as a construction that marginalizes queer relations.

Though I second MacDonald’s skepticism about the victories for women that the play affords, I think one can arrive at such skepticism without policing our



relationship to the past. One need not choose between situating Wroth in her historical context and reading her work in light of present-day political concerns; historicists have long acknowledged that our access to the past is mediated by our situatedness in the present. What is more, this false choice places similar limits on the forms of desire and identification that I see the play critiquing. The strict alterity that MacDonald posits between past and present assumes that the present has fully superseded the past and that both the past and present are self-identical, a conception of historical time that does not allow Wroth to either be at odds with her own times or defamiliarize the present. In her essay, "Context Stinks!" Rita Felski (2011) argues for a more supple form of contextualization: "we cannot close our eyes to the historicity of artworks, and yet we sorely need alternatives to seeing them as transcendently timeless on the one hand, and imprisoned in their moment of origin on the other" (575). Rather than replace a "triumphalist feminist fable" with an equally triumphalist quest for the real, empirical Wroth, I would suggest we approach her work in ways that allow us to shuttle between past and present so as to bring into relief the political stakes that surrounded a text's generation alongside those that might animate a reader in the present. Such an approach, as it revises heterocentric readings of the play, is willing to risk anachronism in order to take up present-day concerns, informed by queer theory, and to take up Wroth's relationship to inchoate historical processes and her literary and familial milieu, informed by the history of sexuality and literary history, in order to refract the one through the other.

What MacDonald identifies as the perils of courtship are the very things that Wroth shows are instrumental to consolidating intimacy around heterosexual coupling, a process that, as I have elsewhere argued, was underway in the early modern period and whose effects we still live with and indeed have expanded due in part to the focus on extending marital rights for same-sex partners in gay and lesbian politics (Bromley, 2012). That is, I understand the play as dramatizing and demystifying heteronormativity, a term that offers a useful shorthand for the hegemonic operations of social pressure and inducement around heterosexual coupling in the early modern period but which is ahistorical insofar as the normative derives from nineteenth-century statistical analysis of populations (Berlant and Warner 1998; Lochrie 2005, 1–26). For queer theorists, this term has not only allowed for an analysis of the ways that eroticism is regulated in arenas that do not seem particularly erotic, but it has also motivated an account of the way that the fight for same-sex marriage represents a shift away from innovations in non-marital, non-monogamous forms of intimate life practiced in queer sexual culture and has even also advanced through the explicit abjection of such practices (Warner 1999). Wroth's play depicts how queer affections are cast as beyond acceptability and yet constitutively necessary to the norm.

The play opens with Venus lamenting the ingratitude of the people of Arcadia, and she and her son hatch a plan to impose suffering on Arcadia's lovers so that they might remember and respect the power of these deities. Venus proclaims to her son that "grief is sufficient to declare thy might,/And in thy mercy, glory will shine bright" (1.1.21–22). Venus and Cupid will impose suffering that, when they mercifully end it, will put the lovers in their debt. The causality, from suffering, to mercy,

to obligation, in Venus's plan and throughout the play exposes how "love's victory," which I am identifying as the ascent of heterosexual coupling over other relations, occurs via the manufacturing of crisis. In *Love's Victory*, heterosexual coupling's constant state of crisis is a ruse of power that allows it to extend its hegemony because queer affections are enlisted to resecure the always-under-duress heterosexual couple form in exchange for recognition as extant but always lesser, a kind of compromised legibility. Thus, even as the legible, normative heterosexual intimate life narratives in the play are repeatedly shown to be unsatisfying and unpleasant, alternatives that are not implicated in the incorporation of characters into the heterosexual order are difficult to find. The irony of Wroth's title becomes even clearer, as I hope to show, when the play is read in connection with recent debates about the political limits of utopianism within queer theory. This debate has pivoted around whether the future temporality of utopianism, or indeed of politics more generally, is necessarily grounded in reproduction and therefore inimical at a fundamental level to queer concerns (Caserio *et al.* 2006; De Lauretis 2011; Edelman 2004; Halberstam 2011; Muñoz 2009; Snediker 2009). If so, then entrance into the political sphere in any socially affirming way, including reading strategies that find affirmations of queerness in otherwise hostile contexts, may nevertheless require queers to accede to the heteronormative terms in which politics is currently understood. Informed by this view, we can see Wroth, then, not as participating in the celebration of "love's victory" in this play, but rather exploring similar political limits by depicting utopian queer alternatives, when legible, becoming instrumental to heterosexual coupling's saturation of the intimate sphere.

When we meet the shepherds who inhabit this play's *locus amoenus*, Philisses laments that he loves a woman whom he thinks his friend Lissius desires. Philisses seems to choose friendship over heterosexual love: "then [than] wrong him once, myself I will neglect" (1.2.32). Given that this conflict opens the part of the play that involves the shepherds, it is not clear whether this privileging of friendship over romantic love is the neglect of which the goddess of love complained in the play's opening scene, or part of Cupid's work that Venus's complaint sets in motion, given that it is a source of suffering. Whichever is the case, however, Philisses's resolution to "in secret ... my passion hide" (1.2.33) violates a fundamental tenet of idealized friendship, running from Aristotle to Montaigne and Francis Bacon, that the friend is another self with whom all is shared (Hutson 1994, Stewart 1997, Andreadis 2001, Shannon 2002, Bray 2003). Knowing that something is bothering his friend, Lissius pleads with Philisses to share his burden, and his plea registers the threat secrecy poses to their friendship:

O, plainly deal with me! My love hath been  
 Still firm to you; then let us not begin  
 To seem as strangers. If I have wronged you, speak,  
 And I'll forgiveness ask; else do not break  
 That band of friendship of our long-held love,  
 Which did these plains to admiration move. (2.2.1–6)

According to Lissius, at one time in the past, the pastoral landscape responded encouragingly to this same-sex bond. In his first scene, however, Philisses disavows the pleasures of the *locus amoenus* as “vain showers” (1.2.19) because of his unfulfilled heterosexual desire. While Philisses claims to put friendship first, this conflict with his heterosexual desire for Musella causes him to act in ways that undermine friendship. He rejects the history proffered by Lissius as well as a generic convention of pastoral – in this case the pathetic fallacy in which the landscape celebrates and sustains same-sex desire.

The threat friendship poses to heterosexual love turns out not to be real, since Lissius does not even love Musella, but it is no less instrumental for being unfounded. Wroth places the total sharing meant to characterize idealized friendship in service to heterosexual love, for soon after Philisses confesses his love for Musella to his friend, he asks to know whether Lissius loves her too. Not only can Lissius reveal that he does not love her as part of idealized friendship’s requirement for total communication, but he can also advise his friend to reveal his love to her because, as Lissius reports, “she speaks to me, but for your sake” (2.2.41). This line suggests that she is friendly with Lissius only because she is in love with his friend. When Philisses asks to reconfirm Lissius’s disavowal of any romantic interest in Musella, Lissius proclaims that he wishes nothing “but her friendship, which I will require/From both [Musella and Philisses]” (2.2.57). Philisses responds that “thus assured, that friendship shall remain” (2.2.59). These lines appear to restore the faithfulness of friends, and they even potentially expand friendship into the controversial realm of cross-sex friendships. Yet Lissius’s friendship with Musella exists only in the context of Musella’s love for Philisses, a rather instrumental and one-sided sort of friendship. Moreover, Philisses’s “thus assured” signals that their friendship was conditional, predicated on Lissius’s not having interest in Musella, or vice versa, in contrast to his earlier proclamations of selflessness on behalf of his friend. Their friendship takes a back seat to Philisses’s love of Musella, and Wroth turns the narrative’s attention to the struggles of the heterosexual couple.

After this exchange with Philisses, Wroth shows Lissius’s incorporation into the heterosexual order by way of crisis. In this scene, Lissius reveals that he loves Philisses’s sister, Simeana, and, mirroring Lissius’s friendly aid to heterosexual coupling, Philisses vows, “If with my sister I but power have,/She shall requite you” (2.2.53–54). Lissius, however, begins the play scorning love as folly. Lissius’s queer scorn of love becomes, by the second act, an obsession for Venus. Yet it is not enough for Venus that Lissius ends up in love with Simeana and has to eat his scornful words. Instead, he must experience love in the way that Philisses defines it, as “a pain which yet doth pleasure bring” (2.1.94). Venus and Cupid test Lissius to try the mettle of his ex-queer conversion. When he and Simeana fall out over Climeana, who loves Lissius but whom he does not love, Musella pledges to intervene on his behalf, echoing Philisses’s friendship in service to heterosexuality in crisis. We discover that their row began because Arcas, the shepherd who serves as the play’s villain for interfering in the various love plots, saw Lissius trying to comfort Climeana after letting her down easily and told Simeana to provoke her jealousy. As Musella reminds

Simeana, “’Twas but his duty kindly once to speak/To her, who for him would her poor heart break./Would you not think it sin quite to undo/A silly maid with scorn!” (4.1.255–258). The unsociable nature of heterosexual coupling informs Simeana’s desire that Lissius be as callous to another dejected woman as she herself was when she bandied words with Climeana over Lissius in act 3, scene 2. The hurt of other kindnesses provokes the crisis that authenticates love, for this conflict allows Lissius to appear to Simeana as “the truest sign of woe” in order to effect their reconciliation (4.1.291). Jealousy is not a bug but a feature of Venus’s rule.

It is not just heterosexual coupling that Venus imposes on the shepherds and shepherdesses in Arcadia, then; the regulation of affection is so strict that even serial monogamy is unacceptable. Women bear the brunt of this intolerance in the play. For example, Dalina’s marriage to Rustic is generally seen as a punishment for her fickleness in love. Climeana loved another before Lissius, but he deceived her. Rather than sympathize with her plight, Simeana says that unlike Climeana, she did not previously love another, and therefore her own love for Lissius is more authentic (3.2.119–122). Wroth explores the problem of what a woman should do following a rejection in love, such as the one Climeana experiences, in her depiction of Silvesta’s resolve to remain chaste. Like Lissius, Silvesta begins the play rejecting Venus’s sovereignty, but does so in terms of apostasy. She will begin to serve Diana now, “Though service once to Venus I did owe,/Whose servant then I was and of her band” (1.2.86–87). Though Silvesta calls out “Love’s changing and blind foolery” in much the same way Lissius calls upon Cupid in scorn, Silvesta is never the subject of any of Venus or Cupid’s diatribes (1.2.89). This might suggest that she will be exempt from Venus’s rule, and perhaps we are supposed to read her devotion to chastity as less threatening or nobler than Lissius’s devotion to friendship.

We find out, however, that Silvesta’s devotion to chastity emerges from her rejection by Philisses, and instead of loving someone else, such as the Forester who pines after her, she leaves the fields to join Diana’s band in the forest. Wroth’s representation of Silvesta’s chastity reinforces the impossibility of “kindling an old fire” (3.2.116), and the playwright depicts this as a norm that governs the intimate sphere in Arcadia. Musella rather smugly sings to Silvesta:

Chastity, you thus commend,  
Doth proceed but from Love’s end.  
And if Love the fountain was  
Of your fire,  
Love must Chastity surpass  
In desire.  
Love lost, bred your chastest thought,  
Chastity by Love is wrought. (3.1.17–24)

Chastity here is reconceived as derivative and thus inferior to love, and the rest of the play sustains this subordination. This is not a particularly friendly thing for Musella to say, not only because Musella is loved by the man who rejected Silvesta, but

because this hierarchized division between chastity and love introduces a wedge of inequality and difference into their friendship. Wroth, then, cleverly attaches a revision of female affiliation to this subordination of chastity, and shows two threats to heterosexual coupling being neutralized at once. Even when Silvesta asserts her friendship to Musella (despite the latter's snide remarks about chastity), such assertion comes in the context of Musella's confession of her love for Philisses. Silvesta says to her, "I do love you, nor will help deny,/That lies in me to bring your care to end;/Or service which to your content may tend" (3.1.50–52).

This service will indeed be tendered since Silvesta is integral to the plot to get Rustic to renounce his claim to Musella so that she can marry Philisses. Even though Silvesta has pledged herself to Diana's service, Venus claims Silvesta as "my instrument ordained" when Philisses and Musella revivify (5.7.71). Further complicating her devotion to Diana and reinforcing her subordination to Venus, Silvesta, having previously rebuffed the Forester's desire to keep her in his sight as threatening to her vow of chastity, now offers the Forester her "chaste love," a phrase she has also just used in reference to Philisses and Musella (5.7.99, 97). Even if we are to understand the relation between Silvesta and the Forester as sexless, Silvesta's repetition of the phrase collapses the difference between perpetual virginity and marital chastity at the expense of the former. This difference was a flashpoint in Protestant writing against Catholic celibacy, which argued that married persons should be considered chaste even if they were not virgins as long as they had the proper attitude toward sexual pleasure – specifically that it not be enjoyed too much or for its own sake but instead for procreation. Early modern scholars, such as Theodora Jankowski (2000), have argued that perpetual virginity was an oppositional, even queer stance in relation to the Protestant elevation of marriage via chastity. Yet Silvesta's attempt to make a queer world that is "free and untouched of thought but chastity" (1.2.124) is undermined as that world is evacuated of its erotic, ethical, and political difference from the world of heterosexual coupling. When Climeana says to Silvesta that "Venus now hath bought/Their future time," the words apply not only to Philisses and Musella (5.3.24–25). Venus and heterosexual coupling pre-empt queer world-making by co-opting the utopian temporality of the future.

Queer theorists have debated the political efficacy of the kind of queer world-making that in *Love's Victory* is interrupted by the spectacular staging of heterosexual coupling's fragility and the demand for queer support. Utopian and reparative political modes seek a queerer world in the future, sometimes wrenching queerness from contexts highly inimical to it for the sake of queer survival, as Eve Sedgwick has discussed in her work on reparative reading (Sedgwick 2003, 123–152). In *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, Lee Edelman argues that the Child, a totalizing fantasy of social reproduction, forms the horizon of such future-oriented politics, and it by definition excludes non-reproductive queer sexualities at the same time as it compels queers into allegiance with it as a predicate for entry into the political domain itself. Rather than find a place within that horizon, Edelman argues that there is an ethical dimension to queerness "accepting its figural status as

resistance to the viability of the social” (Edelman 2004, 3). More recently, Edelman has linked this argument with an analysis of how optimism and repair are insufficient as bases for politics because the alternatives that might be activated to bring about a queerer world “still remain rooted in the willful management of affective intensities” (Berlant and Edelman 2014, 9). That is, such alternatives seek to make a world in which queer selves can thrive, rather than undoing subjectivity itself, and according to Edelman, subjecthood entails a defensive position that would reject, misrecognize, or domesticate forms of eroticism that threaten the self’s continuity and coherence (Berlant and Edelman 2014, 8–9).

Wroth dramatizes something quite similar in terms of the interconnectedness of selfhood and erotic regulation. In the play, Venus’s sovereignty over love subjects the lovers to various painful travails, but when they acknowledge that “Love can in all spirits reign” they are granted renewed status as subjects (1.4.30). Wroth connects subject formation and subjection to the heterosexual order when Venus insists that “our heavenly power/Cannot their strength, but even themselves devour” (1.1.5–6), a formulation that seems to say that Venus is powerless but really means that Venus’s power can sap the scorers of not only their strength but also their subjectivity. In act 2, scene 3, Venus’s priests, acknowledging the might of Cupid, warn against scorning love by writing satiric lines because “if you do, you will but frame/words against yourselves” (2.3.14–15). Such lines ostensibly refer to those who, like Lissius, scorn love only to find themselves in love, but the priests also gesture toward the mechanisms of heteronormative control – critiquing heterosexual desire is tantamount to writing against the legibility of the self. Wroth is so often identified within literary history as having cleared a space for female authorship in the early modern period when the available models for authorial identity were mostly male. Here, however, Wroth locates the limits of authorial selfhood as congruent with heterosexuality, even though many early modern male authors claimed a space of lyric authority out of same-sex desire (Guy-Bray 2006). In *Love’s Victory*, any written or spoken threat to the dominance of heterosexual coupling will amount to “lines/Where [Cupid’s] good, and your ill, shines,” for such threats produce the crisis that pre-empts queer alternatives. Lissius’s scorn for the follies of love, Silvesta’s proclaimed devotion to chastity, and even Arcas’s gossip are all spoken forms of threat that resecure the priority of heterosexual coupling and Venus’s sovereignty. Such detractions must be replaced by paeans to love, despite the clearly sadistic nature of Venus and Cupid’s rule. Venus ties the agency of the shepherds and shepherdesses to propagandizing on behalf of heterosexual desire, as she instructs Cupid to “set [them] at liberty again, to tell/Thy might and clemency, which doth excel” (4.2.11–12). Wroth plays implicitly on the way that subjecthood can paradoxically entail both subordination and agency, and she represents being subject to the heterosexual order as a necessary precondition for being the subject of one’s own actions and statements. Venus commands the lovers into subjecthood in a future of sovereign heterosexual coupling, and their being and speaking would have no meaning outside of such a future. Thus the tethering of being and futurity gives force to her warning and to the hegemony of heterosexual desire.

The way that co-opting the future secures heteronormativity can also be seen in the play's treatment of death. Lissius's refusal of the folly of love, "I'll none of this, I'll sooner seek my grave" (1.2.68), illustrates Lee Edelman's argument that queerness is called to figure the death drive of the social, or "the negativity opposed to every form of social viability" (Edelman 2004, 9) insofar as Venus seeks to shape what constitutes social viability into a totality. When Silvesta vows, "I/Will rescue her or for her sake will die" (5.3.17–18), Lissius's earlier queer preference for death over heterosexual love becomes rewritten in Silvesta's words not as a sign of female same-sex desire in itself or as a signal of her membership in Diana's band, but as a female alliance securing heterosexual ends. Furthermore, through the death and revivification of Musella and Philisses, the plot that allows them to get around Musella's impending enforced nuptials to Rustic, Venus fosters the heterosexual appropriation of the queer death drive. When Musella and Philisses are thought to be dead, Silvesta says she will be willing to submit to the death penalty for having provided the couple with the fatal concoction: "who would dying fly," she asks, "that here beheld love and love's tragedy" (5.4.71–72). This avowed member of Diana's band strangely would not want to live in a world in which heterosexual coupling did not take precedence over all other considerations. The foreclosure on death as a queer alternative is further reinforced when Venus denies Arcas's request for death over perpetual shame for his anti-heterosexual gossiping (5.7.152–154). The ethical space for queer martyrdom in opposition to heteronormativity is made unavailable. That is, these characters are dissociated from their oppositionality to the socially viable, as Venus defines it, by negating their negativity, reframing their desires for death as affirmation of the social even as those desires are blocked.

Yet Wroth is not only thinking about the way heteronormativity co-opts the future in this play. She is also writing about the unavailability of alternatives from the past. The heterosexualization of the past is part of Venus's opening speech. She complains that the shepherds and shepherdesses "grow to scorn our will" (1.1.2). The word "grow" here suggests that Wroth wants us to understand that the characters were once under Venus's subjection and have drifted away. Similarly, Cupid says his goal is to make the characters suffer so that he "may [his] honour touched again repair" (1.1.25). This use of the word "repair" is interesting because it indicates that queerness is not the only thing that can have a reparative relation with the past, and that an important part of heterosexual dominance is its "repairing" of the past to make heterosexuality seem universal and timeless. Wroth frames the action of the play as Venus and Cupid restoring a past in which all bowed to the sovereignty of heterosexual coupling. Reflecting this attitude toward history in the play, the characters who spurn love and may provide alternative histories instead have a past in which they were devotees of love or have to change their orientation to their past. Silvesta had been in love with Philisses before she joined Diana's band, Lissius needs to repudiate his past rejection of love to secure Simeana, and even Dalina has to let go of her fickleness, which, though heterosexually directed, is intolerably flippant in relation to the rather hypocritical austere seriousness of Venus's sovereignty. Venus retains such a firm control on the significance and meaning of the past that when Lacon,

another shepherd, proposes a pastoral game that involves everyone telling “their fortunes past” in act 1, scene 3, the stories are supposed to be about their successes and failures in heterosexual love, as opposed to other forms of affection (1.3.23).

Though such tales are never told, as Musella rejects the proposition, in writing *Love's Victory* Wroth herself may be relating a tale of her past fortunes in love, as the triangle of Musella, Philisses, and Rustic resembles Wroth's own forced marriage to Robert Wroth and her love for her cousin William Herbert (Hannay 2010, 212–221). Wroth may also punningly allude to members of the previous generation of her family through her characters' names. Those family members' love lives were complicated, and even though their writings show the effects of the arranged marriages that they and many in their social circle endured, they are ultimately invested in advancing heterosexual coupling as the ethical center of the intimate sphere and the grounds for articulating a self. The story of Philisses and Musella may allude to her uncle Philip Sidney and Penelope Rich (the Stella of Sidney's *Astrophil and Stella* [1591]), while Simeana and Lissius may allude to her aunt Mary Sidney and Matthew Lister. Like Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (c.1595), which Wroth seems to echo in her revivification plot, Philip's *Astrophil and Stella* and Mary's translation of the *Tragedy of Antonie* (1595) depict heterosexual relations as authentic because obstructed or transgressive. Yet rather than weaken the grip of heterosexual coupling on the intimate sphere, such depictions sentimentalize heterosexual love as fragile and in need of increasing social support and protection from threats. Such texts seek to enlist the reader's sympathies in service to the crisis-based heterosexual order by turning heterosexual lovers into icons because those lovers find themselves momentarily at odds with the circumstances of history and culture—that is, in the position that queers typically find themselves.

There may be some nostalgia at work here in Wroth's re-enactment and identification with the past; when she suggests via Venus that one of the goals of the play's narrative is to restore Venus to her “ancient glory” (1.1.33), she may be referring to a time when women could choose to marry for love, as Musella and Philisses are allowed to do. If so, this is a cruel nostalgia, a phrase I adapt from Lauren Berlant's concept of “cruel optimism,” or the desire for something that promises fulfillment but “is actually an obstacle to flourishing” (Berlant 2011, 1). I am rerouting this concept by applying it to the relationship to the past that Wroth imagines, especially the way in which a particular kind of desire for the past is presumed to be the grounds for queerness but turns out to be the means by which queerness is undermined. Cruel nostalgia is a kind of repetition-compulsion wherein one finds that the historical space of the alternative that would authorize that alternative in the present has already been co-opted by the thing one was trying to escape – in this case unsatisfying heterosexual coupling. In this play, the lovers' future subordination to Venus is achieved through their being brought into reflection of the “ancient glory” of the heterosexual past. They are converted into Venus's “images” and “mirrors” and as a result, they look with Venus's “eyes/By which they true love do spy” (4.2.27, 29, 29–30). Wroth suggests here that the future reproduction of heterosexual desire works via identification with the “ancient glory” of love, but she also shows the



historical effacements required to construct this object of identification. Venus's eyes are alternately blind to queerness or see heterosexuality where queerness actually is, as if in a heteronormative *trompe l'oeil*. Heteronormativity's totalizing fantasy about the past effaces and displaces queerness. My use of the term heteronormative here helps expose as fantasy, as a ruse of power, the construction of the past as self-identically heterosexual, and thereby reveals how anachronism, strategically deployed, can make the past different from itself. It helps to interrupt what Sedgwick identified as the ways that "heterosexuality ... masquerades so readily as History itself" (Sedgwick 1993, 111). What is more, Wroth exposes how that fantasy of the past is essential for the reproduction of the present and future as self-identically heteronormative.

Wroth, however, goes no further than refusing to see with Venus's eyes. She does not articulate the pathways by which these multiple queer intimacies might be recovered for the past or for the purposes of present identification. Instead, she offers only an account of the strategies by which heteronormativity renders the search for queerness unworkable, both formally and historically. I do not think her work is any less valuable to the histories and politics of sexuality or pastoral form for remaining in this mode of critique. Critical engagement with a text is often predicated on finding some proposed political alternative in addition to critique. The reason for this predication, at least in part, is that it feels satisfying to offer something like a possible happy ending through a reading of a text, even when the text denies a reader one, and as I have argued elsewhere, there is much value in this reparative reading (Bromley, 2012). In her exploration of the political value of "stay[ing] unhappy with this world," Sara Ahmed reminds us that "the risk of promoting the happy queer is that the unhappiness of this world could disappear from view" (2010, 105). Wroth is no less imaginative in her work for not imagining a happy queer utopia through pastoral, but instead revising this utopian, optimistic form to expose how heterosexual desire in crisis works to evacuate queer alternatives of the ethics of their non-normative status. In ironizing love's victory, the text provides models for a critical practice that resists what Edelman calls "the trump card of affirmation... the question, if not this, what?" (Edelman 2004, 4). Such a question translates negativity into a positive socially acceptable form, just as Venus translates queer alternatives into the flying buttresses of heteronormativity.

Though I have been trying to argue here that utopianism is not inherently queerer than critique, I would not wish to efface optimism and its affordances entirely, for that would enact the same policing of desires, both of the past and for the past, that has implicitly devalued forms of critique and demystification unaccompanied by utopian alternatives. The process of making the past different from itself is only possible through the strategic diacritical interaction of optimism and negativity in literary imagination and critical analysis. Insisting that there is only room for optimism or negativity in literature or critical practice performs the same evacuation of alternatives that Wroth identifies as a fundamental feature of the way heteronormativity asserts its sovereignty. But optimism and negativity form a couple as well, so I would also add that more terms, past, present, difference, and sameness, need to be

part of that mixture so as to make our relations to the literature we read more promiscuous. Why has queer criticism become so dogmatic in relation to these terms when queer is supposed to signify a fundamental opposition to the dogmatic? Not only should queer studies be capacious enough to house all these terms without any one at the center, but the field seems well suited to promote the promiscuous mingling of them as ethical and political praxes when engaging with the literature of the past.

### What to Read Next

Bray (2003); Jones (1990); Sanchez (2011); Shannon (2002); and Traub (2002).

### Notes

- 1 Wroth's play, never printed in the early modern period, exists in two different manuscript versions, one known as the Penshurst Manuscript owned by the Viscount de L'Isle and another at the Huntington Library. For more on the differences between manuscript versions, see Roberts (1983) and Salzman (2006, 77–84).
- 2 Likely begun in 1580 and completed by 1582, Sidney's text appeared posthumously in print three times in 1595 under the titles *The Defence of Poesy* and *An Apology for Poetry*.
- 3 For scholarship not cited elsewhere in this chapter that has sought to historicize same-sex desire in early modern literature, see Bredbeck (1991), Goldberg (1992), Smith (1994), DiGangi (1997), Traub (2002).

### References

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## Race and Colonization

*Jean E. Feerick*

Edmund Spenser's writing affords a rich archive for exploring the complexity of early modern concepts of race, and of ethnicity, which, as scholars have demonstrated, betray both continuities with and divergences from early modern ideologies of race. Spenser (1552?–1599), who moved to Ireland in the 1580s first as an administrator in Dublin and then as a settler on the Munster plantation (Judson 1945; Spenser [1633] 1934, 223–234), was writing in an era that might be described as post-colonial (Maley 2003, 74). That is, he and a wider community of settlers in the Elizabethan period – who referred to themselves as the New English – were following in the footsteps of an earlier set of colonizers who hailed from England as part of the Norman conquest 400 years prior. Many of those earlier settlers, who came to be called the Old English by Spenser and others, continued to live in Ireland after the conquest, motivated by the twin mandates of subduing and civilizing the native Irish. By Spenser's moment this group of settlers embodied, in rather alarmingly visible ways to their New English successors, how a settler community could slip away from its "origin," becoming indistinguishable from the group it sought to civilize. As Eudoxus, one of the two interlocutors in Spenser's political tract, *A View of the Present State of Ireland* ([1633] 1934), puts it: "That seemeth verie strange which yow saye that men should so much degenerate from their first natures as to growe wilde" (82). *Degeneration*, the term that Spenser and his peers used for racial slide-back, encodes the unique ways early moderns understood the relation between nature and culture, crystallizing many truths about their view of human identity, including what kind of difference a writer like Spenser named in and through the category of race.

It has been customary among historians to view racial ideology as a modern construct, born of modern science with its historically contingent ways of

understanding biology and its tendency to view the human body as pre-programmed by genes that are transmitted from parent to offspring. In this view racialism is predicated upon a rather inflexible idea of biology, one that underscores the role of inherited traits to denote an individual's racial identity at birth (Hannaford 1996; Appiah 1990). In such theories, a person's racial identity – delivered biologically – is an aspect of his/her nature that cannot be changed. Such understandings of difference are conditioned by a rather rigid divide – even an opposition – between the concepts of nature and culture. Although cultural differences might serve to express one's racial or ethnic identity, modern ideologies do not afford culture the power to alter or shape racial identity. In this view culture is “superficial” or “skin deep,” while race, bound to nature, is a permanent marker of difference that pervades the body at a deep level.

Attentive to this modern ideology of difference, despite its dubious claim to scientific rigor (Venter 2007; Gould 1996; Fields and Fields 2012), historians have argued that pre-Enlightenment societies have not been bearers of “racial ideologies” in this modern sense (Bartlett 1993; Kidd 2006; Banton 2000). Rather, as they have compellingly argued, earlier eras – Medieval or early modern – have leaned more heavily on accounts of cultural practice to theorize human difference, suggesting that the lines dividing one population from another are more flexible in earlier eras and therefore fundamentally at a remove from modern ideologies. Speaking of the Medieval period, for instance, Robert Bartlett has argued: “To a point, therefore, medieval ethnicity was a social construct rather than a biological datum ... When we study race relations in medieval Europe we are analyzing the contact between various linguistic and cultural groups, not between breeding stocks” (1993, 197). Still more compellingly, Bartlett, quoting Isidore of Seville, a famous schoolmaster of the Middle Ages, observes: “Races arose from different languages, not languages from different races, or, as another Latin author argues, ‘language makes race’ (*gentem lingua facit*)” (1993, 198). Implicit in this observation is the premise that culture precedes and instates nature in the earlier periods in ways that cease to be possible for modernity.

And yet, the view of these historians has been called into question by critics who observe resemblances, connections, and relations between modern and pre-modern forms of race thinking, in large part due to a growing suspicion that “the bifurcation of ‘culture’ and ‘nature’ in many analyses of race needs to be questioned” and that we need to “query the very boundaries between these categories” (Loomba and Burton 2007, 8, 25.) (For the Medieval period see Heng 2011 and Nirenberg 2007). If that is true of all periods – since nature and culture always “develop in relation to one another” (Loomba and Burton 2007, 8) – it is absolutely crucial for analyzing pre-modern cultures. For the noun “culture” that appears in modern vocabularies to describe the endeavors of distinct human populations was never used in the same way in the earlier period, a point whose significance to the study of early modern race cannot be overstated. As Raymond Williams long ago argued, culture was not a thing so much as “a noun of process” in the early modern period, an activity that exerted a shaping force on any aspect of nature – human or otherwise – whether a

field, a plant, an animal, or a person (Williams [1976] 2015, 49). The shift in this word's meaning between then and now is a crucial indicator of a fundamentally different way of understanding the operations of nature, including human nature, and needs to inform our understanding of early modern racial formations.

For early moderns like Spenser, insofar as they understood earthly life to exist in a mortal and therefore fallen condition, all natural life forms required studied acts of intervention in order to maintain anything like an "ordered" existence, which came in the form of acts of tillage, harnessing, domesticating, educating and so on. Without the application of culture to guide it, nature could slip into depravity – into wild and unproductive patterns of growth that might be expressed in fields that fall fallow, plants that cease to be fruit-bearing, horses that run wild, and people that swerve into ignorance and barbarism (Feerick 2011). The character Burgundy of Shakespeare's *Henry V* (1599) articulates precisely this situation in the final act of the play when he laments France's destruction by war. He observes that

All our vineyards, fallows, meads, and hedges,  
Defective in their natures, grow to wildness,  
Even so our houses and ourselves and children  
Have lost, or do not learn for want of time,  
The sciences...[/] But grow like savages. (5.2.54–59)

Nature in the form of fields and meadows is not ontologically "wild" but becomes so in the absence of culture. The same is true for humans, who "grow" wild in the absence of the culture of learning. Burgundy's lament articulates the early modern truism that all living forms exist on a sliding scale of difference, with acts of "culture" the only stay against a "fall" into a wilderness imagined as a self-destructing state of unconstrained and unproductive growth. In such a view tillage is to the earth, what education is to people – an acculturating act that guides nature to an ideal, because ordered and productive, form. In its absence, people slip into savagery, becoming altered in race and kind.

What this brief excursus into the etymology of *culture* reveals is that nature, as understood by early moderns, is shot through with cultural interventions that reconfigure its physical properties at every point. The early moderns were extremely aware of the entangled agencies of culture and nature, in contrast to modern societies which, as Bruno Latour has argued, lean on the myth of a Great Divide between the human and the nonhuman, society and world, the humanities and sciences. This myth begets the "tragedy of modern man considering himself as absolutely and irremediably different from all other humanities and all other naturalities" (Latour [1991] 1993, 123). As part of this conceptual partitioning of the world, "moderns have set themselves apart from the premoderns" (99), who readily blended "social needs and natural reality" (35) into the hybrids that Latour refers to as "nature-cultures" (41). And yet, even as moderns insist on a clean separation between the material world and the social realm – rendering crossovers between the two realms "invisible, unthinkable, and unrepresentable" (34) – Latour's argument in *We Have*

*Never Been Modern* is that they, like their premodern counterparts, actually constantly engage in such exchanges.

Francis Bacon (1561–1626) expresses this premodern tendency to openly acknowledge exchanges between nature and culture in discussing how much plants can change when subject to different patterns of cultivation. He asserts, “The rule is certain, that plants for want of culture degenerate to be baser in the same kind; and sometimes so far as to change into another kind” ([1627] 1826, 246). His words express a belief that culture – including the *withholding* of culture – can fundamentally re-nature plants, even allow them to transform “kind,” a term that early modern writers used interchangeably with race. The same was true for people in the estimation of the political theorist Jean Bodin (1530–1596) who, in contemplating the origin of nations, would argue that “we see men as well as plants degenerate little by little when the soil has been changed” ([1566] 1945, 87). In thinking of people’s identity as resembling that of plantlife, Bodin anticipates Spenser’s language, in which colonial activity, following its Latin etymology (“colonia” has the sense of “farm”), is first and foremost an act of “planting” people in a new soil, and where whole populations of colonists or “planters” exhibit an ability to grow, decline, decay, or degenerate. His organic vocabulary expresses a premodern tendency to conjoin human and nonhuman realms, seeing them as governed by identical life processes. Where today we understand nature and culture to be discrete concepts existing in separate spheres – which Latour describes as an effect of “the modern constitution” ([1991] 1993, 13) – early modern writers saw them as constantly and beneficially intersecting. In the ideal state, culture and nature were engaged in an ongoing reciprocal dance that animated the world’s living forms. It does not, therefore, exactly follow that in valuing “cultural features” as a defining measure of a population – whether the emphasis is placed on language, religion, or law, as Bartlett (1993) has argued – that pre-moderns were not also therefore speaking in some sense of that population’s “physical nature,” or what today we would call biology. (For discussion of the imprinting of religious difference on the body, see Loomba and Burton, 2007, 12–13; Degenhardt 2010; Britton 2014.) Rather, when they spoke of culture they were always already understanding it as connected to and interacting with a person’s physical nature. (For the humoral body and the environment, see Paster 2005; Floyd-Wilson 2003; Pender 2010.) And yet it also evident that for early modern writers both aspects of human identity – cultural and natural – were understood as malleable and adaptable in ways that break with modern paradigms of race, which build upon a more rigid conception of physical nature and a rupture between these two realms.

The French post-structuralist Michel Foucault echoes the conclusions of Raymond Williams’s etymological overview when he identifies a pre-modern “episteme” for the Renaissance that is governed by a tendency to see the world as organized by resemblances among living things ([1966] 1970, 17–45). His genealogical method of writing history – which describes the unique arrangement of a given period’s “epistemological space” (xi), and emphasizes historical rupture as against continuity – helpfully captures the alien “ordering codes” that governed how early moderns understood the operations of the universe (xxi). He points to the centrality



of resemblance as an organizing principle of early modern knowledge, observing a cultural tendency to perceive the world as rippling with connections, analogies, and relations linking the human form to other natural bodies – whether animal, botanical, elemental, or cosmological. In Foucault’s words, “The point is man: he stands in proportion to the heavens, just as he does to animals and plants, and as he does also to the earth, to metals, to stalactites or storms” (22). The pre-modern episteme Foucault identifies understands all life forms as homologues of one another, as “concentric circles” (21) defined by similar rules and patterns. If modern ways of thinking tend to separate the human from the natural world – to see people as positioned outside of nature and working on it – early modern writers tended to see people as part of the organic “mesh” and as embedded in the same laws, patterns, and dynamics as all of nature. (For the ecological “mesh,” see Morton 2010. For eco-critical readings of early modern materials, see Borlik 2011, Nardizzi 2013, Boehrer 2013, and Feerick and Nardizzi, 2012.) Just as humans could act as agents in applying culture to other life forms, they also understood themselves as the necessary recipients of acts of culture. Without such acts, they, like their earthly counterparts, would slip into barbarous oblivion.

## I

If thus far I have suggested that a notion of race that biologically fixes a population was not operable in the early modern period, since physical nature was so tied to cultural practice as to be constantly re-formed by it, I now need to qualify that point with reference to a key aspect of early modern English identity that bears powerful connections to modern race thinking: the principle of bloodline. If early modern England did not have the language of genetics to explain the precise mechanism for the heritable transmission of traits, it did have a principle that was of Biblical provenance, which perceived in some bloodlines a means not only of inter-generational continuity but a vehicle for the infusion of transcendent qualities. A privileged few – the nobility – were perceived to bear metaphysical properties in their bloodline carrying a charge of divinity and justifying their status as earthly sovereigns and lords. It was this concept of “high blood” that early moderns most frequently associated with the word *race*, which afforded a language for distinguishing rulers from subjects on the basis of invisible distinctions of blood. William Harrison (1535–1593) gestured at this ideology in his *Description of England* ([1577] 1976), when he defined gentlemen as “those whom their race and blood, or at the least their virtues, do make noble and known” (113). So, too, John Florio’s Italian-English dictionary (1598) would define *race* as “a kind, a broode, a blood, a stocke, a pedigree” (313), indicating its association with the privileged ranks of English society. Lowborn men were not typically described by early modern writers as having a race, since early modern English usage implied it was a designation proper to nobility alone. Hence, the early modern lexicon of race tended to name distinctions rooted in a lineal bloodline that were possessed by a privileged few (Feerick 2010).

The context of Ireland in the Elizabethan period became a crucible in which this ancient concept of race was being pressed to the breaking point, with Spenser voicing in increasingly subversive ways (McCoy 1989; Shuger 1997; Ivic 1999) the extent to which lineal properties of blood could not serve as a safeguard against the ravages of decline and alteration that were the predicament of all earthly things. Those invested with the conquest of Ireland in the period of the Norman conquest under Henry II had been of royal race. Their Old English descendants seized upon the rights that their lineal bloodlines conferred on them in order to resist encroachment on their power by both the Queen and her contingent of administrators – the New English – who were charged with implementing her policies in Ireland (Canny 1983). Sir Nicholas White (1532–1592), a member of the Irish Parliament, for instance, reminded the Queen that he and other Old English planters in Ireland were not only the “seed of English blood” but were derived from “ancient nobility,” likening New English attempts to limit and coopt their privileges in Ireland to “artisans that persuade owners of ancient houses to pull them down” (Canny 1983, 14). But Spenser – who was one of these New English administrators – argued otherwise, suggesting that the high blood of the Old English settlers had declined in the quagmire of Ireland and that their condition might be beyond repair precisely because these men believed themselves to be above the need for culture. Moreover, he argues at length in his political tract that they had shirked their responsibilities as overlords in Ireland in failing to apply culture to the mere Irish, whose “wild” and unconstrained behavior they had not only permitted but actively encouraged.

## II

Spenser’s engagement with the necessary imbrication of nature and culture for all men – not least those privileged by race and blood – pervades his entire corpus. But I focus here on two texts that he wrote toward the end of his career, which foreground this distinctively early modern way of seeing nature as alterable and as requiring ongoing acts of cultivation to maintain its ordered course: the incomplete book known as the Mutability Cantos, which concludes the Folio edition (1609) of his epic poem *The Faerie Queene*, and the posthumously published political tract *A View of the Present State of Ireland* (1633). (For the dating of the *View*’s composition, see Hadfield 2014.) Julia Lupton has compellingly positioned these texts in relation to one another, understanding the Mutability Cantos as “a mythopoetic analogue of the *View*’s narrative of waste” that gives an “account of Irish desolation” (Lupton 1993, 102). I would like to build upon this reading by suggesting that the Mutability Cantos portray, in the oppositional figures of Nature and Mutability, an allegorical representation of the outcomes available to all peoples and all living forms, and shows Ireland as the testing ground for these claims, since the trial that Mutability demands is staged atop Arlo-hill, Spenser’s name for the peak of the Galtee mountains in Ireland. This allegorical figure Mutability therefore resonates with and obliquely encodes the history of the Old English. In the *View*, Spenser tracks a

similar set of dynamics in the context of discussing what has allowed the mere Irish and Old English, two populations with presumably quite distinct origins, to be indistinguishable, exposing the pitfall of mutability as that into which the Old English settlers have willfully heaved themselves. Both texts express a view of human nature as provisional, suggesting that a population's most basic identity – what we think of as its race – is made and shaped through the application of culture, rather than something that is conferred with any degree of finality at the moment of birth.

Insofar as both texts dramatize the relationship between acculturating acts and nature, they shed light on Spenser's conception of the principles defining different human populations. Although he is often accused of being racist toward the Irish – and his ideas are nothing if not violent and coercive in the theory of reform they propound (Loomba and Burton 2007, 24–25) – Spenser's position is precisely the opposite of what today we describe as “racist.” Working from the idea of a radically shapeable human nature, Spenser defends the view that blending the Irish landscape with English culture in the form of husbandry, as well as “sowing” (see *View*, 197) English settlers among Old English and Irish alike, will set these wayward populations on the path to growing into civil (English) subjects (see Moroney 1999). Although his interlocutors, Irenius and Eudoxus, often seem to suggest that there is an “Irish” nature that resists this form of “cultivation,” in ways that evoke the essentializing notion of a biological identity such as underpins modern race, Spenser's position, which is carefully adumbrated in the tract, is that cultural practice is to blame for this situation and could, in theory, be remedied. As Irenius declares when asked if he is advocating the extermination of the Irish and Old English: “I doe not meane the Cuttinge of all that nacion with the sword ... for evill people by good ordynance and gouerment, maye bee *made* good” (123–24, emphasis added). Indeed, through the more experienced voice of the planter Irenius, Spenser seems to argue that the Irish had once been a reasonably acculturated people – having had “the vse of lettres verie auntyentlie and longe before England” (53) – but that they grew into savagery in precisely the same way that Burgundy's French people have: through their espousal of ill customs following the “impeoplinge of that Iland” (62) by various invaders. As such, from the Scythians they adopted the practices of herding cattle known as *bollies* and of wearing mantles and *glibs* (65–70); from the Spaniards they adapted the practice of wearing saffron clothes (79); and from the Gauls they learned to confer power and prestige on bardic poets (80–81).

The same pattern of decline is visible among the Old English, who are condemned in harsher terms by Irenius as compared with their Irish counterparts (Maley 2003, 63–91). Where the Irish have declined, it would appear, from the operations of time across many centuries and by means of many foreign invasions, the Old English in Ireland are described as having willfully rejected their connections to England in acts of rebellion and defiance. As such, they are singled out as the primary target of the text, the more intransigent population of the two. Irenius deplores them for the fact that they once had the markings of culture, by virtue both of their high birth and their upbringing, which they actively sought to erase or “raze,” a pun on “race” that Spenser uses elsewhere in his writing to indicate the obliteration over time of the

marks of noble lineage (see *Faerie Queene* [1590] 2001, 2.12.80.4 and *The Ruines of Time* [1591] 1989, 1.177.)

Compellingly, the description of the Old English I have just provided might well describe the figure of Mutability. Initially, she stakes her appeal to rule over the gods on the grounds of her “antique race and linage ancient” (7.6.2.2), emphasizing her lineal ties to the “old *Titans*” (7.6.2.6), the leader of whom is described as having abdicated his throne to his younger brother, Saturn, on the condition that Titan’s issue, not Saturn’s, would succeed him (see 27n). Because this plan ultimately unravels when Saturn’s son, Jove, survives without his knowledge and dispossesses the Titans, Mutability has risen up against the gods to reclaim the powers she views as her birth-right. She defends her action by reference to her patronym: “I greater am in blood (whereon I build)/Then all the Gods, though wrongfully from heauen exil’d” (7.6.26.8–9). Later, when she comes before Jove, she is reviled in and through the language of degeneracy, described as the “bad seed” (7.6.21.1) and the “off-scum of that cursed fry” (7.6.30.1). Here she is figured as the dross – the impure metal – that remains of the hitherto godly bloodline. In an overwrought bovine metaphor, she is described as resembling “some beast of strange and forraine race” which has strayed “from his peeres,” evoking a “ghastly gaze” and an “astonied” response from the herd of “Steeres” upon whom she has stumbled (7.6.28.6–9). If she appears disordered – not least for her “vncouth habit” (7.6.13.9) and “haughty” (7.6.17.4) comportment – she has wreaked similar havoc on the realms over which she has ruled. A force hostile to ordered Nature, she has “the face of earthly things so changed,/That all which Nature had establisht first/In good estate, and in meet order ranged,/She did pervert” (7.6.5.1–4). Although she is an “off-spring” of the gods’ “blood” (7.6.20.8), Mutability exemplifies Spenser’s view that all races – even those of the highest bloodlines – are subject to decline.

Critics have seen an emblem of early modern Ireland embedded in Spenser’s portrait of Mutability. As I have argued, a more specific allegory may be read concerning the Old English, who, in similar fashion to Mutability, rose up against a sovereign power when they felt their bloodlines reproved. But Mutability’s contestation of Nature’s patterns might also be seen to evoke the broader principle that human nature, like all natural forms, needs to be constantly supported by culture to maintain its orderly form. Notably, Mutability’s own neglectful actions have appeared to un-race her, that is, to turn her noble bloodline into dross. Positioned in opposition to the ordered form of nature represented by the allegorical figure of Nature who oversees the trial, Mutability emerges as her antithesis – a version of nature grown wild and uncultured. If Nature is supplemented by the figure of Order when she appears atop Arlo-hill to hear Mutability’s case against the gods, Mutability stands against such principles, having burst the “statutes” that Nature ordained for the world (7.6.5.4). Nature, by contrast, bestows ordered growth on the Irish locale where she hosts the trial: “dainty trees” (7.7.8.7) bow in homage to her, forming the shape of a throne, and flowers grow at her feet to forge a tapestry richer than that of “Princes bowres” (7.7.10.9). By positioning natural life forms – trees and flowers – alongside artful constructs – thrones and tapestries – this account expresses Nature’s identity as a well-hewn composite of culture and nature.

And yet if Spenser overtly suggests that Nature rules over Mutability, enjoying a kind of mastery – having Nature reject Mutability’s claim that all creation is patterned after her since they “doe their states maintaine” (7.7.58.9) – critics have detected a weakness in Nature’s judgment. First, her ruling is delivered in “speeches few” (7.7.57.9), making it appear flimsy and arbitrary, and, second, she provides no justification for her support of the usurping Jove. By contrast, Mutability’s digressive appeal, which marshals a pageant of calendrical and astrological figures, retains a vitality and aesthetic power that calls into question the strength and durability of Nature’s order. Indeed, as Andrew Hadfield (2014) has argued, since the Book opens with news that Mutability has broken “the lawes of Nature” (7.6.6.1), Nature’s appeal to an unchanging “first estate” (7.7.58.4) that effects its own perfection through acts of “[working]” and “turning” rings hollow (7.7.58.6–7). The *implied* message aligns instead with the poet’s view as expressed in the brief eighth canto, where he concedes that Mutability bears “the greatest sway” (7.8.1.5) over earthly things and that Nature’s ideal awaits earthly creatures only in the hereafter.

This view certainly rang true in the context of Ireland, where Mutability – in the form of the degenerate Old English – ruled the roost when Spenser wrote his *View*. Addressing another sovereign perceived to be too tepid in her response to the problem of mutability in the colony, Spenser took the occasion to map the troubles in Ireland as a systematic failure of cultivation at the hands of the earliest colonizing group. Like Mutability, the Old English stand against law and order both in the way they comport themselves and in the way they have allowed the Irish under their rule to live. They have thereby allowed nature in her raw, unbridled, and mutable form to override both the people and the landscape, evoking a refracted version of Burgundy’s blighted garden of France. Riddling his tract with descriptions of human populations figured in organic terms (Grennan 1982) – as people planted, growing, decaying, and degenerating – Spenser signals that the problems in Ireland begin and end with the absence of a cultivating hand to arrest unchecked growth. The Old English have caused this situation in Irenius’s estimation, since “the chefest abuses which are now in that realme, are growne from the Englishe” who “are now much more lawlesse and lycencious, then the verie wilde Irishe” (82). Viewing their English heritage as a would-be bridle that should potentially check their physical nature, Irenius describes the Old English as having “quite shaken of their Englishe names, and putt on Irishe,” like “wanton Coltes [that] kicke at their mothers” (84). If here the Old English are figured as livestock, elsewhere they emerge as subverted husbands who rather than domesticating the livestock entrusted to them, have tossed aside their tools and joined up with the herd. In contrast to the Irish, whose barbarism is born of a complex history of mingling with other peoples, these actions are portrayed as willful and active, making them particularly pernicious in Irenius’s eyes. The Old English “cast of their Englishe names and alleigeance” (85) and stoked rebellions in the land in response to their “pride or wilfull obstynacie” (190). He figures them as subjects who have grown too mighty – too unchecked – such that they have overtaken the garden of Ireland, whose beauties once evoked colonial reveries of being “Lordes of all the seas, and ... of all the worlde” (25).

If the Old English should have applied themselves as the “culture” to the “nature” of the wild Irish, theirs was a culture of omission. For, as Irenius relates, the attempts to acculturate the Irish have occurred only in fits and starts, such that the guiding hand of culture has never been fully absorbed by the native population, the stubborn nation never really “[menaged]” (16). As Irenius puts it in the lexicon of animal husbandry on which he so often leans, “what bootes yt to breake a Colte and to lett him streight rvn Loose at randome?” (9). Indeed, in a perverse reversal of the relations of the proper roles, Irenius describes how the Old English have been more likely to allow themselves to be governed by the lawless Irish, as evidenced by their tendency to foster their children to Irish Lordes, who bring them up “lewdlie and Irishe lyke” and without the “husbandry” of English culture (38). In Irenius’s seasoned and expert view, the whole process of acculturating the Irish must begin anew – presumably under the guidance of New English settlers: first the “field” must be cleared of all weeds or rebels before the seeds of English culture – in the form of Common Law, townships, grammar schools, and English planters themselves – can be sown. (For the *View’s* Georgic emphasis – a poetic mode derived from Virgil (70–19 BCE) valuing acts of tillage as morally preferable to the otium celebrated in pastoral – see Shuger 1997.) Having identified a failure of husbandry in the injunction given to the Norman invaders to avoid sustained contact with the native population, Irenius urges a studied form of “entermingelinge” (197) between English and Irish. Only by “scattringe [the Irish] in small numbers, amongst the English” (197) and by “[sowing] and [sprinckling]” them among the “English planted” will a harvest of civil Irish at long last emerge. Once “those yonge plantes [have] growen vpp,” Irenius notes, it will be the role of the English assembly – positioned as proper English husbandmen – to “[ouerlook] and [veiw]” (199) the crops generated by their labored acts of culture. In the stunningly consistent lexicon that Irenius uses, his argument lays out the idea that peoples such as the Irish and the degenerate Old English can be made anew into a good race of English subjects through studied acts of husbandry. Through the careful application of culture, the natural substrate of this population can grow in a benign and productive manner – that is, into a good race.

### III

As I have argued, Spenser’s “view” of the Irish and the Old English is not premised on the idea that the nature of a people is fixed and inalterable, in ways that are more typical of modern racial ideologies. Instead, he works with the idea that human nature – like natural forms at large – is pliable, reformable, and responsive to the application of culture, if properly executed. In his view, the first round of English settlers in Ireland was constituted by men who failed in their role as “planters,” that is, as “husbands” who were equipped with the duty of “tilling” the soil of the colony, as well as its people. Spenser’s hope, as expressed in his political tract, is that the second round of English settlers – men who were not accustomed to receiving

benefits by virtue of their lineal identity but who understood the value of husbandry, embodying a strong Georgic ethos – would do better. The irony is that within just a few years of writing a tract urging such practices, the Munster plantation upon which the poet settled was overrun by rebels – both Irish and Old English – and the New English were sent packing along with their tools and their theories of racial cultivation.

Although these theories of human identity that I have connected to prevailing views about the role of culture in shaping nature in early modern England differ in crucial ways from ideologies of modern race, it should nevertheless be clear from the account I have provided that these early modern theories could be equally pernicious and equally violent and that by identifying race as a malleable concept for this period, I am not envisioning anything like a racially “innocent” zone for the early modern period. Spenser’s project – of “[fitting]” a people to a foreign law (183), of launching a burnt-earth campaign of starvation (134–135), and of using a metaphorical scythe to clear the land of rebels construed as brambles (13) – is stark, cruel, and violent. For, as Irenius ruthlessly states in construing people through a lexicon of nature submitting to agriculture: “all those evils must first bee cutt awaye with a stronge hand, before any good can bee planted, lyke as the corrupt branches and the vnwholsome bowes are firste to bee pruned, and the fowle mosse clensted or scraped awaye, before the tree can bring forth any good fruite” (123). Culture here is imagined as a force that can and should aggressively reshape human nature, as it does every other aspect of the natural world. But Spenser’s theory of colonial reform, unlike modern racial paradigms, begins with the assumption that human identity is extremely malleable and that “good” races can sprout from the “soil” of any native population that receives proper husbandry. His writing thereby affords a glimpse into a crucial and dissonant aspect of early modern race thinking.

### What to Read Next

Baker and Maley (2002); Canny (2003); Coughlan (1989); Highley (1997); McCabe (2002).

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## Agency and Choice

*John Lee*

I'll never  
Be such a gosling to obey instinct, but stand,  
As if a man were author of himself  
And knew no other kin.

In Act 5 Scene 3 of *Coriolanus* (1608), Martius Caius Coriolanus proposes that a man might imagine, and act by, the fiction of a self-authored personhood (35–38). One might argue that a life so lived would be less than fully human, but it is not inconceivable; Aufidius, a Volscian general, might find, one suspects, such a form of living rather easy. For Coriolanus, though, the statement is fantastical, and is so because it is he who says it. Coriolanus has been seen to be a figure of strong domestic loves from the play's opening, emotionally bound to his mother predominantly, but also to his wife and to a lesser extent to his son. It is not, then, a great surprise that Coriolanus's proposal does not outlast this scene. His family have arrived in the camp of the Volscian army he now leads, and he soon finds himself persuaded to negotiate a treaty between the Volscians and the Romans. This compromise, as Coriolanus immediately recognizes, while good for Rome, is most dangerous if not "most mortal" to himself (5.3.201).

One's choices, it seems, are not simply one's own to make, even when one's life is at stake. It is not just that, as Marx's famous opening to the *Eighteenth Brumaire* ([1852] 1996) has it: "Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please in circumstances they choose for themselves" (32). It is also that some of the choices available to Coriolanus are not possible for him, however much he might wish them, or recognize that they are in his best interests. Coriolanus's proposition on self-authorship, that is, is fantastical because he could not begin to live it;

Coriolanus's ability to choose, his agency, is constrained not only by historical circumstance but by a variety of relationships which go to constitute who he thinks he is, and how he feels about himself. These aspects of self, in fact, are more to him than his mortal life. Coriolanus's agency is interwoven with his identity, and both are fundamentally relational.

## Hegel and the Coming of a Modern Age

In *Sincerity and Authenticity* (1972), Lionel Trilling puts forward a historical framework for what he terms "the moral life" (1), that is the life that a culture thinks good and fulfilling. As an academic, he is very aware of the contingent nature of cultural values, and of how and how much they may differ between times and places. Yet the powerful and continued hold some works of literature exert on audiences and readers suggests that such distinctions may be more a matter of academic record than of human consequence. And so at one moment Trilling finds himself persuaded that "human nature never varies, that the moral life is unitary and its terms perennial," and at another believing that "an informed awareness of the differences among moral idioms is of the very essence of a proper response to literature" (2). Such productive ambivalence underlies his overall position on the history of moral life; that it, and human nature, is largely continuous, but subject, from time to time, to significant revision, which revision may be seen in terms of development, addition, or loss. Trilling proposes two such revisionary moments that are important to a proper response to literature: the growing cultural importance accorded to "sincerity" during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; and the replacement of "sincerity" by "authenticity" in the twentieth. "Sincerity" Trilling takes to be the congruence between avowed and actual feeling in a public context, a kind of truthfulness that is the foundation of honest dealings with others; "authenticity," by contrast, is an end in itself, the being true to oneself for its own sake and, often, in opposition to public notions of the good moral life. The high valuation of "sincerity" was, for 400 or so years, Trilling argues, one of the distinctive characteristics of Western culture (2–12).

*Hamlet* (1600–1601), as so often in these contexts, is seen to mark this shift in the moral life of Western mankind: "sincerity," Trilling argues, is "definitive" of the Prince, and central to our understanding of the play (3). The shift altered how people saw themselves, and what they felt it was good to be. It was, in shorthand, central to the process by which people came to see themselves as "individuals," a form of personhood that is central to the early modern period's being *early* modern, that is a precursor to and part of the modern period. How did such "individuals" differ from their predecessors? Trilling gathers together various sources. They had a greater awareness of "internal space"; sat on chairs not benches; looked into better mirrors; wrote autobiographies, and painted self-portraits. Trilling is careful not to commit himself to causal explanations of these shifts: "It is when he becomes an individual that a man lives more and more in private rooms; whether the privacy

makes the individuality or the individuality requires the privacy the historians do not say” (24–25). At the same time, this increasing awareness of one’s own particularity made for a greater awareness of the singularity of others, and so of a public society made up of other, similarly distinct persons, as opposed to a social order defined by custom and underpinned by divine authority. Such a public society of persons might be argued with and acted on; it looked forward to the public sphere Habermas ([1962] 1989) would describe; and, unlike more traditional conceptions of social order, it could be changed. Sincerity was the guarantor that such arguments and actions were what they seemed to be, and not self-interested or deceptive. Sincerity, the individual, and public society were interrelated and mutually supporting notions. A new kind of personhood and society had come into being and, with *Hamlet*, come onto the stage.

The general shape of this history, and the importance of tragedy within it, was not new. Its most influential proponent was the German philosopher, G.W.F. Hegel (1770–1831). Hegel had seen, in Elizabethan and particularly Shakespearean tragedy, the coming of a modern age, where the tragic outcome was produced by something within the protagonist, typically an over-commitment to one or more of his or her passions ([1835] 1975, 1223–1232). Such focus on the nature of the protagonist Hegel contrasted with an older, classical culture, in whose dramatic art, most famously represented by Sophocles’ *Antigone* (c. 441 BCE), the tragic climax was brought about by the protagonist being caught between the claims of conflicting and external ethical norms. Modern tragedy was seen to have become largely the expression of its protagonist’s subjectivity, that is his or her particular experience of the world (Bradley 1909, 69–92).

Such claims for cultural change, when given a particular location or date, have a tendency to look, as Trilling recognized, “absurd” (Trilling 1972, 24). They attract revisionist attacks; and many of the activities that are held to be constitutive of the appearance of the “individual” have been shown to exist, even in the context of an England that was typically rather culturally backward compared to Europe, long before the sixteenth century (Aers 1988). Yet, overall, for some two hundred or so years, the historical paradigm of a cultural inflection centered around a new sense of personhood coming into cultural prominence in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries has held (Burckhardt [1860] 1878; Huizinga [1919] 1924; Panofsky 1939; Cassirer [1927] 1963).

### The “Self” and *Hamlet*

Central to this moment of cultural inflection as it affects personhood is the notion of the “self.” It is both an important word, and one that is difficult to define clearly. In the ways it is used, “self” fits well within Wittgenstein’s 1966 discussion of aesthetic words. These were words Wittgenstein saw as being in and of themselves rather unhelpful, at least if a reductive clarity is looked for, as they are “used something like a gesture, accompanying a complicated activity.” “In order to get clear about aesthetic

words," he argues, "you have to describe ways of living" (11), and it may be helpful to approach the "self" as a similar word, especially given the notions of curation and artful construction that have come to be bound up with it. It is certainly true that discussions that set out to define what "self" is are complex, ongoing, largely unlitrary, and perhaps best left to philosophers. More generally helpful to literary studies have been approaches that look to describe what "self" has been thought to be, and how it has been constituted. Seigel (2005) offers one of the most helpful recent historically descriptive accounts of selfhood. Building on the work of MacIntyre (1981), a philosopher of ethics, and Taylor (1989), a philosopher of the history of ideas (both of whom offer sophisticated accounts of Trilling's "moral life"), Seigel, a historian, argues that thinking about the self in Western traditions can be seen to have had three main dimensions – the material, the relational, and the reflective (5). The material dimension concerns, most importantly, the bodily; how one's physical being, its needs and desires, the ways in which it has evolved to work, is a part of one's personhood. The relational dimension involves one's interactions with others and with the languages, conventions, values, and practices that go to make up one's culture. The reflective dimension arises out of the ability of consciousness to make itself the object of its own study, and particularly to consider our "impressions and ideas not as pointing directly to things in the world, but as objects of concern in themselves [and for] what they indicate about our own being." This leads to questions about the status of our knowledge of the world, the extent to which we produce that knowledge, and the trustworthiness of our own thought processes. Above all, Seigel argues, "these questions establish a 'second-order' relationship to the contents of experience, allowing reflective beings to take a distance from the first, more immediate one" (12).

*Hamlet* might almost be considered a dramatized exposition of such second-order relationships. There are, obviously enough, statements about the nature of experience, mostly from the Prince. "There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so" (2.2.244–245), he tells Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, before going on to note how there are aspects of himself that elude his control: he could, he believes, "be bounded in a nutshell" and still count himself "a king of infinite space" were it not for "bad dreams" (2.2.247–248). Even the kingship of his own mind, it seems, is denied him, as "bad dreams" play a kind of Claudian role in his inner life. Such expositions of the nature of his experience of his consciousness lend the play its philosophic cast, but they are only a part of the reflective nature of its drama. For the play is full of doubles and doubling. Names are doubled: the prince and his father are both "Hamlet," as Fortinbras and his father are both "Fortinbras." Situations are doubled: as Hamlet loses his father, so Ophelia and Laertes lose theirs, a part of which parallel the Prince recognizes, talking (in very visual terms) of finding in "the image" of his own "cause," the "portraiture of" Laertes' (5.2.82–83). To Freudian readings, such doubling goes further than Hamlet can admit; Claudius, in killing Hamlet's father, performs one of the Prince's deepest, and more repressed, desires (Freud [1900] 1985). And then, more complicatedly still, there is the play within the play, which restages the actions of the past as Hamlet imagines it – and to the extent that his imaginations fit the action of the already written play, *The Murder of Gonzago*.

Caution is needed here, however. Doubling *per se* need not be reflective. Key to Seigel's account of personhood is the distinction between the *reflexive* and the *reflective*. Images in a mirror are examples of the former, and the mental act of reflection an example of the latter: "The terms [...] indicate two distinct forms of self-reference, one passive and one active" (13). *Hamlet* might be said to be interested in exploring the relationship between these active and passive images of oneself; to use these two contrary forms of self-reference to draw an axis along which to fashion a dramatic and intellectual "space" in which personhood may be explored. While our attention is constantly drawn to doubles within the play, those doubles are also distinguished the one from the other: Hamlet, father and son, are not the same, and calling attention to their nominal identity (in the sense of identicalness) is a way of directing our attention to their identities, what it is that distinguishes them beyond their name. Ophelia's and Laertes's loss of a father may place them in a similar situation to Hamlet, but there are many differences between their situations; they know, for example, whom their father's killer was – Hamlet himself – with a certainty that Hamlet never has concerning the killer of his own father.

Importantly, such doublings exist not only locally and for the moment, but within the play as a whole, and what at first seems a passive reflection is often later understood as an active and motivated projection, shaped by the dramatic persons themselves. Comparison and contrast, the detection of similarities and dissimilarities, is a central process in our ability to make sense of the world. In *Hamlet*, the production of doubles and the subsequent questioning of the extent of their true identity (in the sense of the doubles' identicalness) and so of their identity (in the sense that answers to "who or what are you?") are exploited to produce a dramatic exposition of the experience of its protagonist's consciousness. Some sense of quite how vertiginous and complex that experience is can be gained from the way in which the two pre-eminent examples of such dramatic expositions – the Ghost and the gravedigger scene – may themselves be seen to be doubled versions of one another.

When Hamlet takes in his hand the third skull that the Sexton has disinterred in 5.1, he offers the audience first and foremost a *memento mori* scene: the skull is in a sense his own; this is what he, and the audience, will come to. The skull in this sense offers a passive reflection, albeit one which is meant to lead on to further moral reflection on the shortness of life, the importance of matters of the spirit, and so on. Yet this religio-cultural and iconographic reflection is only one of the images that the skull offers. This is also, as the Sexton mysteriously knows, the skull of the Old Hamlet's jester, Yorick. Hamlet tells Horatio how Yorick had given him a "thousand" (5.1.142) rides on his back when he was a child, and how he had kissed the jester innumerable times. This is, then, a particular skull, around which gathers, from Hamlet's memories, a father-like figure from the Prince's childhood. It gathers other images, too: it may be "my lady's" skull (5.1.147), who now seeks to hide the lines of age with cosmetics; or it may be Alexander the Great's skull, who was of an age, when he died, with the Prince. But it is that father-like figure of Yorick which the skull's return to daylight and to Hamlet picks up on most clearly, and it is that figure that most clearly invites readings of the scene as a grossly material parallel to the appearance of the Ghost.

My use of “Ghost” runs the risk of making the parallel, in terms of the objects compared, sound too certain. Old Hamlet is described as a “ghost” within the play (and a “damned ghost”), but more often he or it is referred to as a “spirit” (Lewis 1942) of uncertain status and origin, and so of “questionable shape” (1.4.24). Is it a good spirit or a spirit out to deceive? Is it, or is it not, Hamlet’s father? Does the spirit not answer to Hamlet’s desires, as the Prince asks himself, a little too perfectly? In a similar way the skull is anybody’s skull, Yorick’s skull, my lady’s skull, Alexander’s skull, and, to go on, Cain’s skull and so, as Cain was the first murderer (and of a brother), Claudius’s skull. The spirit’s and the skull’s return to Hamlet are complicat-edly-double versions of one another, but neither object is, with certainty, any one thing. They constantly move between being external and internal to the Prince; part separate other, and part imagined projection. Hamlet talks earlier in the play of seeing his father “in my mind’s eye” (1.2.186). It has become a famous phrase in itself, which perhaps blunts an appreciation of how well it captures the *telos* of the play: the play builds towards scenes in which the audience enters a strange fictional space where contiguities are everywhere felt within kinds of relationships that are often inconsequent and out-of-plot-order; in these scenes the narrative progression of the play seems less important than the experience of the play as a whole moment. That fictional space is of a piece, though wider in its experiences and the resources it draws on, with the nature of the Prince’s words which sound out within it, as his mind wanders, in 5.1, from the beginnings of biblical time, through classical civilization, into the present of lady’s chambers and lawyer’s quiddities and quillets, and on to the future of his own mortality. These movements of Hamlet’s mind are natural, without being rational or reasonable. The audience recognizes a kind of wild orderliness to the way in which the scene moves in and out of the long perspectives of recorded time, the concrete detail, the childhood recollection, the abstruse recollection. The result is a dramatic and lyrical richness reminiscent of the experience of reading *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (1609). Seigel’s material, relational, and reflective dimensions of personhood are all here, constantly interacting the one with the others. Hamlet’s subjectivity is less a particular perspective, and more the product of the exploration of the tensions between the various dimensions of personhood.

### Agency and Institutions

“Concern about the self”, Seigel suggests, “is concern about how we put the diverse parts of our personal being together into some kind of whole” (17). Later in 5.1, when the burial party have come to lay Ophelia to rest, the Prince steps forward and announces himself with a clear, and possibly provocative, claim to regal identity: “This is I/Hamlet the Dane” (5.1.210–211). As a statement of identity, its clarity is at odds with what has preceded it, and that inadequacy is a part of what the scene is about: the scene dramatizes how such definitive-sounding statements of identity and cultural locatedness, like Wittgenstein’s aesthetic words, stand in place of an ongoing and complicated activity. The statement is itself also curiously

self-contradictory. In Seigel's terms, we might see the active in collision with the passive within Hamlet's statement, the declarative "I" of agency sitting uncomfortably passively with the traditional category of "the Dane." It is, then, a statement in which agency announces itself and afterwards disappears; there is an active choice being made to take on a passive, if powerful, role.

In the 1980s, it was that disappearance of agency into institutional structures that was stressed in criticism. A number of critics began to push, rather successfully, against the historical narrative of the coming of a modern subjectivity with the arrival of the individual on the Shakespearean stage. They stressed either the lack of literary evidence for agency, or its theoretical impossibility. The more historically-minded critics pointed to the absence of a vocabulary of meaning of modern personhood. "Identity," "self," "character," "individual," "personality" were all words that lacked their modern, and now primary, senses (Ferry 1983); critics, when they talked of the dramatic persons of Elizabethan plays, had largely been describing those persons in an anachronistically modern language, which would only begin to develop in the second half of the seventeenth century. For the more theoretically-minded critics, who largely drew on some combination of Marx, structural linguistics, and Lacan ([1959] 1977) or post-structural thinkers such as Derrida ([1967] 1976), Althusser ([1970] 1971), and Foucault ([1966] 1970, [1975] 1977), agency was a near impossibility within the Western tradition, as it was the product of the larger structures of which the person was a small part (Greenblatt 1980; Barker 1984; Belsey 1985). Saussure's (1857–1913) model of language was seen to provide the foundational example (Culler 1975; for a dissenting reading of Saussure, see Tallis 1988). Just as individual words lacked meaningfulness when separated from the governing structures, grammatical and semantic, of their respective languages, so did individual persons; words and persons only *seemed* to possess an agency, which was more truly the product of the larger systems in which they were found. In place of meaningful agency, in fact, there were fictions or ideologies of agency, by which the governing culture sought to maintain the status quo. The critic's and theorist's role, given this, might become an explicitly political one, and this political role had its antagonistic and utopian aspects. It was antagonistic in its belief that by exposing the fictive nature of the notion of agency which underlay the narrative of the arrival of the modern subject ("subject" was a preferred term, as it was seen to be indicative of the person's "subjected" nature), the critic might expose the fraudulence of the values of the modern state, and perhaps even bring about substantive change; and it was utopian in believing that, as this fiction of individuality deformed humankind's true nature, so its exposure would allow better kinds of experience of personhood to come into being.

Neither of the aims of the more theoretically-minded critics has been realized, and this strand of the attack on agency has become steadily less influential on the shape of current criticism. The reasons for this were largely political. Feminism, in particular, one of the most intellectually vigorous critical areas of the 1980s and 1990s, saw the attack on agency as a direct threat to the recovery of a history of female, as opposed to male, experience. Such a recovery was fundamental to the



feminist project, and it was hard to see how such a feminist history might be constructed if the individual person ceased to be a meaningful object of study (Jardine 1989). There were also theoretical disagreements. Most notable was the sustained attack being mounted against structuralist and post-structuralist accounts of language outside the fields of literary studies. Chomsky's (2000) far more fully materialist account of language had led, in the 1960s, to the cognitive turn in linguistics; this gradually made its way into literary studies, an arrival whose presence was developed and amplified through the increasing presence of the discoveries of neuroscience (Zunshine 2015). Theories of how language worked now paid far greater attention to the presence and activity of the mind than structuralism and post-structuralism ever had; persons became active parties in the production of meaning, and as they did, the idea that they were simple products of language or other cultural codes became increasingly hard to argue persuasively.

Alongside political and theoretical arguments for agency were historical and literary arguments. To some it seemed odd to be arguing for the impossibility of agency in a period that was riven by intellectual and social change, in which the earth could be replaced by the sun at the center of the universe, and a king, in England, could be executed by representatives of his people. If cultural systems were so powerful, why were they being overturned? There seemed a great deal of historical evidence that people were able to step back from their culture's values and reassess them; to reconstruct, over time, even the paradigms (Kuhn 1962) by which they looked out on their natural, social, and political worlds. This is, of course, the activity of Seigel's reflective dimension, and, as Seigel pointed out, the present attacks on agency likewise demonstrated the presence of a reflective agency; Marx, Derrida, and Foucault all stood as rather optimistic examples of the limits of cultural power, being quite able to stand outside, and critique, the values and paradigms of their times.

### **Agency and Choice in *1 Henry 4***

The lasting and substantial effect of the attack on agency is to be seen in a wholesale re-invigoration of historicist approaches. For the questioning of the historical narrative around the coming of a new kind of subjectivity revealed with what broad brush-strokes that history, as it engaged with the literary record, had been drawn. Trilling's work, intellectually supple and self-questioning though it was, gives good evidence. Polonius's "to thine own self be true" (1.3.81) became a statement for Trilling which arrests the modern audience by its "lucid moral lyricism" (3). Trilling is well aware that we may be uncertain what one's true self is, but that Polonius's claim is largely intelligible to us in ways that Polonius and we might agree on he does not doubt, just as he does not question what precisely it is that Hamlet means when he talks about having "that within which passeth show" (1.2.85). If, however, the modern vocabulary of interiority is not yet available to Shakespeare, and so to Hamlet, what authorizes such an assumption? The ancient Greeks, as Taylor notes,

were famously able to formulate the injunction “know thyself”; but they did not have our, or a, sense of “the self” (113) as a noun; they conceptualized the distinction between their inner worlds and the outside world in ways wholly different from those in the modern West (Vernant and Vidal-Naquet [1972] 1981). Does a similar situation apply to Polonius’s “thine own self”?

The response to the exposure of the scantiness of evidence for a sense of self that might be shown to be coterminous with modern notions of personhood has been a renewed and more thorough exploration of the ways in which personhood was constituted in the early modern period. It is hard to overestimate the effect of this on current criticism. One might say that the main areas of this research have taken place in relation to bodies, to religion, and to objects; but that is a list that might easily be expanded to include animals, space, law, travel, friendship, time and nature among others. Through all these areas, related questions persist: to what extent is choice one’s own? what is meant by agency? what kinds of selves are envisaged in relation to, and produced by, the kinds of choices that are available to the person? are those selves ones that seem more familiar to, or more distant from us? The past is less present than it used to be.

Within this historicist resurgence it is the material dimensions of personhood which has claimed the greatest attention. Starting in the 1990s, a series of studies emerged of Elizabethan humoral theories of physiology. Schoenfeldt (1999) and Paster (1993) looked to recover the resources offered by a humoral vocabulary for discussing early modern interiority. Both argued for a sense of self that was far more embedded in, and permeable to, the nature of the surrounding world than is now the case. Summarizing his approach memorably as the call for a move from the balls to the belly, Schoenfeldt argued that early modern selves needed to be understood far more as the product of what a person put into their bodies, rather than as a product of the inherent drives pictured by Freudian psychology. Agency, in Schoenfeldt’s argument, was alive and well, and involved the regulation of one’s own body’s constitution; for one could become what one ate. The choices involved in eating became a test of ethical discrimination and moral virtue. Paster, by contrast, concentrated more on the impact of such permeability on the sense of a clear interior/ exterior divide within one’s sense of oneself. Taking as example Falstaff’s comment to Hal, early on in *1 Henry 4*, that he was “as melancholy as a gib cat or a lugged bear” (1.2.51), a simile that the Prince mischievously expanded to include old lions, lover’s lutes, a hare and the melancholy (filthy water) of Moor-ditch, she argued that Elizabethans saw themselves not as separate from, but as coextensive with a world in which passions had an ontological existence outside of the person, which independent existence prevented the barriers between humans, animals, plants, and the planet itself which would be erected – perhaps to our and the planet’s cost – through the later parts of the seventeenth century (Shannon 2013).

For Paster, then, not only was the early modern subject largely denied any self-authored agency, but the early modern person’s emotions themselves became social phenomena (Paster 2004); they inhabited quite distinct emotional universes from

those of the modern West. Others have sought to qualify this position (Pender 2010) or to suggest that the self is differently permeable at different times, for example when awake or when asleep (Sullivan 2012). I want to close this chapter, however, by arguing that such arguments over the nature of agency and choice within a humoral context, while important in themselves, are neither the main, nor only, paradigms of agency and choice within *1 Henry 4*. That is to make a wider point: cultures are complex, and striated in a host of ways. They have, in this context, various and concurrent systems of articulating the idea of the self; some of those, to use Raymond Williams' categories, are emergent, some dominant, and some residual (1977, 121–127). Plays may employ all of these; equally importantly, they may have their own ways of staging and exploring the agency implicit in choice in their own terms. They may, that is, have their own dramatic grammars of the self, and such grammars will themselves be one (or more) of a culture's systems of articulating the idea of the self.

The play within a play of the tavern scene in *1 Henry 4* concludes with Prince Henry (Hal) saying "I do, I will" (2.4.351). "I do, I will" is a fascinating and complex line, in the context of a discussion of agency and choice. Hal, who is here playing Henry 4, utters it in response to Falstaff, who is playing Hal, urging that while Henry 4 may banish Peto, Bardolph, or Poins from his (Falstaff-as-Hal's) company, "old Jack Falstaff" should be allowed to remain: "banish not him thy Harry's company, banish not him thy Harry's/company: banish plump Jack, and banish all the world" (2.4.348–350).

Falstaff is here, in the play within the play, not quite his own self. He is acting the role of Hal, as performed to Hal's Henry 4 (though he is also, of course, acting the role of Hal to Hal, showing Hal a version of himself which he hopes the Prince will recognize and wish to maintain and inhabit). In Falstaff-as-Hal's repeated "banish nots," one can sense a formulation being searched for, which is found and delivered in the final "banish plump Jack, and banish all the world." That "plump" is a particularly deft touch. It picks up a moment at the beginning of this section of the play within the play where Hal-as-Henry 4 had described Falstaff as "that trunk of humours, that bolting-hutch of beastliness, that swollen parcel of dropsies, that huge bombard of sack..." (2.4.329–330).

Falstaff-as-Hal is offering to transform Hal-as-Henry 4's humoral valuation of Falstaff. The explosively fat container of all humors, the comedy and conceit of which relies on an intimate understanding of a humoral world view, which both Prince and Falstaff clearly possess, is now offered up, in "plump", as a healthy, global plenitude. What is more, it is a plenitude that Falstaff knows the Prince loves. In a manner that complicates the line of Hal-as-Henry 4's attack on Falstaff, we have, earlier in the scene, heard Hal tell his friend Poins that he is himself "now of all humours that have showed themselves humours since the old days of goodman Adam" (2.4.73–74).

In characterizing and attacking Falstaff as a trunk of humors, then, Hal-as-Henry 4 is also attacking Falstaff as a kind of version of Hal. Hal-as-Henry 4 imagines Hal

becoming a kind of image or double of Falstaff; which is just what, though in a contrary way, Falstaff hopes his presentation, to the Hal who is playing Hal-as-Henry 4, of the Prince as the Prince and patron of plenitude, will produce. So Falstaff-as-Hal's recasting of the supposed explosive and dangerously contaminative humoral fatness of Falstaff as the plump richness of the world is thus also a kind of argument to Hal to be more accepting of an aspect of himself, which aspect, of course, includes the maintenance of his friendship with Falstaff.

Much is owed to the recent discussions of humoral vocabulary and the history of emotions in understanding these passages. Yet, at the same time, the play gives a very clear depiction of Falstaff and Hal using these vocabularies and the related conceptions of personhood to their own ends. Put simply, Hal does not for a moment think that a "trunk of humour" is a sufficient description of Falstaff; it is more a diminishing trap than a description. Hal's and Falstaff's imaginations and their conceptions of themselves, in other words, are not limited by these vocabularies and their paradigms. It is rather that the one is attempting to place the other in particular roles within their play, and that they sometimes use the vocabulary of a humoral understanding of personhood to do this. The interior of the tavern, and more specifically the play space, has become an imaginative, and intimately interior, space. The play within a play is a space of shared fantasy, in which Hal and Falstaff imagine possible future relationships, and possible future kinds of selves. Where Hamlet's thoughts had overwritten the skull he held in his hand, Hal and Falstaff act out, the each to the other, their future hopes and selves.

That staging of choice and identity makes plain its complicated and relational aspects. It invokes the material and social dimensions of personhood; but these are, here, largely reductions. Hal attempts to "reduce" Falstaff to his physiology or to a series of traditional social and theatrical roles. But Falstaff, not being simply those things, is able in return to stand outside them, and to translate his material presence to a sense of the healthy and delightful plenitude of the world. We watch these dramatic persons watching themselves, as others, whom they care for and love, watch them, from complicated multi-perspectival positions; in Seigel's terms, this is highly reflective, and very active.

In the end, it is Hal-as-Henry's "I do, I will," plus the arrival of present history in the form of the Sheriff's knocking at the tavern door, that decides the matter. Yet that declaration, while simple in phrasing, adds further perspectives. For the "I will" introduces another dramatic person into the imagined scene: Hal as Henry 5. The son, as the father, suddenly jumps forward in time to imagine himself as the future King Henry, the son as king.

The tavern scene, in its multi-dimensional dramatization of personhood, is every bit as complicated as Hamlet's parsing of a skull into a sense of where one's own being might stand in the sweep of human history; it is just as full of other or imagined persons, even if these are not spirit-forms of father figures or biblical killers or classical models. Where *Hamlet* gives us a lyrical exploration of the self-constituting nature of subjectivity, *1 Henry 4* offers subjectivity as the product of intimate self-staging, dependent on and responsive to the desires of those very complicated things

known as other people. The shared nature of that intimate self-staging is one of the aspects which give the scene its emotional power.

Hal's "I do, I will," as a declaration of identity, has similarities with Hamlet's "This is I, Hamlet the Dane." Like Hamlet's statement, Hal's statement seems terribly – appallingly, perhaps – inadequate to what the audience has just seen. But where Hamlet's statement is wholly unequal to the lyric complexity of the scene in which it is uttered, to the extent that the freighting with meaningfulness of the "I" makes it very difficult to know quite what it is Hamlet means when he says it, it is the equanimity and clarity of Hal's lucid pragmatism that threatens to exceed our understanding, in what it is willing to give up or exclude. A kingship of infinite space, with or without bad dreams, is not for him; it is the mortal crown, with all that involves, that he wishes on his head.

If drama may offer its own mode – or modes or mixed-modes – of thought, and provides its own grammars and forms of personhood, the primacy of the purchase of historicist approaches on particular acts of literary interpretation is questionable. (This is a matter quite different from questioning the importance of historicist approaches to our understanding of literature.) For the plays may be less reflections of their period than attempts to think through the questions of the time in their own terms. They very well may, in other words, have novel things to say, which critics can only write about in paraphrase, or in terms of their later cultural effects.

Seigel suggests theorists of personhood can be divided into those who predominantly take a single or a multi-dimensional approach. From these examples, it seems reasonable to suggest that dramatic literature tends towards the multi-dimensional account of personhood, given the physical presence of the actors, their inter-relationships with one another, and – within Elizabethan drama at least – the widespread sense that they have given roles to play, from which their characters stand at a distance and which they may find more or less satisfactory to enact. Righter (1962) some time ago drew attention to the peculiar relevancy of *Totus mundus agit histrionem* for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and exploring the idea of the play, in the play's own languages, is still a good idea. Early modern drama does not only reflect notions of what it is to be a person which were current in early modern English culture, but also offers its own grammar and language by which to understand what it might be to be a person; it depicts selfhood in its own terms, which typically differ from other contemporary accounts of what personhood may be in its use of the dramatized experience of consciousness, which is sometimes non-rational and unreasonable, as a foundation for the continuity of a sense of self.

### What to Read Next

Calderwood (1983); Pender (2010); Seigel (2005); Taylor (1989); MacIntyre (1981).

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# Religion and the Religious Turn

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## **The Religious Turn in Shakespeare Studies**

In his 2004 biography of Shakespeare (1564–1616), *Will in the World*, Stephen Greenblatt notes the survival into the late sixteenth century of the great mystery cycles, affiliated with the Catholic Church and its liturgical calendar and staged by the different guilds of major towns and cities: “Associated originally with a grand procession to honor the Eucharist, the production of a mystery cycle was a major civic enterprise, involving large numbers of people and significant expenditure.” Under attack by Protestant reformers, the last mystery cycle was performed at Coventry in 1579, “when Will was fifteen,” and Greenblatt speculates that the young man and his family might have seen these works of universal church history and civic self-display performed in their final years (36–37). The new public theater that Shakespeare would go on to practice was specifically prohibited from dramatizing Biblical stories, and defenders of secular drama usually pointed to classical rather than medieval sources to legitimate their art. Yet, as Kurt Schreyer (2014) has argued, the public theater shared themes, costumes, and stage properties with older religious forms, and Shakespeare and his contemporaries adapted and recollected hagiographic, sacramental, and “mysterious” elements in their secular dramaturgy. Speech and performance practices native to church settings crossed over into the public theater (Smith 2016), and, as Jeffrey Knapp notes, many Anglican clergy acted in university plays as part of their training and even wrote plays for the stage (2002, 3).

Greenblatt, Knapp, and Schreyer have all contributed to what Ken Jackson and Arthur Marotti (2004) dubbed “The Turn to Religion in Early Modern English Studies.” Much of the work documented in Jackson and Marotti’s review essay recovered the vitality of English Catholicism in response to the commonly received



narrative of progressive secularization aided by the triumph of Protestantism (Sommerville 1992). The religious turn was fueled on the one side by the New Historicist interest in cultural differences and the dynamics of power, an orientation that revalued English Catholics from remnants of a bygone era into culture-conscious dissidents. It was abetted on the other side by an interest in revitalizing some of the impulses of critical theory: thinkers as diverse as Walter Benjamin (1892–1940), Erich Auerbach (1892–1957), Ernst Kantorowicz (1895–1963), Emmanuel Levinas (1906–1995), Carl Schmitt (1888–1985), Jacob Taubes (1923–1987), Hannah Arendt (1906–1975), and Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) harbored complex relationships to the intrication of Christianity and Judaism as well as to divisions within Christendom (Hammill and Lupton 2012). What has united the historicist and the theoretical wings in the religious turn is an interest in moving beyond models of demystification that equate religion with superstition, untruth, or ideology. The religious turn was (and is) not only *about* religion, but was (and is) also willing to take religious life and thought seriously, as affirmative possibilities animated by their own ongoing development in response to changes in the larger culture, often incorporating and accommodating rather than simply rejecting competing knowledges such as science and rival truth practices such as art (Cummings 2013). New readings of faith (Kuzner 2015), blessing (Budick 2013), and forgiveness (Beckwith 2011) in Shakespeare creatively combine historical and philosophical analysis in order to approach drama as a resource for living. The religious turn construes the religious landscape of Renaissance England as a mixed terrain shaped by uneven development rather than strict teleology, composed of layered formations in which past and present often touch each other in unexpected ways (Duffy [1992] 2005; Harris 2009).

Phenomenology, the science of how things appear to embodied subjects, has played a key role in efforts at reclaiming a richer picture of religious life and the interplay between secular and sacred forms in the English Renaissance. By describing modes of being in a world saturated by vibrancy and value, phenomenology invited modern and post-modern theologians to set aside the thorny and unanswerable question of God's existence in favor of studying the effects, images, and cognitive states solicited by acts of devotion (James 1902; Levinas [1974] 1998; Marion 2013). In *Reformations of the Body: Idolatry, Sacrifice, and Early Modern Theater*, Jennifer Waldron (2013) argues that the living, sensing, feeling body put forward by Martin Luther (1483–1546) and John Calvin (1509–1564), phenomenologists *avant la lettre*, bears God's creative imprint and could thus be opposed to the "dead images" and "dead letters" of Catholic sacramental and iconic practices. Whereas Waldron emphasizes the theatrical resources and participatory ethics of Protestantism, Kurt Schreyer in *Shakespeare's Medieval Craft* (2014) emphasizes the continuities between Catholic and Elizabethan architectures of experience. He shows, for example, how *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1595–1596) and *Macbeth* (c. 1606) recycled medieval stage properties and soundscapes to create a public drama that resounded with the special effects of an earlier theatrical regime. Matthew Smith (2016), in readings of Renaissance plays, sermons, and ballads, argues that theatricality and

belief, far from being at odds with each other in Protestant England, were actually integrated through the environments of performance and the expectations that both audiences and actors brought to the several places of the stage. Finally, object-oriented approaches, a tactile offshoot of phenomenology, look to animals, environments, and creaturely life to understand post-human interactions (Bennett 2010; Cohen 2012), sometimes incorporating ecclesiastical and devotional object-routines into studies of Renaissance texts (Spolsky 2007; Shannon 2013; Yates, 2003, 2016; Lupton 2016).

Much of the most inventive and interesting work in the religious turn's first phase, especially in Shakespeare studies, concerned a reevaluation of Catholicism, including a renewed attention to biographical materials that point to the Catholic allegiances of Shakespeare's family and his possible early ties to recusant nobility and intellectuals (Milward 1973; Greenblatt [2001] 2013; Dutton *et al.* 2004; Milward 2005). Accommodating this work on the varieties and persistence of Catholicism, much of the most recent work on Shakespeare and religion aims to construe a position for Shakespeare that favors nondogmatic and inclusive religious settlements, whether this is called *politique* (Wilson 2004), Anglican (Kastan 2013), Erasmian (Knapp 2002; Wehrs 2011), tolerant (Sterrett 2013), messianic (Jackson 2011), Abrahamic (Jackson 2015), or post-confessional (Betteridge 2013). David Kastan's description of Shakespeare as a "Parish Anglican, a tolerant, largely habitual Christian" (Kastan 2013, 37), identifies the Elizabethan settlement between Catholicism and Puritanism as the zone occupied by Shakespearean drama. Thomas Betteridge's (2013) championing of the term "post-confessional" captures Shakespeare's desire to move beyond the Catholic-Protestant conflict; Betteridge suggests that the late plays "rescue devotional words such as 'grace' and 'forgiveness' from confessional contamination" (225). Richard Wilson mounts a far more stringent argument, insisting on the Catholic context of Shakespeare's early life and recovering allegories of a disavowed militant Catholicism in almost every play. Yet Wilson ultimately describes Shakespeare as settling for a "politique" neutralism with respect to controversy like that of Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592); although Wilson's account is more conflictual than Betteridge's or Kastan's, he also sees Shakespeare as inventing ways to reconcile and incorporate Catholic and Protestant positions into his drama. Similarly, Alison Shell (2010) and Gillian Woods (2013) find Catholic strains in Shakespeare's work but demur from claiming him as a Catholic writer. Some scholars of the religious turn reach beyond the Catholic-Protestant divide to probe Shakespeare's participation in a broader and more various monotheistic matrix. Understanding St. Paul (c.5–c.65) as a cosmopolitan messianic Jew, for example, has meant acknowledging Paul's role in Catholic, Hebrew, and philosophical as well as Protestant lines of thought (Badiou [1997] 2003; Agamben [2000] 2005; Kneidel 2008; Lupton 2011; Miller 2014). So too, the passage of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob through the three monotheisms and into literary works as diverse as Shakespeare's *King Lear* (1605–1606), Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851) and Kierkegaard's *Fear and Trembling* ([1843] 1939) has afforded a series of mediations among disparate confessions and world views (Jackson 2015; McNulty 2014).

In the remainder of this chapter, I test the appropriateness of another term, “post-secular,” for gauging Shakespeare’s interactions with religion. The idea of post-secularism is associated with the later writings of Jürgen Habermas and Charles Taylor, as well as with thinkers who challenge the identification of modernity and secularization from the alternative positions of post-colonialism (Talal Asad) and feminism (Rosi Braidotti). Summarizing this range of approaches, Zhange Ni writes, “The postsecular is particularly attentive to the fluidity of religion as a constructed category, to the varieties of non-modern, non-Western religious traditions, and to the flourishing of new types of ‘spiritual’ (although almost invariably embodied) practices” (2016). Post-secularism may help us grasp the range of impulses captured in recent approaches to Shakespeare and religion, including Greenblatt’s, Wilson’s, and Shell’s sense of a deep personal and intergenerational conflict leading to an ethically ambivalent but creatively productive resolution; Beckwith’s and Betteridge’s attention to Shakespeare’s positive retooling of theological terms for common use; and the interest of Jackson in the Old Testament – which means Jewish and Hebrew – sources of much of Shakespeare’s thought.

### Post-Secularism: Definitions and Dilemmas

The term “post-secular” is sometimes used to refer to the failure of secularization in modernity, as manifested in the resurgence of violent and intolerant fundamentalisms among all three monotheisms. “Post-secularism” also carries a more positive sense, to describe the rapprochement with religious ways of thinking and forms of life effected from within a scientific and pluralistic worldview. I distinguish four basic strands of post-secular theory today: the *weak post-secularism* of Jürgen Habermas, who has grudgingly incorporated religious pluralism into his account of political rationality; the *strong post-secularism* of phenomenologist Charles Taylor, who argues for the ethical value of religious experience in the contemporary West; the *non-Christian post-secularism* of Talal Asad, who focuses on the Western bias of the secularization thesis; and the *eco-feminist post-secularism* of Rosi Braidotti, who seeks to unlock the affinity-potential of religious forms of life in a global setting fraught with social and environmental injustice.

The Frankfurt School theorist Jürgen Habermas spent much of his career furthering what he called “the rationalization of the lifeworld,” a project in which religion largely functioned as a deterrent to the successful practice of communicative reason in the public sphere. In the decade after 9/11, however, Habermas turned his attention to the persistence of religion and the real challenges this phenomenon poses to pluralist democracies (Casanova 2013, 27–28). “Translation” is a key term for Habermas, whether he is describing the genealogy of secular concepts such as responsibility, autonomy, and emancipation from religious sources (Habermas 2006, 258) or enjoining secular democracies to engage in a “complementary learning process” that “translates relevant contributions from a religious language into a publicly accessible one” (260). For Habermas, religion is something more than a necessary

evil, since its promises to yield “*not yet exhausted* semantic potentials” (emphasis his) as well as precious forms of solidarity with the capacity to strengthen our troubled public spheres (Habermas [2012] 2013, 352–353). Habermas is not, however, interested in analyzing religion as a social or existential good apart from its significance for democracy.

Pursuing a more aggressively affirmative line of post-secularism, Charles Taylor argues for the value of transcendence in “a secular age,” the title of his 800+ page book from 2007. He argues that inhabitants of Western modernity live in an “immanent frame,” an autonomous and internally coherent order experienced and acknowledged as distinct from any supernatural or transcendent one. Counterintuitively, perhaps, it was Judaism and Christianity, as well as certain strains in classical philosophy and religion, that bequeathed us the immanent frame, by exiling the pagan gods and demonic and magical powers from the world of nature (553–554). What came *from religion* also led to the increasing *marginalization of religion*: “It is in the nature of a self-sufficient immanent order that it can be envisaged without reference to God; and very soon the proper blueprint is attributed to Nature” (543). Yet, although the immanent frame invites its complete separation from any concept of the transcendent, Taylor argues, it does not require it. The secular age permits a choice as to whether its immanent frame is closed off from or open to a transcendent being, force, or principle. *Post-secularism is the condition of that choice: it is secular*, because it presumes the immanent frame itself, but it is *post-secular* because the immanent frame continues to host the possibility of its own openness, as witnessed in the persistence and even flourishing of religious ways of life in the West, including charismatic forms like Pentecostalism.

Although Habermas and Taylor differ in the degree, orientation, and enthusiasm of their evaluations of religious life and experience, they both avow the Western, Enlightenment ideals of reason as shared goods and necessary conditions for modernity. Yet the term post-secular has also gained currency among thinkers wanting to account for non-Western forms of modernization. Talal Asad places special emphasis on the way in which the categories of the secular and the religious have been used to denigrate nonwestern peoples and ways of life, especially Muslim ones. For Asad (2003), post-secularism as a political program means critiquing secularism as a doctrine used to justify expansionist and interventionist policies and becoming attentive to the different forms of time and space that accompany the varieties of religious and political experience outside (and increasingly inside) the West. Taking aim at Habermas and Taylor from a feminist and ecological as well as a global perspective, Rosi Braidotti is interested in recovering the religious sources of emancipatory philosophy and politics (2009, 2013) in order to craft an “ecophilosophy of multiple belongings” (2009, 48). Asad and Braidotti push the post-secularism of Habermas and Taylor towards more expansive settlements that take the globe and the planet as their reference points.

What, then, might it mean to consider Shakespeare as contributing to or anticipating post-secularism? Shakespeare is antithetical to post-secularism conceived simply as the resurgence of religion. As Alison Shell reveals in her careful comparison

of Shakespeare's work and the poetry of his distant relative, the Jesuit, martyr and devotional poet Robert Southwell (1561–1595), Shakespeare chose to “subsume religious or other ideological considerations to aesthetic ones” while Southwell was “impatient with all cultural activity not obviously directed towards important [i.e., religious] ends” (Shell 2010, 117). Anti-secular zeal was represented in Shakespeare's lifetime by radical Puritanism, militant Catholicism, and expansionist Islam, and can hardly be said to receive positive press in his works. If handled with care, however, post-secularism in its more affirmative senses can be used to bring forth aspects of Shakespeare's evolving relationship to religious thought and life.

### Weak Post-secularism: Shakespeare/Habermas

Habermas is an unwilling exponent and late convert to post-secularism, which he has developed more as a way to accommodate the threat of religious pluralism to the public sphere than as an existentially attractive strand of democracy viable over the long term. Like Habermas ([1962] 1989) Shakespeare furthered a public sphere capable of entertaining a range of potential interlocutors, though some – such as the possibly-Puritan Malvolio (*Twelfth Night* [1601]) and Angelo (*Measure for Measure* [1604]) as well as the Jewish Shylock (*The Merchant of Venice* [1596–1597]) – are more thoroughly chastened than others. Shakespeare's plays offered an alternative to the schismatic vortex into which religious conflicts were driving the England and Europe of his day; in doing so they contributed, along with the works of other dramatists and theater-makers of the period, to building the foundations for the inclusive public sphere recovered by Habermas in the coffee houses of the late eighteenth century.

Weak post-secularism takes the preservation of the public sphere as its aim, and understands the accommodation of religious pluralism as a necessary element in that process, but not as an end in itself. Much Shakespearean comedy shares such an aim. (On Shakespeare and Habermas, see Wilson and Yachnin 2010.) *The Comedy of Errors*'s (1594) decidedly classical form, derived from the Latin playwright Plautus (c.254–184 BCE), its light farcical style, its rationalist interest in correcting “errors” in thought and perception, and its Inns of Court origins all make it a fitting home for proto-Habermasian thinking about religion and the public sphere. The play takes place in Ephesus, whose quarrelsome inhabitants were reminded by St. Paul in Ephesians 2: 14 (c.62) that Christ “hathe made of bothe one, and hathe broken the stoppe of the particion wall” (Geneva Bible 1560). The play ends with the servant twins walking hand in hand “like brother and brother” (V.i.426), each refusing to claim seniority as they prepare to join a communal “gossiping” or Christening feast (V.i.42). The differences between Catholics and Protestants, Shakespeare seems to imply, are like those of twins separated at birth: each may have developed along a separate path, but their commonalities far outweigh their differences, and neither can justly claim to be older than the other. Patricia Parker (1983) and Jeffrey Knapp (2002, 56–57) are among those who have read *The Comedy of Errors* with these

questions in mind. The play's interest in the role of translation (Parker) and good fellowship (Knapp) in moderating the religious violence brought about by controversy aligns the Shakespeare of *Errors* with Habermas' weak post-secularism. By including Catholic characters and ecclesiastical spaces alongside classical, humanist, and Protestant forms and sources, Shakespeare suggests a public sphere that is post-secular as well as secular. Cohabitation and a willingness to "translate" were the minimal conditions of both a public theater and a court entertainment machine that hosted audiences composed of persons with complex relationships to the Reformation and its new regimes of belonging and belief.

### Strong Post-secularism: Shakespeare/Taylor

Charles Taylor's interest lies not in the public sphere per se so much as in the attitudes towards action, value, and meaning that secular and religious orientations yield when pursued from within the immanent frame bequeathed by monotheism to modernity. "We all see our lives," Taylor writes, "as having a certain moral/spiritual shape. Somewhere, in some activity, or condition ... life is fuller, richer, deeper, more worthwhile, more admirable, more what it should be" (2007, 5). Taylor's central concern lies in how we define, recognize, cultivate, disavow, or otherwise conceive of that fullness, not only in conscious thought and discourse, but in the background pictures and underlying schemata by which we encounter and interpret our worlds. Whereas Habermas's interests are political and epistemological, Taylor's are phenomenological and existential, concerning "the whole context of understanding in which our moral, spiritual or religious experience and search takes place" (3).

Like Taylor, Shakespeare sometimes takes a stance towards religious experience that is stronger than mere tolerance or inclusion, by experimenting through the theatrical medium itself with different modes, traditions and techniques by which feelings of fullness and attunement as well as attitudes of care and receptivity might be accessed and cultivated – or, in the great tragedies, destroyed and undone. Macbeth, reporting the death of Duncan to the nobility assembled in his castle, declares,

Had I but died an hour before this chance  
I had lived a blessed time; for from this instant  
There's nothing serious in mortality.  
All is but toys. (II.iii.93–96)

The word "blessèd," enunciated here with an irony at once tender and devastating, names those moments of gratitude when we feel ourselves not fully responsible for possessing the goods that we enjoy (be it children, sunsets, or a good meal). In recalling the blessings he once enjoyed, Macbeth recognizes his permanent exile

from that condition through the deed he has committed. *Macbeth* (1606) relies on Christian theories of the will (Ribner 1959) and medieval dramatic forms (Schreyer 2014), yet is remarkably secular and even psychoanalytic in its analysis of interior states of mind (Favila 2001), including intentionality, criminality and guilt (Curran 2012). Written in the context of the Catholic Gunpowder Plot and its Jesuit-hunting aftermath, the play is not unconcerned with questions of religious pluralism, violence, and public speech. Yet the play's real interests lie more with understanding how secular ambition imperfectly frees itself from religious compunctions in a rapidly modernizing world (Bristol 2011; Lowrance 2012). The death of Duncan echoes with the death of God, and the night noises that first prompt and then haunt the insomniac Macbeth (bells, beetles, owls, and the cry of women) are the sounds made of the *frame becoming immanent*, banishing the demons and witches of an earlier world view. Taylor's description of routines that suddenly lose their meaning (6) resonates with Macbeth's horror at the endlessly empty march of "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow" (V.iv.19). The play itself is deeply concerned with sense- and meaning-saturated states of fullness and emptiness, affective mixes that flow from the moral actions and physical environments of the protagonists. We could mount a similar reading of *King Lear* (1605–1606), which revisits the world of Job (c.6 BCE?), from dungheap to whirlwind, as the frame of the cosmos becomes immanent (Marx 2000; Hamlin 2013).

### Non-Christian Post-secularism: Shakespeare/Asad

Both Habermas and Taylor write from within a Christian world view, though Habermas far more than Taylor is concerned to address Europe's new and not-so-new Muslim communities. The challenges of Muslim migration and pluralism are central to Asad's "anthropology of secularism," a phrase that reverses the usual ethnographic reflex (ethnographies of "others") in order to disclose the many shapes that secularism takes in both Western and non-Western contexts. Like Asad, though not nearly as acutely, Shakespeare was aware of rivals and precursors to Christianity. *Othello* (c. 1603–1604), *The Merchant of Venice* (c. 1595–1596), and *The Tempest* (c. 1611) are among the works by Shakespeare that explicitly engage the relationship of Christianity to other monotheisms and faith practices – and not only to the honor of Christendom, as many readers have argued (Adelman 2008). Clayton Crockett, defining post-secularism as "a beyond in and of secularism," cites Derrida on *The Merchant of Venice*: "the entire play proceeds 'as if the business of translation were first of all an Abrahamic matter between the Jew, the Christian, and the Muslim'" (Crockett 2013, 24, 32). The play's forced conversion of Shylock prevents the kind of conversation and mutual translation that Habermas wants for the republics of contemporary Europe: in this sense we could say that the play favors the early Habermas of communicative reason and civic proceduralism over the late Habermas of postsecularism (Lupton 2006, 100–102, 209). Yet *Merchant's* Abrahamic debts and continuities (Jackson 2015, 96–113) and Shakespeare's willingness to turn an

anthropological eye on Venice itself also affiliates the play with the prehistory of Asad's global post-secularism.

In *Measure for Measure*, the two strands of Christendom are no longer the twin brothers of *Error's* Ephesus but an anxious and inhibited couple (the Catholic Isabella and the Puritan Angelo) divided by genuine differences of outlook, temperament, and commitment. Such enemies could never marry each other; instead their animosities must be resolved through a civil authority – Duke Vincentio – who institutes an alternative set of unions that stabilize a public sphere pushed out of kilter by both libertine and religious extremes. Insofar as the Duke still represents the church (he spends most of the play disguised as a friar), *Measure for Measure* suggests the persistence of religion and religions in a body politic composed of multiple limbs (Rust 2013, 103–138).

According to Asad, secular states, far from guaranteeing toleration, put into play “different structures of ambition and fear” (8); the same could be said of Shakespeare's Venice and Vienna, which are atremble with anxiety and suspicion. And what about Verona? Modern productions often map the feud between the Montagues and the Capulets (*Romeo and Juliet*, 1594–1595), bred of an “airy word” (I.i.89), onto more substantial conflicts such as Anglo/Latino, Hindu/Muslim, Israeli/Palestinian, and Shia-Sunni animosities (Munro 2016). In such productions, twins divided by mere error become enemies representing rival truths, a forceful remapping that makes the hostilities of the play appear more urgent while rendering the conciliation more fanciful (Rokem 1995).

### **Ecofeminist Post-secularism: Shakespeare/Braidotti**

I have suggested that Shakespeare's early comedies explore a Habermasian public sphere; that his mature tragedies dramatize the existential dilemmas of Taylor's immanent frame; and that the V-plays (Venice, Vienna, Verona) address the distinctive and potentially irreconcilable worlds inhabited by different faith groups. I recommend that we read the late romances, especially *Pericles* (1606–1608) and *Cymbeline* (1610), in relation to Braidotti's globe- and planet-conscious feminist post-secularism. Although Braidotti like Asad calls attention to the Western bias in Habermas' and Taylor's variations on post-secularism (2013, 180–183), her emphasis is ecofeminist more than postcolonial. According to Braidotti, “the post-secular predicament stands for a vision of consciousness that links critique to affirmation, instead of negativity, and ... shows traces of residual spirituality as well as a distinctly planetary dimension” (2011, 170). Shakespeare's late plays explore creaturely life in its existential, environmental, and theological dimensions, an investigation conducted through the travails of two of his most memorable and original, as well as resilient and thoughtful, female protagonists, Marina and Imogen (Lupton 2013; Martin 2015). If in *Macbeth* and *King Lear* the gods are in retreat and are laughing as they leave, in the romances, Shakespeare explores ways to invite them back in.



*Pericles* is the first of Shakespeare's late romances. *Pericles* is a self-consciously archaizing play that draws on the Book of Jonah (5–4 BCE) and medieval saints' lives and miracle plays along with Greek romance (Womack 1999). *Pericles* was performed in a recusant (non-conforming Catholic) household in Yorkshire in 1610, along with *King Lear* and a "seditious interlude" dramatizing the life of Saint Christopher (Wilson 2004, 271–293). In Thomas Betteridge's formulation, *Pericles* yearns for "a pre-confessional world in which liturgical words, the language of faith, united rather than divided Christians" (2013, 225). *Pericles* maps the Book of Jonah's concern with the relationship between Jews and gentiles onto the division between Catholics and Protestants in a period of religious terrorism and state surveillance (Lupton 2015).

Whereas the titular hero Pericles is largely passive, his daughter Marina exercises an unusual degree of autonomy. Sold by pirates into sex slavery in Mytilene, on the island of Lesbos, Marina talks her way out of defloration in the brothel to which she has been sold by pirates. Borrowing her script from medieval saints' lives and exiting the brothel with a little extra cash, she founds a school for girls at the watery edge of the city. She holds her classes in a "leafy shelter" (V.i.53) near the shore, a structure whose temporary character suggests the creaturely and sojourning character of the human condition as well as the openness of the immanent frame within which the play's actions unfold. A new Jonah as well as a new Sappho (d. c. 612 BCE), Marina is an agent of cosmopolitan translation among Hebrew, Greek, Pauline, and Catholic traditions and styles of comportment, exercised under the sign of hope, not fear. Braidotti writes, "At the heart of my research project lies an ethics that respects vulnerability while actively constructing social horizons of hope" (2009, 121–122). Hope is one of Paul's three theological virtues, along with love and faith; earlier in the play, the shipwrecked Pericles courts the princess Thaisa with an emblem consisting of a stunted branch and the words, "*In hac spe vivo* [In that hope I live]" (II.iii.44). Marina has taken that single branch and multiplied it into the porous armature of a collective space where she and her "fellow maids" (V.i.51) supplement vulnerability with resilience in order to build Braidotti's "social horizons of hope."

*Cymbeline* is another play that features a passive father and a strong daughter in a classical space – this time Roman Britain – striated with theological allusions. King Cymbeline or Kymbeline was famous for one thing only: during his reign, Jesus Christ (c. 4 BCE–c.33) was born (Moffett 1962). Yet direct reference to or knowledge of the Nativity is always deferred in the play (Ebery 2002). It is as if Shakespeare had chosen Cymbeline's reign because of the Nativity, but then rigorously suspended direct reference to Bethlehem in order to acknowledge the multiple sources and possible other itineraries of Isaiah's (c. 8C BCE) prophecies. The play is post-secular in so far as Shakespeare builds a poetic and theatrical space that is rich with historical, mythological, and Scriptural trains of thought, including Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Job as well as Psyche, Diana, Cleopatra, and Lucrece (Simmonds 1992). At the end of *Cymbeline*, Britain has conquered Rome on the battlefield, but then legally resubmits to Rome's authority. The syncretic world-building of the play welcomes a range of readers to consider its pointed internationalism and anti-schismatic message as well as to evaluate the role of magical thinking in effecting these resolutions.

*Cymbeline*'s central birth involves not a baby boy but an adult woman, in the form of Imogen's successive achievement of new forms of public identity, commitment, and relationship, victories accomplished through speech and action. Whereas her husband Posthumus receives a divine vision, Imogen becomes herself through primarily human means, acting in concert with other persons. She acts, moreover, in response to the teeming world of nature and her own creaturely estate: not unlike Marina setting up her school in a "leafy shelter," Imogen becomes a "cave-keeper" (IV.ii.xxx) in the Welsh mountains, artfully orchestrating new forms of order in response to the affordances of the locale. The courage evinced by Imogen's departure from the sheltered life of the court is matched by the ingenuity and care with which she enters into new, more provisional and itinerant conditions of dwelling. In both her exit from the palace and her entry into new forms of subsistence, dressed first as a franklin's wife and then as a boy page, she avoids self-sacrifice by tempering her fidelity to her husband Posthumus with anger at his slander, a sense of her own merit, and a willingness to imagine and indeed pursue other lives. Both Imogen and Marina, I would suggest, are "post-secular saints": *saints*, because their stories draw on medieval hagiography and accommodate Catholic audiences; *secular*, because they become themselves through the humanist practice of action and speech; and "*post-*" because their stories rework religious narratives and virtue-discourses in a new space shaped by environmental attunement and a willingness to listen, translate, and learn. What Rosi Braidotti, citing William Connolly, says of post-secularism can be extended to Shakespeare's Marina and Imogen: they exemplify an "'ethos of engagement' that allows for affect, viscosity, and wider modes of connections" than those afforded by either secularism proper or by the post-secular variants pursued by Habermas, Taylor, and Asad (2012, 203).

### Conclusion: Post-secular Shakespeare?

I have mapped four vectors of post-secularism onto some works of Shakespeare, with an aim to better understanding the qualities of Shakespeare's engagement with religion. To qualify as post-secular, an idea or practice might:

- 1 Translate between religious and profane meanings and spheres of influence or activity, toward the goal of strengthening public life (Habermas);
- 2 Address the phenomenology of both secular and religious responses to a world in which supernatural forces no longer reside (Taylor);
- 3 Draw attention to hostile or competing identities (Asad); or
- 4 Engage space, place, and creaturely life from the perspective of care (Braidotti).

It may appear that this chapter builds from Habermas to Braidotti. Yet the rationalism of Habermas, the Christianity of Taylor, the relativism of Asad, and the vitalism of Braidotti each represent both a strength and a limit, and thus supplement and correct each other. All of the paradigms, moreover, have the capacity to exhibit

a foundational reach. The theory of speech put forward by Habermas is manifested in Shakespearean drama as an art of action in which true courage begins with the risk of appearing before others. The structure of the Shakespearean theater was – and is – itself a kind of immanent frame in Taylor’s sense, identified with the globe and obeying its own internal laws of fictional coherence and stage management, yet remaining exposed to the heavens above. Asad insists on the vastness of that globe and its many loci of secular and religious experiment and conflict, while Braidotti’s attention to relationality, autopoiesis and the posthuman condition resonates in Shakespearean theater as an environmental art of assemblage and affordance.

Shakespeare could also, of course, be read without any of these paradigms at all. Indeed, it is odd to use the word “post-secular” to describe a moment when secularization was still very much a work in progress, let alone a state to be overcome or revisited. Yet I submit that post-secularism can help capture Shakespeare’s entertainment of multiple religious sensibilities in an artistic medium – public theater – that both borrowed from sacred literature and liturgy and was run as a secular institution. Post-secularism speaks to the sense expressed by many scholars that Shakespeare felt implicated in the bloody controversies of his day but also strived to invent means to both keep his distance from and make his peace with them. Shakespeare’s dramatic poetry offers a living framework for integrating, analyzing, evaluating, and practicing the post-secular predicament in which we find ourselves. This work of reflection and engagement can happen in classrooms and theaters; in nontraditional settings, such as prisons, shelters, or churches; and in scenes of life and styles of relationship rendered newly pellucid by their coincidence with a Shakespearean problem or image. When I study *Pericles* with groups of older adults, we work together to enact and expand the play’s themes of aging, mental illness, and public health, and we practice declamation, interpretation, and discussion as keys to mental agility and spiritual refreshment as well as community formation. This work connects us in an odd way to that Catholic household in Yorkshire that hosted the play in 1610 as part of its own clandestine worship practices, and back even further to the great medieval cycle plays that unfolded between church and public square.

### What to Read Next

Cummings and Simpson (2010); Greenblatt ([2001] 2013); Hadot (2002); Kastan (2013); Shell (2010).

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# Desire and Representation

*Simon Ryle*

No desire is more natural than the desire for knowledge. So begins Aristotle's *Metaphysics*. In recognition and imitation of Aristotle (384–322 BCE), this same sentence also opens Michel Eyquem de Montaigne's "On Experience," the essay that marks the apogee of the French philosopher's monumental *Essais*, that "book of one substance with its author" ([1580] 2003, Book 2.18, 755). At the culmination of his writing life, Aristotle's dictum comes to name the "natural" impulses driving Montaigne's quest to know himself. Montaigne realizes that he finds himself – and that he has repeatedly found himself – in the instance of his essayistic questing (Frame 1982). Yet alongside his desire for knowledge of himself, runs – from the opening of the *Essais* – an equal, if differently problematic desire for the knowledge of desire. "We are never 'at home,'" Montaigne wrote in the first edition of the *Essais*:

we are always outside ourselves. Fear, desire, hope, impel us towards the future; they rob us of feelings and concern for what now is, in order to spend time over what will be – even when we shall be no more. ([1580] 2003, Book 1.3, 11)

Just this double sense of desire as natural to man's nature and a central aspect of what takes him unnaturally beyond it, of desire as both man's home and loss of home, is taken up by Shakespeare. In *As You Like It*, Touchstone depicts desire as a form of entrapment that is proper to man: "As the ox hath his bow, sir, the horse his curb, and the falcon her bells, so man hath his desires" (3.3.51–52). As the bow, curb, and bells control and delimit the range and freedom of their respective animal's movements, so too in their desire men may locate the structures that restrict and guide their potential. Touchstone's desire is herein far removed from the dark inner longings that Macbeth perceives within himself: "Stars hide your fires,/Let not light see my



black and deep desires" (1.4.50–51). To take these two claims together, in Shakespeare's engagement with the semantic field denoted by the word, desire names both the enframing circumscription that for Touchstone defines man's passage and delimitation, and the obscure, intimate impetus that propels the Thane of Cawdor beyond the confines of hierarchical social order. Desire holds these characters tight, and casts them away; it forces them into inescapable social relations, and rips through the fragile veil of society. Desire names both their home and loss of home.

In Jacques Derrida's profound meditation on home and hospitality, he locates an "axiom" of "self-limitation" or "contradiction" in all hospitality ([1999] 2000, 14). I cannot welcome you to my home, the French deconstructionist notes, without affirming my ownership, that is to say my mastery of the spatial, situational relations in play. This is the paralysis on the threshold "that must be overcome" for there to be "true" hospitality: "Hospitality can only take place beyond hospitality" ([1999] 2000, 14). Derrida's threshold "beyond" the threshold of home, brilliantly, if unwittingly, describes the zone in which Renaissance desire operates. Veering between a conquestal, colonizing set of claims made upon self-identity, and a defamiliarizing realization of the instability of subjecthood, the outcast/at home dialectic of Renaissance desire seems almost to anticipate post-structuralism's project of deconstructing the traditional philosophical oppositions that constitute, in Derrida's words, the "violent hierarchy" (Culler [1983] 2007, 85). (As Suzanne Guerlac (1996, 6) has it: "If there is a single term that post-structuralism could not live without, it is 'transgression.'") With its re-circulating desire to know desire, the Renaissance re-makes the "natural" Aristotelian desire for knowledge – by which Aristotle foregrounds and stabilizes the authority of his philosophy – as an endlessly evasive object of knowledge. This chapter explores how, for the early moderns, desire describes a limit to representational thought: a site where the self confronts the mimetic frames and vanishing abysses of its own autochthonic impulses.<sup>1</sup>

### **Theater of the Incommensurable**

The stakes involved in the representational limits that both impel and are traced by desire could not be much higher than in Othello's longing to comprehend and to hold firm as a graspable and singular image his knowledge of Desdemona. Disoriented by Iago's successive improvisatory insinuations, Othello's anxious exclamation, "O, she will sing the savageness out of a bear!" (4.1.185–186), repositions the instinctive care he feels for his wife as a loss of his natural savagery. In seeking to hold firm his dissonant emotions in a singular image, Othello forces himself toward violence. "I will kill thee/and love thee after" (5.2.18–19) is the logical if also paradoxically brutal end to his ongoing attempts to ground and fix his knowledge of Desdemona. The murder resolves the impossibility of knowing her mind, the skeptical problem that Othello experiences – when he approaches it most vertiginously – as a breakdown of his own language into a fragmented listing of body parts: "Pish! Noses, ears, and lips" (4.1.42). Othello kills to free himself from the dialectic

driving his longing to know, the uncanny familiar-unfamiliarity of Desdemona's desire. He must kill her, pull her bodily apart – "I'll tear her all to pieces" (3.3.434); "I will chop her into messes" (4.1.196) – as a response to the syntactic and bodily fragmentations that arise with his recognition that he cannot have her entirely. As he claims of the inevitability that he feels will come to govern his own actions, the unknown "corner" in the thing that he loves writes her "destiny unshunnable, like death" (3.3.276–279).

Othello is led unwittingly towards the murder, we might say, by his attempt to fix the dialectic of his desire via the expression of the very representational lack that impels that desire. This is in evidence in his description of Desdemona's skin, "smooth as monumental alabaster" (5.2.5). With the image of Desdemona's external surface as beautiful tomb, Othello restates a topology of skeptical misogyny common to the period – seeming to anticipate, for example, the accusations leveled by the polemical pamphlet writer Joseph Swetnam in 1615: "Many women are in shape Angels but in qualities Devils, painted coffins with rotten bones" (qtd. in Henderson and McManus 1985, 205). Woman, in this characteristically gynophobic reckoning, is a deceptive surface within which corruption festers like death. Othello catches both the way the sensuous beauty of Desdemona's body repels violent attack – "I'll not shed her blood" (5.2.3) – and the unknowable interior masked by her "whiter skin" (5.2.4). Aligning Desdemona's perfect exteriority with the deathly container in which his violence will shortly come to inter her, Othello's simile reflects the anticipatory mimetic delimitations that impel desire. In attempting to clasp his identity firm in language, to fix the dialectic of his desire into singular and concrete (or alabaster) images, Othello keeps on discovering the already-written inevitability of his violence.

Jacques Lacan's Graphs of Desire chart both desire's relation to an already-written futurity herein foregrounded by Shakespeare, and exemplify the heterogeneous futures spawned by Renaissance mimesis.<sup>2</sup> The Graphs were first developed during Lacan's teaching on *Hamlet* in his weekly seminar *Le désir et son interprétation* (1959–1960) at the Hôpital Sainte-Anne, Paris. As a series of technical sketches, with increasing complexity Lacan's Graphs depict the built-up strata of language that overlay one another in the formation of subjectivity.<sup>3</sup> At the simplest level, the "elementary cell" (Lacan [1970] 2002, 681) of Graph One shows the first intervention of the signifier as what Lacan terms "a hole in the real" ([1970] 2002, 682). At one level, the "real" names for Lacan the primordial substantiality of matter that is lost to the speaking subject, who must come to his/her body and the material world via linguistic structures. Yet this very loss means that, from the perspective of symbolic subjectivity, the real also takes the position of a void excluded from the symbol's governance. Fated to live with this "abyssal vortex which ruins every consistent structure" (Žižek 2002, xiii), desire arises in and for the subject as an incessant longing to make good the lack. In the graph, the vector that depicts the path of the signifying chain intersects twice with the vector of the subject. In a vital but little remarked upon detail, because the two vectors proceed in opposite directions, the intersection of the battery of signifiers (prior to signification in

the signifying chain) is experienced by the subject – in his/her coming to subjectivity – as following from his/her “mastery” (Lacan [1970] 2002, 683) of language. That is to say: the product of this double inverse intersection is a “retro-active effect” ([1970] 2002, 682) by which the control of meaning seems to arise for the subject prior to the semantic closure that will have obtained it. As we have seen, Othello is entrapped within language, marshaled towards an already-written violence by his attempts to fix knowledge in mimetic forms. Likewise spoken into being by language, Lacan’s subject nonetheless perceives him/herself as the agent of speech.

As a vivid exemplification of Lacanian desire, Othello’s attempts to stabilize his knowledge of Desdemona implant a monstrousness, or a deathly absence, within sensuous experience. He is drawn ever deeper into mimesis by that which resists mimetic expression, and by the sense of his own blindness that both informs and follows from this resistance. Take one of Iago’s early attempts to implicate Michael Cassio:

*OTHELLO:* Is he not honest?

*IAGO:* Honest, my lord?

*OTHELLO:* Honest? Ay, honest.

*IAGO:* My lord, for aught I know.

*OTHELLO:* What dost thou think?

*IAGO:* Think, my lord?

*OTHELLO:* Think my lord! By heaven, thou echo’st me  
As if there were some monster in thy thought  
Too hideous to be shown. (3.3.103–111)

“This fellow’s of exceeding honesty” (3.3.275) is Othello’s first remark when left alone at the end of this exchange. Correctly perceiving the verbal technique that Iago uses to overload language with unstated implications (“thou echo’st me”), Othello misdiagnoses an unspeakable significance to his Ensign’s strategic disruptions of communication. Writing on the way Iago’s repetitions nurture in Othello a desire for that which representation cannot give, Stanley Cavell finds in the play a melodramatic refutation of skeptical method: “Othello’s enactment, or sufferance, of that torture [the exchange above] is the most extraordinary representation known to me of the ‘astonishment’ in skeptical doubt” (1979, 484). The demonic skill exercised by Iago lies in his ability to marshal Othello to “want to believe”: for Othello, in fact, to try against all the odds, and “against his knowledge” to “believe” in Iago’s insinuations (thus forcing skeptical doubt into the space between himself and Desdemona) (Cavell 1979, 489). Iago, in this reading, contorts communication’s seeming so as to invoke the desire implicit to skepticism for a substantive that is ungiven in representation (“as if there were”).

Paralleling post-structuralist accounts of “the desire of presence” that is, as Derrida notes, “born from the abyss (the indefinite multiplication) of representation, from the representation of representation” ([1976] 1997, 163), in his final words in the play Iago redoubles the negation and the phrasal echoing by which he

whips up Othello's longing for knowledge: "Demand me nothing. What you know, you know" (5.2.300). Offering no less than he has throughout the play, Iago invokes the impression of an unyielded meaning, an abyss of representational refusal in the place of his identity that he will not or cannot bring to language. Exemplifying Shakespeare's recurring interest in language's mimetic limit, Iago's echoing refusal to speak ("you know, you know") transmutes into a demonic register Cordelia's sense that she "cannot heave/My heart into my mouth" (*King Lear* 1.1.91–92). That there is nothing to know – has always been nothing to know except for an echoing of language at the site of "nothing" – means that a certain Bradleyian mode of character criticism seeks to investigate the psychology of, for example, Iago's motivation, or his "motiveless Malignity" (Coleridge [1808–1819] 1969, 315), thus limiting its attention to the represented figures independent of the material fact, style, or trace of their representation, is caught in the same misrecognition, or *méconnaissance*, of desire (Žižek 1992, 1–28) by which Iago ensnares Othello.

Shakespeare's theater, then, is not a *theatre of envy*, a depiction of desire arising out of a mimetically described object of desire, as René Girard has argued (2000). In his notion of *mimetic desire*, Girard places an emphasis on Shakespeare's earliest works: Proteus's intense lust for Silvia, and his abandonment of his love for Julia in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, which arises from the epideictic praise by which his friend Valentine describes Silvia, just as Tarquin's concupiscent lusts for Lucrece in *Rape of Lucrece* arise from the lavish praise by which Collatine describes his wife. One major problem with Girard's account is its disinterest in questions of Shakespeare's language. Girard abandons the recurring figures, topologies, and motifs of Shakespeare's poetry for a transparent version of the content value of language. This works, to a degree, as a narratological analysis of the earlier works, but as Othello's impulsion towards the unspeakable exemplifies, it misses the interplay of form and content vital in the major tragedies. In Georg Lukac's words, "the only possible thing' is the shortest definition of form known to me" (1974, 22). As Shakespeare likewise emphasizes, content is inseparably bound to the material body of its mimetic transmission. Desire in *Othello* is not merely due to an uncomplicated communication of content-value (such as Silvia's beauty as described by Valentine), but due to a certain gap in the formal fact of representation ("you know, you know"), that – once itself represented, brought to the self-conscious display of mimesis – induces a longing for ever-more representation to make good the lack. Rather than mimetic desire, this is the ever-unfulfilled, unfulfillable desire for mimesis.

In this context, the significance of Theodor Adorno's notion of aesthetic form as a mode of what he terms the "non-identical" can hardly be overstated. Adorno writes:

art is an entity that is non-identical with its empiria. What is essential to art is that which in it is not the case, that which is incommensurable with the empirical measure of all things. The compulsion to aesthetics is the need to think this empirical incommensurability. ([1970] 2004, 426).

Adorno's claim is not that art transcends history, but that it is impossible to locate in a particular historic period the network of signifiers that will fully delimit the work of art. And in this impossibility one is placed, though art, in a relation with the insufficiency of the symbolic network that has constructed the possibility of one's response to art. That is to say, the moment of historical incommensurability demanded by the artwork causes a transitory aporetic breakdown in the subject. There is perhaps no sharper exemplification of Adorno's non-identity than the slippages of identity that Shakespeare explores in *Othello*, such as in Iago's insight: "I am not what I am" (1.1.64), and Desdemona's similar protestation, while awaiting Othello's arrival at Cyprus, "I do beguile/The thing I am by seeming otherwise" (2.1.122–123). It is typical of Shakespeare's incessantly involuted epistemological musings that the two characters whose mimetic incompleteness ensnares Othello's desire each pronounce upon the fact of the non-identical gap that means their seeming selves are not, in fact, what they are. This means, rather than Girard's *theatre of envy*, that Shakespeare's edifice is more precisely described as a *theater of the incommensurable*: of representation as a facing-up to its own tarrying with absence or non-identity, in which the mimetic form, in this mirroring of its own lack, describes the very structure of desire.

### Desire in the Abyss

With the iconic Dover Cliff scene from *King Lear*, Shakespeare catches just this combination of longing and absence; of being cast out and held close; of the desire for mimesis as the descent into a terrifying abyss. In the remarkable amalgam of iconography that Shakespeare assembles for the scene, an exiled man, one who is disguised by a performance of madness in which he seems to bear forth the deepest truth of his misery, leads his blinded father to the end of England, where he hopes to throw himself to his death. At the culmination of this malformed quest, Edgar's remarkable verbal description of the cliff moves plane-by-plane down the non-existent abyss:

Come on, sir, here's the place. Stand still: how fearful  
 And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low.  
 The crows and choughs that wing the midway air  
 Show scarce so gross as beetles. Half-way down  
 Hangs one that gathers samphire, dreadful trade;  
 Methinks he seems no bigger than his head.  
 The fishermen that walk upon the beach  
 Appear like mice, and yon tall anchoring barque  
 Diminished to her cock, her cock a buoy  
 Almost too small for sight. The murmuring surge  
 That on th'unnumbered idle pebble chafes,  
 Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more,  
 Lest my brain turn and the deficient sight  
 Topple down headlong. (4.6.11–24)

Space is given in the poetry of the cliff as a metonymic decline, down through the stacked levels, via the representation of mimetically reduced objects (“The fishermen that walk upon the beach/Appear like mice”), and objects given via their synecdochic resemblance to parts of themselves (“Methinks he seems no bigger than his head”). With this metonymy, Shakespeare turns the signficatory limits of mimetic language towards the expression of a subjective viewing position newly structured by Renaissance aesthetics. Aligning metonymy with mimetic emplacement, Edgar situates his suicidal father in a protective non-space. The figure of the protective nothing evidently interested Shakespeare in *King Lear*, for it is reworked in another of the play’s most tender moments, the fantasy prison in which Lear imagines a future of proximity with Cordelia: “We two alone will sing like birds i’the cage” (5.3.9). Part of the wonder of Shakespeare’s language in these examples comes from the way it consistently draws profound pathos from self-consciously epistemological experimentations with mimesis. In both of the play’s non-spaces, Shakespeare binds a mimetically destabilizing exploration of the theater’s space to a deepening of the emotional proximity of his characters.

Marshall McLuhan observes that Edgar’s vertical landscape sketch offers a verbal transformation of the vanishing point perspective of visual art, terming the cliff: “the first and [...] only piece of verbal three-dimensional perspective in any literature” (1962, 15). The space of the cliff draws deeply – if perhaps at second or third hand – from the revolution in spatial representation in Italian and Flemish painting of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Take the “proto-Renaissance” (Beck 1999, 29) perspectival space of Ambrogio Lorenzetti’s *Annunciation* (c. 1344), housed in the Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena (Figure 6.1). Lorenzetti’s innovative arrangement was immensely influential in the coming *quattrocento*, in which major paintings of the Annunciation from Veneziano (c. 1445), Piero della Francesca (1470), Piermatteo d’Amelia (c. 1480), and Lorenzo di Credi (c. 1490) successively replicated and heightened Lorenzetti’s formal arrangement of a vanishing point depth space that divides the flattened foreground presentation of Gabriel and Mary (see Pye 2000, 68–86). François-Xavier Gleyzon has written instructively on what he terms, following Aby Warburg, this recurrent “*sacred interval*” (2010, 104) in Renaissance Annunciations. In the impulse to realism of which Lorenzetti’s *Annunciation* constitutes an important early exemplar – for space, light, character, and action given as plastic representation – one locates a particularly potent strand of the Renaissance desire for fixing knowledge as a spatial relation.

“[T]he visible orthogonals of the ground plane”, Erwin Panofsky writes of the work,

are here for the first time all oriented toward a single point, undoubtedly with full mathematical consciousness; for the discovery of the vanishing point, as “the image of the infinitely distant points of all the orthogonals,” is, in a sense, the concrete symbol for the discovery of the infinite itself. ([1927] 1991, 57)

As the conventional argument goes, a new privileging of the eye, and with it a new mode of subjectivity-as-viewing-position was formalized with Leon Battista Alberti’s description of vanishing point perspective painting as “*una finestra aperta sul mondo*” ([1436] 1966, 56) (“an open window on the world”). In Alberti’s codification



**Figure 6.1** Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Annunciation*, c. 1344, Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena, inv. n. 88. Reproduced with the permission of Ministero dei beni e delle attività culturali e del turismo.

(and already implicit to Lorenzetti's work from a century earlier), the view proffered by Renaissance mimesis offered its spectator a new mode of spatial knowledge. Anticipating this shift, Lorenzetti's vanishing point caught for representation a "concrete symbol" of the infinite perceived by the emergent Renaissance subjectivity as the intimation of a divinity at once present and absent to the mimesis, inscrutably beyond the mimetic space to which He serves as organizing principle. And seventeen decades after Alberti, Shakespeare renegotiates a secularized and self-conscious engagement with this Renaissance view. The spatial negation of the non-existent Dover Cliff in *King Lear* is redoubled by the verbal vanishing point at the furthest extremity of the abyssal depths, rendered by Shakespeare as a metonymic collapse of things into parts of themselves: "yon tall anchoring barque/Diminished to her cock, her cock a buoy/Almost too small for sight" (4.6.18–20) (Ryle 2014, 75–76). As with the echoing of meaning that Othello hears, at Dover Cliff Shakespeare figures the impossible desire for the solid ground upon which Renaissance mimesis rests as a failing metonymic quest for infinity at the abyssal depths.

If Lorenzetti offers a lucid new mode of representation, it is in suggestively catching the way questions of desire and mimesis, of the visible and obscure, will twist

together in the emergent *quattrocento* aesthetic. The Vulgate's words flow in golden script from Gabriel's mouth across the picture space: "*Non erit impossibile apud Deum omne verbum*" (Luke 1.37) ("for nothing is impossible with God"). Exemplifying divine impossibility brought to spatial realism, they hang in the air between the vanishing point depth space replicated and suggested specifically by the orthogonals of the floor tiling, and a *trompe l'oeil* column interposed over the foreground of the picture. A similar pictorial device to this column is to be found in key Annunciations of the *quattrocento* from Fra Angelico (c. 1434), Filippo Lippi (c. 1440) and Piero della Francesca (c. 1464). Yet in doubling the motif of division effected by the vanishing point, Lorenzetti's column counterpoises two opposed sets of representational claims – that of the mimetic depth of the image, and of the architectural space of the image's exhibition – in one "*sacred interval*." This opposition is bound up with the narrational content of the image. In one obvious sense, the crucifix shaped by the intersection of vertical and horizontal bars in the center of the framed space marks the narrative future of the Messiah in the very moment that His earthly annunciation is revealed to mankind. As with the violence that catches Othello in its already-written inevitability, Lorenzetti's *Annunciation* intimates the passion of Christ's destiny. It is also notable that the vanishing point of the painting's orthogonals, for Panofsky the first of its kind in any mimesis, nowhere appears in the picture: is, in fact, obscured at exactly the spot where Gabriel's words demarcate a cruciform intersection with the *trompe l'oeil* column – so that a series of depths and refutations-of-depth, of the present moment pregnant with symbolic destiny, play across the image's representational claims.

The metonymically structured movement towards the poetic vanishing point of Edgar's cliff makes a radical intervention into the viewing position constructed by Lorenzetti. Shakespeare reworks Lorenzetti's tension for poetry, I want to claim, and, in so doing, introduces a profound meditation on the metonymic structure of desire. Lacan is again helpful in recognizing the shift in ground effected by Shakespearean space. Metonymy is Lacan's way of rethinking Freud's idea of displacement (which describes how traumatic memories are brought to dreams by related, contiguous forms). Lacan's innovation is the way it fits Freudian dreamwork to the fundamental structuralist distinction that Roman Jakobson located between the linguistic operations of *metaphor*, which named a vertical exchange of signifiers with the same grammatical function, and *metonymy*, which named the horizontal movement of one signifier to another in the chain of signification ([1956] 1987). For Lacan "the symptom *is* a metaphor, whether one likes to admit it or not, just as desire *is* a metonymy" ([1970] 2002, 439). Rather than remaking lack as a "dazzling weave" (Lacan [1970] 2002, 422), as does the symptom/metaphor, desire flees lack – the cut in the real inflicted by the signifier – in the form of a contiguous movement from object to object in an impossible search for the object-cause of desire that will make good the lack. This means that metaphor, as Joel Fineman has noted,

is always a little metonymic because in order to have a metaphor there must be a structure, and where there is a structure there is already piety and nostalgia for the lost



origin through which the structure is thought. Every metaphor is a metonymy of its own origin, its structure thrust into time by its very structurality [...] The allegorical structure thus enunciated has already lost its center and thereby discovered a project: to recover the loss discovered by the structure of language and of literature. (1991, 18)

As Fineman perceives, by the logic of Lacan's redeployment of Jakobson's structuralism, the metaphor/symptom is forever caught in a mimetic and, thus, desirous structure. If every metaphor seeks to name the lack that makes its own metaphoricity possible, it is at least minimally involved in a metonymic quest for the referentiality that will recover loss as signification. Yet, once alerted to the refusal of these structuralist distinctions to hold fast as determining functional operations, one cannot but recognize, specifically with regard to *King Lear's* vanishing point abyss, the metaphoricity of Shakespeare's metonymic Dover Cliff. For one, Shakespeare's cliff gives its perspectival metonymy as verticality. In shifting the planes of depth aligned with horizontality in both structuralist linguistics and *quattrocento* perspective, and in providing a space of synecdochic descent, Shakespeare's cliff offers a self-conscious figuration of metonymy – a metaphorical remaking of the metonymic movement as depth, and of that depth as a figure for desire's endless metonymy (an identical metaphor is to be found in Derrida's figural use of "abyss" that I quote above as a naming of the metonymy of desire). Giving metonymy as figure, as metaphor; anticipating post-structuralist analyses of the tottering instabilities of linguistic structure, Shakespeare's language confronts its own incommensurability. Take the ambivalent visuality claimed by the verbal scene in Edgar's sliding synecdochical reduction of scale at the extremity of the abyss. Via the metonymy, the audience is provided with an ambivalent verbalization of the complete panorama. Barque, cock, and buoy are brought to language. But this verbalization, in excess of the descriptive intention, is counterpoised by the invocation of the subjective view (from whence the cock looks like the buoy, and the buoy is not visible). In this breaking apart of sign and representational function – which is reworked in the sound of the "surge" that is given in the onomatopoeic "murmuring" and then denied ("cannot be heard") – the buoy negatively redoubles that which is ungiven by the representation of the non-existent cliff described by the words. It is an empty signifier of the vanishing point that is *not* included in the nothing-space of the linguistic descent: an abyssal place-holder for the groundlessly retroactive self-fashioning relay of the Renaissance desire for mimesis that is set in motion by the subject position which that mimesis inscribes (Pye 2000, 84–86). For Jonathan Goldberg, "the language which would seem [...] solidly to locate the world slides into an abyss" (1984, 254). Descending into the abyss, with the buoy Shakespeare approaches the vanishing center of representation: the uncanny wound that Lacan would graph, nearly four hundred years later, as "the hole in the real."

"Who is it that can tell me who I am?" (1.4.221) Lear implores, on the very brink of losing a grasp on his identity. As Frank Kermode has suggested, the "shadow" (1.4.222) which the Fool proffers as answer, as the opposite of substance, offers another of the play's many figures of nothing (2001, 190). This is so; and yet in

the shadow something beyond nothing remains, an impression or silhouette of identity – just as in Puck’s image, in the Epilogue of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, of the theatrical mimesis as shadow. The shadow is *something*, even if any attempt to grasp its materiality elicits – as with the vanishing buoy – nothingness. And, as with the *something*-identity of the theatrical shadow, at the place of the vanishing point of Edgar’s Dover Cliff there is to be found a similarly anthropomorphized leftover. Shortly after Gloucester’s pratfall, now purportedly looking up, Edgar describes a “fiend” at the summit who “had a thousand noses” (4.6.70). This image, it should be noted, cannot credibly stand up as a sensory experience. How could he see all those noses, Gloucester might ask (if he still believes, after his pratfall, in the existence of the cliff), when the “shrill-gorged lark so far/ Cannot be seen or heard” (4.6.58–59)? Rather than a continuation of the realistic poetic representation of verbal space, we might claim, Edgar evokes a distorted mirror-image of himself – a “negative image” as Gleyzon puts it (2010, 194) – in which the “thousand noses” reference the various identities he must adopt (son, lord-in-exile, madman, beach rescuer, challenger, and perhaps – at the end of the play – future king). I have suggested that in disguising himself Edgar’s performance of madness offers a displaced expression of his suffering. Notably, the unseen lark’s song whose invisibility haunts the cliff repeats this topology of a vocal expression emanating from the site of a mimetic vanishing. Situated in this zone at the outer limits of representation, the fiend fixes as spatial depth the longing that Edgar has felt since meeting with his blinded father, for an end to the exile from his home and his identity that his mimetic disguise has enforced: “I cannot daub it further” (4.1.55). Edgar throws off the uncanny voice of Poor Tom with an image of mimetic display given in the form of a monster at the furthest extremity of sight. The fiend also resonates with Albany’s pessimistic figure for misanthropy, following the “barbarous” behavior of Lear’s daughters: “Humanity must perforce prey on itself,/ Like monsters of the deep” (4.2.49–50) (Ryle 2014, 76). In each case, at an extreme of verticality, Shakespeare fills his vanishing points with spatial manifestations of the “abjection” that for Julia Kristeva marks the borders of subjectivity. “[A]rtistic experience” she argues, “which is rooted in the abject [...] appears as the essential component to religiosity. That is perhaps why it [art] is destined to survive the collapse of the historical forms of religions” (1982, 17). As instance of abjection brought to the secularized vanishing point, Shakespeare’s fiend draws attention to the symbolic thresholds renegotiated by early modern aesthetics. Humanity as preying upon itself; Edgar as fiend: in the monstrousness lurking at the representational limit Shakespeare charts the non-identity of the known.

One recalls the “monster in thy thought” that Iago’s failure of linguistic communication encourages Othello to imagine. In closing my brief chapter at the site of this recurring monstrousness at the limit, I would turn to Timothy Morton’s recent sense of *ambient poetics* as “a materialist way of reading texts with a view to how they encode the literal space of their inscription” (2007, 3). *Ambiance* for Morton names a poetic way of thinking through the non-hierarchical interrelation of world and perceiver, “a state of nondual awareness that collapses the subject-object division” (2002, 52). The parallel occlusions occasioned by Iago’s echoing and Edgar’s

vanishing points, considered alongside Lorenzetti's *finestra aperta*, suggest how, in Morton's terminology, the ambiance of a particular mimetic structure works to define and fix a "subject position": "The artwork hails us, establishing [...] consistent veins of historical and ideological patterning" (2007, 80). Aesthetic form as "ideological patterning" might seem almost to position the viewer or reader of the artwork as paralleling Mary in the *quattrocento* Annunciation, called to her destiny by the divine word. And this aesthetic call, that occurs both in and through representation, resonates across modernity. Octavio Paz has claimed of his writing, "I don't see with my eyes: words are my eyes" (qtd. in Ramazani, Ellmann, and O'Clair 2003, 798). Anticipating modernity, and to some extent setting it on its way, Lorenzetti's artwork and Othello's jealousy likewise chart sites of a self-conscious sensory occlusion; the word as a non-identical reconstruction of the known.

In this sense, Renaissance desire finds itself at the very brink of modernity, heralding a space in which it is not yet home, and from which it will always have been outcast. As Vincentio consoles Claudio at the point of execution in *Measure for Measure*: "Thou hast nor youth, nor age,/But as it were an after-dinner's sleep/Dreaming on both" (3.1.32–34). Renaissance mimesis hails its spectator to a culturally and historically specific betweenness, but with Shakespeare the self-conscious recognition of this ambivalence at the brink involves a vertiginous destabilization. And, I would suggest, a mimetic hailing that perceives itself as such is also a radical intervention into desire (and therein, an opening on epistemological change). One should return here to Derrida's transgressive hospitality beyond the threshold of the home with which this chapter opens. One obvious unspoken reference for Derrida is Freud's formative account of the uncanny, "*Zur Psychologie des Unheimlichen*" (1919), which muses on the way the homeliness of the *heimlich* can also signify concealment and that which is secret, so that the semantic field of the German word touches upon the uncanniness given explicitly in its marked-negated form (*unheimlich*) even before negation occurs. And it is our knowledge of this bloodcurdling monstrousness that lurks in the familiarly known, as our first glimpse of the spatial defamiliarization that hails the outset of modernity, which we should attribute to Shakespeare.

Writing on the "messianic" futurity that Derrida attributes to *Hamlet* (Derrida [1993] 1994, 81), and perhaps also drawing from Warburg's idea of the "zone" of "*prophetic monsters*" (qtd. in Gleyzon 2010, 203), Nicholas Royle argues that "the future is necessarily monstrous: the figure of the future [...] is heralded by a species of monsters" (2003, 110). As manifestations of this uncanny futurity, Shakespeare's monsters at the vanishing point of mimesis offer an anticipatory anthropomorphic figuration of the abstract and non-subjective spaces that come to the fore during the Enlightenment – one obvious example would be the anticipation in Edgar's Dover Cliff of the Kantian sublime, in which the subject discovers infinity in negative form, as its very unthinkability, in the contemplation of vast natural wonders (Pye 2000, 91). And the emergence of this non-subjective, Kantian-Cartesian knowledge as a relation with the space that is no longer either home or not-home, as Morton's sporadically brilliant *Ecology without Nature* outlines, comes to define a key element of the shift to modern subjectivity.

The incessant logic of capitalist expansionism (see Hardt and Negri 2000); brutal and tragic territorial conflicts; long-range weapons of mass annihilation; irreversible ecological destructions – so many of the most urgent contemporary issues are manifestations of the modern era’s unreconciled spatial displacements. Writing on Joyce’s modernism, T.S. Eliot describes the way *Ulysses* makes “the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history [...] possible in art” ([1923] 1975, 177). Shimmering at the threshold of the representable, place-holders for the desire that circulates incessantly a lack in mimesis, Shakespeare’s monsters anticipate the space of this possibility.

### What to Read Next

Blanchot ([1955] 1982); Belsey (1994); Kristeva ([1977] 1980); Lacan ([1973] 1981); Mitchell (2004).

### Notes

- 1 For the relation of desire and representation in language, see Kristeva ([1977] 1980) on the “heteronomous space” of “naming” and “negation” (111) by which literary texts fragment self-identity. In Mitchell’s (2004) innovative reading of pictures, the artwork (acting like a Gorgon) desires to petrify its spectator’s gaze. Belsey (1985, 1994) explores how fictionalized accounts of desire, in their formal and narratographic complexities, would seem to anticipate the radically progressive sexual politics of the 1960s and 1970s. Girard (2000) describes the relation of desire and mimesis in Shakespeare, though, as I discuss, without due attention paid to the endlessly searching involutions of Shakespeare’s language. For the representational limits in Shakespearean language formative to my reading of desire, see Burke (1951), Fineman (1988, 1991), Goldberg (1984), Greenblatt (1980), Gross (1989), and Pye (2000).
- 2 This chapter places an emphasis on textual diachrony – on Shakespeare in, and as, modernity – seeking to write beyond New Historicism’s synchronic respect for epoch. I am indebted, though, to the New Historicist recognition of the “culturally transitive nature of mimesis” (Hutson 2006, 62). As Greenblatt (1988) states: “Mimesis is always accompanied by – indeed is always produced by – negotiation and exchange” (8.)
- 3 For the graphs, see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graph\\_of\\_desire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graph_of_desire).

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## Service

*David Schalkwyk*

In *Othello* (1604), Iago, Shakespeare's most villainous servant, who ruthlessly pursues his master and mistress to death, talks of "the curse of service." It is a sign of our simultaneous distance from the seventeenth century and our attenuated connection to Shakespeare's era that service should seem to most of us, as it does Iago, a kind of curse. Who would want to be the servant?

To Shakespeare (1564–1616) and his contemporaries, however, master–servant relations were inescapable. They may have been resented by many in the position of service, but they formed the social fabric of a whole society predicated upon mutual, if unequal, obligation rather than, as Marx (1818–1883) and Engels (1820–1895) suggested of the rise of capitalism, "callous cash-payment" which "has reduced the family relation to a mere money relation" (1848, chapter 1). They constituted relationships from those of the humblest milkmaid in a household to the duty that the monarch owed to God. In between, apprentices owed their service to their masters for the period of their apprenticeship; gentlemen servants (like Malvolio in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* (1601), Antonio in Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613–1614), or De Flores in *The Changeling* (1622) by Middleton and Rowley) served in the households of titled noblemen; soldiers like Iago served military masters like Othello (and Othello in turn owed his service to the state); wives were considered to be servants to their husbands; and even powerful aristocrats like the Earl of Kent in *King Lear* (1605–1606) owed their service to their monarch (see Burnet 1997; Neill 2000, 2005; Evett 2005; Schalkwyk 2008; Weil 2009).

Such master–servant relationships were inherited from a feudal system in which vassals owed loyalty and their labor to the local lord, who in turn provided them with land on which to work and protection from enemies. The relationship between master and servant was, in the ideal at least, built upon mutual obligation – each

depended upon the other for safety, protection, and material existence, and it was ultimately grounded in the Christian Bible. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians (c. 62) spells out the reciprocal duties that wives owe to husbands, children to parents, and servants to masters:

- 5.22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your husbands, as unto the Lord. [...]  
 5.25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, & gave himself for it. [...]  
 6.5 Servants, be obedient unto them that are *your* masters, according to the flesh, with fear and trembling in singleness of your hearts unto Christ,  
 6.6 Not with service unto the eye, as men pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,  
 6.7 With good will serving the Lord, and not men. [...]  
 6.9 And ye masters, do the same things unto them, putting away threatening: & know that even your Master also is in heaven, neither is there any respect of person with him. (The Geneva Bible [1560] 2007)

Paul insists on a strict hierarchy, but he balances it with the reminder of the love and duty that husbands owe to their wives, parents to children, and masters their servants, adding that in the eyes of God there are in fact no differences of rank or class – “no respect of person.”

Such ideals of reciprocity were of course breached in practice as often as they were observed. Servants were often exploited, especially when differences in rank between master and servant were pronounced, but we should nevertheless attend to the social historian, Peter Laslett ([1965] 2005), when he tells us that in this period service meant that almost all relations were “love relations,” and that as a result of the modern and post-modern world's distance from such forms of affective reciprocity, the world of Shakespeare, Webster (1578?80–1638?), Middleton (1580–1627), Rowley (1585?–1626) and Ford (1586–1639?53) is a “world we have lost.”

Virtually everyone, then, was a servant (or a master or mistress) of someone else, depending on where they stood in the hierarchy of “rank” or “station.” “Class,” in the strict Marxist sense of the term, did not yet exist as a concept. But the period was also in transition, from the relatively settled relations of feudalism to the more disruptive, and individualistic, modes of an emergent form of mercantile capitalism. In short, less stable, impersonal and fleeting cash relations (Marx's derided “callous cash payment”) in cities were supplanting the older more settled and integrated reciprocities based on landownership and tenure. This has led the few critics who do pay attention to master–servant relations in the literature to the claim that the old stabilities were breaking down: Neill argues that “most household service was coming to seem like a form of wage-slavery, more and more difficult to reconcile ... with honour and gentility” (Neill 2005, 33): whereas master–servant relations in *King Lear*, especially in the attitude of the Earl of Kent to his master were considered sacred, those in *Othello* betray an increasing disillusionment in the old ideologies of service (Neill, 2004b).

The three tragedies in this chapter, first performed from roughly the time of Shakespeare's death (1616) to seven years into the reign of Charles I (1632), each



embroil sexual, social, and personal notions of service. Can one apply notions of service, and indeed love, that were already beginning to be strained in the sixteenth century to plays produced well into the seventeenth? In each case the conceptual issue is the complex relationships among service, desire, love, and reciprocity. Service is a necessarily reciprocal relationship: as Hegel (1770–1831) observes, master and servant are conceptually dependent on each other (to the extent that the figure who believes himself to be superior and independent – the master – turns out to be most blindly dependent upon the servant, without whom he could not be master) (1816, paras. 192–193). Desire involves no necessary reciprocity: whether or not it is returned is accidental. Love is more complicated; one might love someone without such love being returned, but love is also close to friendship, which *is* reciprocal. It is perhaps a cross between desire and friendship. We might distinguish between love and desire, as Jacques Lacan (2002) does, by arguing that in a love relationship the desire of the lover is miraculously returned when the beloved herself becomes the lover (IV.4). In this chapter, I am going to focus on relations among these concepts as they are embodied in these three tragedies rather than as examples of historical causality or of service relations as the repositories of hierarchies of power. This differentiates my argument markedly from New Historicist or Cultural Materialist approaches, but it also differentiates it from a humanist focus on character (Bradley [1904] 1919), or an “old” historicist emphasis on the history of ideas (Tillyard [1942] 1972). The latter emphasized the importance of the discourse of courtly love, which might be thought of as offering a model for the “right” ordering of sexual, social, and personal notions of service. In this model, as found in the writings of Andreas Capellanus ([1184–1186?] 1960), if the male lover offers himself to the female beloved, and does so in accordance with courtly protocols, the reciprocity of master–servant relations places an obligation upon the woman to reward him, whatever her personal feelings for him are. In other words, the reciprocity of service is seen to put to one side issues of desire and love; what she *feels* in our romantic sense – what lies in her heart – is by and large irrelevant. The discourse of courtly love is present in all three of these seventeenth-century tragedies, but whether they accept its paradigmatic status is another matter; the reciprocal relationships between the various kinds of social and erotic service are seen to be more complex, questionable, and subject to change than any idealizing formulation would allow. First, though, to Iago’s wholesale challenge to the notion of the reciprocities of service and the representation of service as a *curse*.

### Shakespeare’s *Othello*

Iago’s disquisition on service in *Othello* (1604) represents the most searingly skeptical view in all of Shakespeare, perhaps in the drama as a whole:

IAGO. Why, there’s no remedy. ’Tis the curse of service.  
 Preferment goes by letter and affection,  
 And not by old gradation, where each second  
 Stood heir to th’ first. (1.1.37–40)

Othello's servant comments on a *general* social ill – a transformation from what may formally have been a blessing but has now been transformed into a curse (Neill 2004a). “Preferment” is the term for the process whereby someone is accepted and taken into service, usually on the recommendation of a friend or person of higher rank. But preferment also has its more modern sense of “promotion”: a servant may also be preferred by achieving a more elevated position in the hierarchy of service.

Iago claims that such preferment – the means by which servants achieve their positions or improve them – has been corrupted. Instead of following a traditional path of “old gradation” in which years of service or rank determined the servant's position, nowadays such things are determined by influence or favoritism (“letter and affection”). Service as the foundation of an old system of reciprocities has been corroded, and Iago considers himself a victim of that change. As he continues his anatomy of the changes in master-servant relations he introduces the concept of love. In Iago's eyes the network of recognized allegiances and assumptions of responsibility that preserved the social fabric has frayed to the point at which his duty to love his master has been abrogated:

Now, sir, be judge yourself  
Whether I in any just term am affined  
To love the Moor. (41–43)

He then confesses something that lay at the bottom of all anxieties about the trustworthiness of servants: that he “follows” Othello merely to profit from him. He is, in Paul's words, merely a servant “unto the eye” – that is to say, on the surface. In the new, corrupt times, the clear-eyed servant declares, those who follow masters dutifully are fools, because all they get for years of faithful service is dismissal into an old age of thankless poverty. Iago will have nothing of such blind idiocy: “In following him, I follow but myself” (65). This attitude constituted the nightmare of the political and social theorists of the time: it evoked their deepest anxiety that such “eye service” by servants could mean the destruction not only of a specific master (like Othello), but also the disruption of the society as a whole. What makes Iago especially ominous is his determined inscrutability: not only his capacity for merely acting the part of the dutiful servant, but also his ability to keep his innermost motives hidden, “keeping [his] heart attending on [him]self.” “Attending,” which should refer to the position of servant vis-à-vis master, here underlines the fact that Iago serves only himself.

### **Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi***

John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* (1613–1614) reprises Iago's attitudes to service in a different key, but it does not simply endorse them; it adds another perspective on master–servant (or more accurately, mistress–servant relations), that is possibly derived from another Shakespeare play, *Twelfth Night* (1601), and which combines,

in two separate servant figures, the bitter *reséntiment* at the *actual* exploitative relations of service that Iago highlights with the possible reciprocity of love through service. Indeed, although few editors and critics other than Michael Neill (2015) have commented on this, Webster's play world is driven by the concept of service.

Critics have found the gentleman-servant Bosola a complex, if somewhat bewildering, character. He is modelled on a common class of young men in Jacobean England: gentlemen with a university education from Cambridge or Oxford who, with no independent wealth or land, found it difficult to find any place for themselves in society. They tended to congregate at the court where they hoped to catch the eye and favor (and service) of an influential member of the nobility, or even the monarch's circle. But many were unable to find such "preferment," and so they constituted a large group of disaffected men whose lack of a fortune meant that their chances of marriage were very slim, and whose ambitions as a potentially capable and educated elite seemed bound to be frustrated.

Bosola, once a "fantastical scholar" in Delio's words (3.3.41), has proved a difficult character to which to give a unified psychological profile: he is the conventional "malcontent" of Jacobean drama, combining an acute, satirical grasp of the faults and corruption of the court with a deep personal discontent; he is a loyal servant filled with self-loathing for his entrapment in service; a callous killer filled with compassion for his victim; a discarded veteran soldier with ambitions to be a respected scholar; and a penitent whose quest for salvation ends in his accidentally killing the person he seeks to protect. Bosola's difference from Iago is marked by his incapacity to break free of the bonds of service that he so despises – to the point at which he is caught between two demands without being able to find a way beyond or between them: those of his duty to his ostensible mistress, the Duchess, and those to his master, the Cardinal.

In a perceptive essay, Frank Whigham argues that the psychology of character is subordinate to, or may be explained by, the historical instability of the position of the gentleman servant in the period: Bosola is unable to maintain a secure personal identity because service itself was changing from "role to job" (2000, 186). Service had given its incumbents a sense not only of what they had to do but also of who they were (encapsulated in the question "what are you?" which asked about identity within a set of stable social relationships (Adamson 2010)). But the growing reduction of the role or identity of the servant to a mere job – to discrete instructions to do things, to perform discontinuous acts, for which the reward (if there is any) is no more than money – means that, as Whigham argues, the servant is alienated from his putative identity or role in a fixed social order, and therefore views his actions as those of a stranger. He can no longer recognize himself in the tasks that his master requires him to perform. That leads him to despise, to loathe, not only what he does, but also what he *is*. But it also means that he can find no way out of his trap: there is no identity available to him other than that of the conflicted, self-loathing, servant.

Whigham's analysis can be translated into an individual psychology, but in essence it is a *social* reading, which regards the construction of character on Webster's stage

as a composite response to the social and political contradictions of his time and his own concerns. Webster argues for another possibility in his play's dedication. In addressing his patron, the Right Honorable George Harding, Baron Berkeley of Berkeley Castle and Knight of the Order of the Bath, he insists that individual merit should supersede the out-of-date valorization of social rank: "I do not altogether look up at your title, the ancientest nobility being but a relic of time past, and the truest honor indeed being for a man to confer honor on himself" (Bevington *et al.* 2002). The common playwright is referring to himself as one of those who would "confer honor upon himself" through what he does rather than what he is. If his character, Bosola, finds it impossible to do thus, the other major servant in the play, Antonio, comes closer to success. Against Bosola's corrosive, self-disgusted and ultimately defeated ambition Antonio stands as another gentleman-servant, the Duchess's secretary and bookkeeper, whose self-effacing loyalty to his mistress is – unlike his shadow, Malvolio, in *Twelfth Night* – rewarded by a loving marriage to the Duchess.

By depicting a loving union between the Duchess and her servant, Webster turns the abstract, idealizing erotic fantasy of the courtly tradition into a concrete relationship in which social scandal is combined with a relationship of "flesh and blood" (in the Duchess's words) blessed with three children (1.1.520). Antonio and Bosola are two sides of the same coin. Socially both are gentlemen servants, but each of them has found a different place for themselves within the social hierarchy of the court. If Bosola has been reduced to a cat's paw, Antonio has secured a much more comfortable and honorable position for himself as head of the Duchess's household. Whereas Bosola curses a world in which service is its own reward, Antonio serves virtue for its own sake (1.1.348–349). Like Bosola, Antonio is also a choric commentator on the corruption of the play's society; but he does so through the shining, contrary example of the French court. In contrast to Bosola's searing, conventional misogyny, Antonio holds his mistress in high esteem and respects her loyal servant, Cariola; and his distance from the instrumentized sycophancy of the other courtiers in the opening scene suggests that, despite his position of service, he is his own man. But he is not a member of the aristocracy, and while he may fantasize, as Malvolio does in *Twelfth Night*, of an erotic relationship with his mistress, he is much too caught in his station to do anything about it.

Like the Countess Olivia in *Twelfth Night*, as a widow the Duchess is free to marry a man below her station (widowhood being one of the very few situations in which women were not in a position of service – and therefore obedience – to a man). Olivia has no brothers, however. Both of the Duchess's brothers try to bully their sister into following their wills rather than her own. The frenzied misogyny of Ferdinand's objections to her re-marriage has been thought to harbor incestuous desires (Leech 1951; Mulryne 1960), but Whigham argues persuasively that Ferdinand's sexualized imaginings are expressive of a social phenomenon. His desire is not for his sister. Rather he does not want to be degraded and contaminated, via his sister, by members – such as the "strong thigh'd bargeman" (2.5.42) – of the lower orders. His incest-like fantasy of sexual endogamy is a specific symptom of a refusal to contemplate the contamination of the aristocratic family by commoners.

A great deal has been made of the relationship between the public and the private in the play. By elevating her steward to her lover and then not only marrying him in private, but also keeping the union secret, the Duchess seems to forge a space beyond the demands of the broader society, and especially the public world of the court. Susan Wells (2000) argues that Webster's play struggles to establish the private – a feminine sphere – as important or significant at a time when family life as a place of mutual affection beyond the scope and power of the public world was just coming into focus. It is therefore extremely vulnerable, especially as it tries to convert the fungibility of service into the necessarily mutual reciprocity of romantic love, where the person loved cannot be substituted for anyone else. Here Webster entertains a loving reciprocity that is not governed by the bonds of service: the intimacy established between the Duchess and Antonio is made possible (as it is between Viola and Orsino in *Twelfth Night*) by the condition of service, but there is no sense in which the Duchess is pressured into offering herself as a *reward* for Antonio's good service. What happens is that, placed in the position of the mistress-beloved in a traditional relationship of courtly service, she freely chooses to become the lover too, and moreover she has the power to elevate her servant to the position of husband.

The scene of the Duchess's wooing of Antonio (1.1.416–429), followed by the warmly bantering companionship of Antonio, his wife, and her servant in Act 2, creates what Wells calls an "intersubjective world" (2000, 156) that in its warmth, intimacy, humor and humanity is starkly contrasted to the domain over which the Argonian brethren preside. Those human qualities are exemplified by the Duchess's simple invitation to Antonio to return her love for him, to treat her as desiring and responding "flesh and blood" rather than as that "figure cut in alabaster" which "kneels at my husband's tomb" (1.1.520–521). The intersubjective world created by Antonio and the Duchess, with the help of Cariola, fleetingly realizes a fantasy that Shakespeare entertains – especially in his sonnets – in which service may be turned into reciprocated love.

But flesh and blood cannot withdraw for long from the public world. The private marriage results in a happy fecundity which is inevitably public, giving rise to rumors among her subjects that she is a whore. Flesh and blood will also go its own way, as the discovery scene with the apricots shows. Antonio and the Duchess are forced into their own lies and subterfuges in order to protect themselves, and Webster is careful to show Antonio's personal inadequacies as *social* ones: under pressure, he behaves like an accountant, not an aristocratic soldier. He is no hero, but he was never bred to be one, and that makes him no less loving or deserving of the Duchess's love in our eyes – if not in those for whom the deservings of love are determined by more public qualities of breeding and education.

The harrowing of the Duchess in prison brings Bosola's status as servant back into focus, as it puts pressure on her heroic, aristocratic endurance. Bosola's conflicted nature is most apparent in his continued torture of his mistress even as he is moved to a lyrical appreciation of her integrity and stoic endurance. Neill suggests that Bosola is in fact in love with the Duchess at this point, and that he therefore

genuinely wishes to save her soul by preventing her despair (2005, 137). He may therefore wish to bring her “comfort” in the face of his master’s cruelty. He nevertheless obediently strangles her, even if he cannot bear to do so “in mine own shape.” This is as cowardly, if not more so, as Antonio’s feckless behavior, and his shape-shifting to the end, in attitude and resolution as much as identity, signals the crisis of service itself. Othello’s servant adopts a shape-shifting persona as the “honest Iago” in order to destroy his master and the institution of service itself. Bosola is never able to secure an identity that either enables him to fulfil the glowing praise of ideal devotion and honesty that he bestows upon Antonio in order to trap the Duchess or break free from what for him, but not for Antonio, is no less than the “curse of service.”

### Middleton and Rowley, *The Changeling*

*The Changeling*, written collaboratively by Thomas Middleton and William Rowley and registered in May 1622, was performed a decade after Webster’s tragedy. In *The Changeling* the focus on service is much narrower than it is in Webster’s tragedy. *The Changeling* is still firmly set in a general world of master–servant relations, but it focuses relentlessly on one relationship between a gentleman–servant in decline, De Flores, and his obsessive desire for his mistress, Beatrice-Joanna, who for reasons more than his physical ugliness, harbors a deep-seated loathing for her father’s servant. It is thus tempting to read this play in post-Freudian terms: as a study not in social corruption but rather as illustrating the serial displacements and transference of desire: Beatrice’s from her fiancé, Alonzo, to Alsemero, and then to the object of her loathing, the servant De Flores, who haunts her obsessively before finally possessing her unto death.

The key scenes in the play’s exploration of the relationship between desire and service are 2.2, in which Beatrice procures De Flores as her agent to murder her fiancé, Alonzo, so that she will be free to marry Alsemero, her new love, and the chilling 3.3 when her father’s detested servant claims her virginity as his reward. Scene 2.2 contains 11 uses of words with “serv-” as their root or lemma, and a further four references to service without using the word as such. Each use plays off the others, so that the notion of service soon resonates in complex, and sometimes discordant, ways. In the mouths of Beatrice and De Flores, mistress and servant, “service” rings with sexual overtones, and the mere mention of the word raises the vexed question of what sort of reward is fitting for the dutiful servant.

Here *The Changeling* differs from its predecessor. Even though both plays represent an erotic relationship between mistress and servant, the concept of reciprocity in each is radically different. The Duchess is never placed explicitly in the position of an erotically elevated, desired woman. *The Changeling*, on the other hand, offers a number of hints of courtly erotic desire, not least the glove that Beatrice enigmatically drops. We have seen that, built into the protocols of courtly behavior is the obligation of a woman who is served faithfully by a devoted lover, to reward him

with her favors. Such reciprocity through service is pushed to grotesque limits by Beatrice's entrapment into "servicing" the servant whom she thought to have used as a mere instrument of her desires.

Secure in her rank as the ruler's daughter, she cannot believe that the use of De Flores as the instrument of her desire can have any untoward consequences. Three different uses of the concept of service within a few lines show the ways in which the bondage of service may work in unexpected ways. In 2.2.53–54, Beatrice invokes the secret-keeping duty of ideal service – "perfect your service, and conduct this gentleman/The private way you brought him." Observing this subterfuge, De Flores notes that her two suitors "both/Cannot be served" (58–59), using the suggestion of sexual service to distinguish the different position within the economy of service available to women. He is right, and soon enough his own "service" is required in disposing of the unwanted betrothed. Beatrice believes that she is in command – "serv[ing her] turn upon him" (69) (that is to use De Flores to achieve her ends) – but she is unaware that as she begins to employ the conventional language of reciprocal service and promise of "reward" to De Flores, she is embarking on a path by which she will put herself into the power of the servant and thereby be reduced to serving *him* in the grossest sexual sense. The tables are wholly turned between mistress and servant. He refuses all mere material reward as being both beneath his station and incommensurate with the enormity of his deed on her behalf: she becomes "the deed's creature" (3.3.137).

This transformation of mistress as master to mistress as sexual servant offers the other side of Webster's vision, expressed in the Dedication of *The Duchess of Malfi*, that it is what one does that confers nobility, not what one is. Through her action, which echoes the instrumentalizing uses of servants by people like Ferdinand and the Cardinal, Beatrice – chiefly because she is a woman – loses her honor and reduces herself to a spiritual state that matches the physical deformity of her abhorred servant. From now on Beatrice and De Flores will "stick" together undivided, just as the grisly, phallic finger that De Flores cuts from her fiancé sticks to the vaginal ring he so deperately wants: "it stuck as if the flesh and it were both one substance" (37–38) – the "one substance" alluding to the Christian marriage ceremony in which husband and wife are considered "one flesh."

On ethical and social grounds, *The Changeling* offers a challenging account of the ways in which the use of servants as instruments of the master's (or mistress's) will may backfire, including the possibility that behavior (deeds) may well destroy the nobility assumed to come automatically with blood. Mark Thornton Burnett argues that in this play "aristocratic order is not invaded from below or from without: it is penetrated from the inside" (1997, 107). But the play also offers a more intensely psychological insight into the erotic aspects of service that we find in neither Webster nor Shakespeare.

From the beginning De Flores and Beatrice are united by the asymmetrical intensity of their feelings about each other. De Flores cannot stop himself from "haunting" Beatrice, despite the abuse she heaps on him: "Why, am not I an ass to devise ways/Thus to be railed at? I must see her still" (2.1.77–78). Not 20 lines earlier

Beatrice has betrayed her own obsessive abhorrence of the servant who stalks (“haunts”) her: “Again! This ominous, Ill-faced fellow more disturbs me/Than all my other passions” (53–54). This is a very powerful confession. Beatrice is a woman of very strong passions: her obsessive desire for the new man who visits her father’s castle is enough to drive her to kill the man to whom she is betrothed. And yet it is no stronger than her loathing for the man she is forced to encounter every day. Why does she leave her glove to De Flores when he picks it up and returns it to her (as a true courtly servant would)? Because she can’t bear to retain anything he has touched? Why does she drop it at all? In the courtly tradition a woman giving (even dropping) her glove to a man in a suppliant position would suggest the promise of erotic favors. Whether she consciously knows it or not, by offering her glove for him to “thrust [his] fingers into her sockets here” (1.1226–1227), Beatrice is engaging in a form of sexual enticement and opening herself to penetration, if only in fantasy.

If the play did not confirm Beatrice’s ultimate transference of her desire to De Flores it might be considered anachronistic to suggest that, along with its compulsive obsession with what is hidden or secret at every level, Beatrice harbors an unconscious desire for the man who governs her most intense passions. This could be read fairly straightforwardly in moral terms, as a metaphor for Beatrice’s *real* nature: her loathing for her servant obscures her refusal to face up to her real moral quality. In employing him to murder her betrothed she reduces herself to what he is. She therefore acts beyond the bounds of her aristocratic breeding; by reducing herself to De Flores’ level by inadvertently making herself sexually available to him (and therefore, like the Duchess, betraying the supposed purity of her family’s blood), she contaminates that blood. That blood, as she says to her father, needs to be purged and poured into the “common sewer” to “take it from distinction” (5.3.154).

The problem of “distinction” lies at the heart of *The Changeling*, which in its very title calls into question the capacity to maintain differences in absolute terms. If things change, how can one distinguish them with any certainty or constancy? And what of Alsemero’s observation that “there’s scarce a thing but is both loved and loathed” (1.1.125–126)? Such a declaration of the interaction of love and hatred – indeed, of difficulty of drawing an absolute distinction between the desire for pleasure and the desire for death – disturbs the play’s assumed hierarchies: between master and servant, aristocrat and commoner, male and female, ordered and disordered, mad and sane, secure and vulnerable, secret and exposed.

The closing discussion among the survivors harps on the results of a general tendency of human beings to change, but change is not necessarily bad. The participants of the decidedly untragic subplot declare their change for the better: Antonio and Franciscus admit to their foolish pursuit of Isabella who, unlike Beatrice, has kept herself intact from their professions of service, while her husband declares his newly gained clarity of vision: “I see all apparent, wife, and will change now/Into a better husband ...” (5.3.224–225). The play makes an attempt to end with a



confirmation of old hierarchies and norms and a re-establishment of an endogamous unit from which foreign elements (Beatrice: “ugly whoredom,” De Flores: “master sin,” and Diaphanta: “a wantonness”) have been expunged. But no concluding platitudes can expunge the acknowledgement that the relationships of service – social and erotic – upon which the social world depends are contaminated by the love and loathing that are bound together within the family.

### **Coda: John Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore***

The issue of endogamy versus exogamy as a matter of social and political difference is expressed in *The Duchess of Malfi's* suggestions of the incestuous desire of Ferdinand for his sister, and Beatrice's falling from the close confines of family through a corrupting servant in *The Changeling*. In Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, first printed in 1633, the import of incest – both sexually and socially – is given its full weight, in the tragic story of the erotic love between a brother and sister in an acquisitive, essentially amoral society. Here the aristocratic impulse towards incest as a way of preserving a noble family from the contamination of the “common,” evident in Whigham's reading of *The Duchess of Malfi*, is pushed to the social world as a whole, since the distinctions between nobility and commoner are more fluid and labile in Parma. While Florio is a mere citizen of Parma, he is besieged by a mix of noble, gentleman and citizen suitors for his daughter, Annabella.

Annabella's brother, Giovanni, directly and defiantly challenges the cosmic prohibition against incest by calling into question both religious and social sanction as mere superstition. “Busy opinion is an idle fool/That, as a school-rod keeps a child in awe” (5.3.1–2), he declares as he prepares to sacrifice his sister and lover, and while he may bewail the religious prohibition of incest before he beds his sister (1.2.159–160), within five lines he rejects religion as a merely conventional instrument of subjugation: “I find all these but old men's tales/To fright unsteady youth” (165–166). Employing the new arguments of rational humanism, Giovanni places his intellect (and his unstoppable desires) above what the French philosopher, Montaigne ([1580] 2003), wrote of as “custom” – the conventional rules by which societies order themselves – and which are themselves intertwined with the absolute laws of religion.

Two questions that arise from our discussion of the earlier Jacobean tragedies receive especially concentrated treatment in *'Tis Pity*: the transformation of the service relations of courtly love into real, fleshly erotic relations; and the depiction of master–servant relations in a Caroline (1625–1649), not a Jacobean (1603–1625) play, written some two decades after Shakespeare's Iago expressed his corrosively cynical views on the “curse of service.”

Briefly, the first represents a reduction, as far as it can be taken, of the difference between lovers: station, rank, age, nationality, temperament, blood – everything except gender that separates lovers is reduced to absolute point zero in the

endogamous relationship between brother and sister. Giovanni celebrates precisely their identity (their lack of “distinction”) in his philosophical argument in favor of their union:

Are we not therefore to each other bound  
 So much the more by nature, by the links  
 Of blood or reason, nay, if you will have't,  
 Even of religion, to be ever one,  
 One soul, one flesh, one love, one heart, one all? (30–35).

Moreover, such endogamy, in rejecting the cynical hypocrisy of the society embodied especially by the Cardinal but also by just about everyone else, attempts to forge a separate, private space of heavenly union through eros.

When Giovanni talks of making his “love” the “god” of his “idolatry,” is he using courtly terms for the adoration of the beloved by the lowly and servile lover, or is his own passion – *himself* – the real object of his narcissistic infatuation? The horrific event at the end of the play, when Giovanni stabs his sister to death in the midst of a kiss, and then enters the party with her heart impaled at the end of his dagger, suggests the latter – that, as with Ferdinand’s love for his sister in Webster’s play, Giovanni’s love for his sister can brook absolutely no other rival, and is therefore a displaced adoration of his own pseudo-godly presence. The service relations that imbued all early modern representations of eroticism via the courtly tradition turn out to be those of Shakespeare’s Iago: entirely self-serving and ultimately self-consuming. And this is true of the fantasy image at the heart of the courtly tradition as such. Giovanni loves Annabella merely to “serve [his] turn upon her”; in “serving [her], he serves but [himself].” When she stops being his fantasy mirror-image it is time for her to be eviscerated and obliterated, her mystery displayed as a piece of meat at a banquet.

But if Giovanni is patterned after Iago, *'Tis Pity* offers us a very surprising representation of non-erotic service, in the form of Soranzo’s loyal servant, Vasquez. Critics don’t pay much attention to Vasquez. The Arden editor dismisses him as “cunning and sadistic” (Ford [c. 1630] 2011, 25). But he’s more than that: some 20 years after Shakespeare created Iago, 30 after I.M. bemoaned the decline in traditional service relationships in his *A health to the gentlemanly profession of serving-man* (1598), in the wake of the severely compromised servants Bosola and De Flores, and at a time when critics repeatedly tell us that loyalty had been all but eroded by the impersonal alienation of cash relations, Ford offers us an *anti-Iago*: a servant absolutely devoted to his master’s interests. That such interests should be repulsively self-centered and horribly violent should not divert us from this extraordinary instance of *total* service by the devoted servant.

Vasquez employs an Iago-like cunning to hide his true loyalties from Hippolita, who tries to seduce him, acting as a more knowing Beatrice. But unlike Iago, his loyalty is directed not to himself, but to Soranzo, whom he loves in a chain of affection and duty that began with his original master, Soranzo’s father. To the Othello-like

question, “What incarnate fiend/Hath led thee on to this?” the servant responds calmly and implacably:

Honesty and pity of my master’s wrongs. For know, my lord, I am by birth a Spaniard, brought forth my country in my youth by Lord Soranzo’s father, whom, whilst he lived, I served faithfully; since whose death I have been to this man as I was to him. *What I have done is duty*, and I repent nothing but that the loss of my life had not ransomed his. (5.6.116–124; emphasis added)

In Shakespearean terms, Vasquez is a curious amalgam of the absolute dedication of the Earl of Kent in “pity” to his master, King Lear, and the subterfuge “honesty” assumed by Iago in pursuing his own interests. His methods are those of Iago, but his sense of pity, duty, and faithfulness are those of Kent. Moreover, he withstands the promise of material, sexual, and puissant “preferment,” the objects of so much servant fantasy in Jacobean drama, to declare his essentially *selfless* devotion to his masters, who form an unbroken tradition of ideal master–servant relations. Why does he act in this way? Just as Iago refuses to tell us why he destroys Othello (“What you know, you know./From this time forth I never will speak word” (5.2.355–356)), so Vasquez offers no more than the example of his duty. This may seem as strange and inscrutable to us as Iago’s more obvious refusal to reveal himself. But at least some of Ford’s audience, even in the 1630s, would have understood. Vasquez represents a world we have lost almost completely.

### What to Read Next

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# The Body and Its Lives

*William W.E. Slights*

Incarnation is a central fact of Renaissance drama and poetry. To lose sight of human embodiment is to lose sight of this literature altogether. The vitality of literary human beings, their ability to somehow stand in for us and to engross us, is the work of the intricately depicted hearts, hands, lips, eyes, and guts that feature so prominently in Renaissance literature. What Hamlet calls “this too, too solid flesh” (Folio, 1623), or in other versions of the text, “sallied flesh” (Q1 1603, Q2 1604–1605) is everywhere apparent. At the height of his torment, Faustus fears as much for his body as for his soul, wishing that his body might “turn to air,” his soul to “little water drops” (*Dr. Faustus* c. 1588–1589, 5.2.180–183), and when Flamineo lays his fake claim to humanity, he shrieks, “My liver’s parboiled like Scotch holy-bread;/There’s a plumber laying pipes in my guts, it scalds” (*The White Devil* 1612, 5.6.141–142). The extremities of suffering are matched by the extremities of physical pleasure in *Shakespeare’s Sonnets* (1609) (e.g., 46, 47, 106) and in Donne’s *Elegies* ([1633] 1967) (e.g., 2, 10, 13, 14). The array of rhetorical strategies for expressing the suffering and ecstasies of the body developed during the Renaissance in tandem with the anatomical sciences, and humanist letters were under constant pressure to accommodate conflicting theories of the human body.

It is commonly believed that modern theories of the human body were inaugurated with the publication of Andreas Vesalius’s *De humani corporis fabrica libri septem* (*Fabrica* for short) in 1543. In his *magnum opus* the Flemish anatomist assembled precisely illustrated results of his dissections of the human skeleton, muscles, blood vessels, and internal organs, registering as he did so both his respect for earlier natural philosophers and his disagreements with them. His work influenced not only medical practice but also representations of the body in the visual arts and literature. After this defining event, it was no longer possible to believe in the holistic

accounts of a body regulated by the four humors, since it was now possible to see and measure the “body in parts.” The so-called anatomical Renaissance appeared to usher in a new scientific age. This pervasive view needs to be challenged, however. In the absence of such a challenge, there is a risk that the creative vitality of linguistic and literary interpretation will be stifled by scientific and historical “facts” that can appear self-evident but which are not at all. The tools of literary interpretation are vital to understanding the ways that the human body has been represented and misrepresented in Renaissance studies. My present aim is to bring the conflicting array of ancient, Renaissance, and modern theories of the body into some kind of sensible alignment, acknowledging their radical differences but also respecting their enabling continuities. From the outset it is clear that the body is not a simple, physical fact of existence but rather a complex social phenomenon requiring multiple reconstructions over time.

### Social Histories of the Body

Ben Jonson (1572–1637), the English playwright most given to anatomizing human folly into its constituent parts, fills his satirical tragedy *Sejanus* ([1604] 1990) with grotesque bodies that seem intent on observing, then imitating, each other’s follies. *Sejanus* draws a crowd of ambitious admirers quick “to praise/His lordship, if he spit, or but piss fair,/Have an indifferent stool, or break wind well.” (1.38–40). The prevailing habit of imitation rules Tiberian Rome (14–37) just as it does the England of Jonson’s humor plays. Far from operating as though the human form is the masterwork of the divine Creator and measure of all things, as it is, for example, in Phineas Fletcher’s book-length anatomical poem *The Purple Island* (1633), the chief achievement of these bodies appears to be their excretory prowess (see also Jonson’s guided tour of London’s sewer system, “On the Famous Voyage”). Gross bodily functions come to represent the body politic of Rome in Jonson’s relentless satire. His exposé of Rome’s peculiar curiosity about the body culminates in a crowd-sourced anatomizing of the overreaching *Sejanus*. “[T]he rude multitude” dismember him and “deal small pieces of the flesh for favours”:

[T]his hath cut off his hands;  
And this his feet; these, fingers, and these, toes;  
That hath his liver; he his heart. (5. 818–835)

The violent reduction of a human body to its discrete bits threatens to make a travesty of the symbolic and metaphoric system of thought that found scope and nobility in the macro/microcosm analogy. The importance of the body to the habit of mind that interweaves microcosm (“the little world of man”) with macrocosm was carefully documented by Leonard Barkan in his book *Nature’s Work of Art* (1975). A decade later, in *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (1995), Jonathan Sawday remarks that “an endlessly repetitive

interplay of metaphor, similitude, and comparison” joined microcosm and macrocosm so that “the [Renaissance] body lay entangled within a web of enclosing patterns of repetition” (23). In addition to Barkan’s book, Sawday cites the work of A.O. Lovejoy (1936) and Joseph A. Mazzeo (1953) explicating metaphors of the body and the universe. That analogy must have been very much operative in the early seventeenth century or Jonson could not have achieved the degree and significance of satiric horror that the strategic placement of this passage produces at the play’s climax.

In the 1970s and 1980s theoretical interest in the universalizing metaphoric joins between the body and the non-human world that saturated Renaissance literature was replaced by a far darker theory of cultural production, Michel Foucault’s model of the state apparatus controlling all human endeavor through a relentless scheme of surveillance.<sup>1</sup> Foucault’s followers, even more than the prominent French philosopher himself (1926–1984), characterized the force of this official scrutiny as so penetrating as to produce debilitating forms of self-censorship. Literary scholarship, emerging from the formalism of the 1950s, found much that was appealing in this view, and Foucault became enormously influential. Almost as influential was the work of Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975), who posited an anti-authoritarian revolt of the human body against the political forces of repression. This “grotesque” body with its rude sounds and smells waged a perpetual battle against the restraints of the idealized body of classical sculpture and art. As Michael Holquist says in his prologue to Bakhtin’s *Rabelais and His World* ([1965] 1984), the book “is finally about freedom, the courage needed to establish it, the cunning required to maintain it, and – above all – the horrific ease with which it can be lost” (xxi). This freedom was precisely the quality of social existence that Foucault and his followers maintained had ceased to exist in the Western world during the nineteenth century and was probably only an illusion in earlier ages.

Foucault’s assessment of the impossibility of individual expression in an overdetermined social matrix led a great many of the British cultural materialists, among them such Renaissance scholars as Francis Barker (1984), Catherine Belsey (1985), and Jonathan Dollimore (1984), to denounce the liberal humanism that they felt had dominated literary studies up to that point. There was an exhilarating sense abroad in the early 1980s that a corner had been turned from the narrow alleys of I.A. Richard’s (1929) brand of practical criticism into the broadly philosophic avenues of High Theory. The announced death of the notions of “context,” “human nature,” and the author himself was widely embraced, and it now remained for interpreters of Renaissance texts to re-think the work of the preceding half-century. At the center of this effort in North America was Stephen Greenblatt, the initially unwitting leader of the critical school that came to be called the New Historicism.

In his 1988 book *Renaissance Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare* Greenblatt set out to pursue the origins and achievements of Jacob Burckhardt’s ([1860] 1878) self-defining Renaissance men in the work of Wyatt (c.1503–1542), Spenser (?1552–1599), and Marlowe (1564–1593). The pursuit, however, did not lead where Greenblatt hoped it would. Instead of locating the source of individual freedom in self-definition, Greenblatt discovered repeatedly in his reading of Renaissance

literature that identity was shaped by collisions with the social and political authorities of the time. Though Greenblatt's critical procedures left him feeling trapped in a sociological and cultural morass that did not support the possibility of self-fashioning at all, he continued to cling to the felt experience of being the author of his own identity. So where did that feeling come from?

There is nothing so personal, so individualizing as one's own physical body. It feels like the ground of human identity and the basis of any narrative of human experience. Not surprisingly, the materialist critics of the 1970s and 1980s were determined to understand the human form as it appeared in the literature of the past. The Renaissance bodies they found were quite unlike the one that Aristotle's anatomical project had abstracted from myriad forms of living creatures. Aristotle's investigations in *Parts of Animals* (c. 350 BCE) conflated studies of humans with those of other animals (frogs and monkeys, for example), producing a composite physiological model that required refinement in later ages. The theory of humoral balance espoused by Alcmaeon of Croton (b. ?510 BCE), Galen of Pergamon (129–c. 210), and other natural philosophers in ancient Greece made important discriminations that provided subsequent Renaissance anatomists an enduring framework within which to understand a wide array of distinctly human forms of health and disease. In addition to the grotesque Bakhtinian body and the analogical microcosmic bodies that we have already encountered, there were bodies in pain, sexual bodies, bodies in parts, and medicalized bodies – and each had to be provided with its own theoretical underpinnings.

### **Bodies in Pain and the Sexualized Body**

In the mid-1980s Elaine Scarry proposed that bodily pain was the ultimate shaper of human reality. Pain, particularly the excruciating, apparently endless pain of torture, effectively blots out all sense of where and who one is. The tortured body was well known to English dramatists of the Renaissance period, as evidenced by Tamburlaine's brutalizing of Bajazeth (*Tamburlaine The Great* 1587), the blinding of Gloucester (*King Lear* 1605–1606), and the tormenting of the Duchess of Malfi (1614). Surely the body can be tormented beyond belief and well beyond the analytical capacity of any 10-point pain-tolerance scale, but it also asserts its endurance beyond the realm of pain. After publishing *The Body in Pain* (1985), Scarry went on to explore the spiritual aspect of bodily experience in the writings of John Donne, developing the concept of “volitional materialism” (1988, 71). Through the insistent force of his own will, she argues, Donne attributes physical reality to language itself as he embeds it in the parchment, vellum, even windows, on which he writes. From there it is a small step to incorporating his soul into his disease-ridden body in the *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions* ([1624] 1987).

Body studies took a very different turn in the work of Thomas Laqueur. His ground-breaking book, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (1990) had a substantial impact on how Renaissance scholars came to understand



the sexualized body. Laqueur makes the case that from the time of Galen until the late eighteenth century female genitalia were thought to be identical to the male, just inverted and hidden inside the body (4). In succeeding centuries, male and female organs and experiences of sexuality have been thought to be “opposite.” This paradigmatic shift, he says, is not the result of correcting an error of observation or of changing conventions of representation, but rather is a function of engrained ways of seeing. Throughout the Renaissance, the physiological key to reproductive difference was not so much genital structure as heat. Women’s purported coldness required the heat of the male seed to insure generation, and, as Laqueur recognizes, “the standard of the human body and its representation is the male body” in the Renaissance (62). The female body was consistently represented in the period as awash in uncontainable fluids – tears, urine, menses. The ascribed lack of bodily control in women was “naturalized by means of the complex classification of bodily fluids to which Galenic humoralism was committed both in theory and in practice” (Paster 1993, 25). Many kinds of unreliability, including rhetorical and sexual, flowed from this “flawed” system of female hydraulics. The copiously sweating and urinating body of Ursula the Pig Woman (2.2) in Jonson’s *Bartholomew Fair* (1614) and the famous christening scene (3.2) in Middleton’s *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (1613) are just two instances of the association between shame and the leaky female body in Renaissance drama. We will encounter the cultural power of shaming again when we consider the intense medicalizing of the body in the Renaissance. But first we need to register the impact of twentieth-century feminist theory on our understanding of women’s bodies as they were displayed in Renaissance literature, and then to explore the contestation of exclusively heteronormative assumptions that so strenuously limited Renaissance body studies until very recently. The need to historicize our sense of the sexualized body was established by Caroline Walker Bynum (1987) and Natalie Zemon Davis (1983), among other historians of the medieval period. Such Renaissance specialists as Nancy Vickers, Carol Thomas Neeley, Lynda Boose, and Marianne Novy also powerfully demonstrated the devaluation and exploitation of the female body in the literature of their period. As they pointed out, the persistent Galenic model of sexual difference, with its emphasis on the *lack* of vitality in the female body, was powerfully derogatory. The biases built into the model had been widely ridiculed in the verse satires and dramatic comedies of the period but were all too often accepted at face value in earlier twentieth-century literary criticism. The corrective work of Gail Kern Paster in this area was especially far-sighted and effective, making a persuasive case for “the place of psychological theory in the social history of the body” (1993, 3). This theoretical move helped to open up the study of *affect* that has become a widely debated area within body theory, even more widely these days than within queer theory.

Homosexuality, long nudged aside by blustering assertions about perfectly acceptable, asexual male friendship in the Renaissance, came into clear focus with the publication of Alan Bray’s bold but balanced historical study, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (1982). “The intimacy between men in Europe and North America today,” as he later put it, “is protected to a large extent by the notion of a

quite distinct homosexual minority for whom alone homosexual desire is a possibility” (1994, 56). No such isolatable gay subculture existed in Renaissance England, and so practices such as anal intercourse – seen as aberrant and biblically moralized as “sodomy” – were even more threatening to heteronormative social hierarchies than they are now. The assiduous work of Bruce R. Smith (1991), Mario DiGangi (1997), and Will Stockton (2011), among others, has added both substance and indeterminacy to the notion of what a sexual identity, let alone a queer one, might be. Texts such as *The Merchant of Venice* (1596–1597) could no longer be read without reference to male-male desire and bonding. Neither could any poem in which a male speaker explores his deep love for Christ or in which the philosopher – ancient or modern – enchants young boys with learning. All this emphasis on maleness did not escape the notice of theoreticians of the female body and of woman-to-woman intimacy. Valery Traub’s *Desire and Anxiety: Circulations of Sexuality in Shakespearean Drama* (1992) highlighted largely unnoticed resonances in Renaissance texts and lesbian practices on the Renaissance stage.

Every aspect of textual production and consumption from creative inspiration to book selling has recently been shown to have a sexual component, and the full impact of this broad-spectrum sexualizing of bodies of text has yet to be fully felt. Previously unrecognized parallels between social-sexual and literary practices in the Renaissance are having a growing impact on textual studies of the period. Jeffrey Masten’s *Textual Intercourse* (1997), for example, encourages textual critics to view the widespread practice of theatrical collaboration in the context of body studies. The links between the human body and the corpus of Renaissance texts have broad implications for Renaissance studies, as we will see when we revisit Jonson’s *Sejanus*.

## The Body in Parts

The important collection of essays bearing the title *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe* appeared in 1997. It contains separate essays on the tongue, anus, breast, clitoris, eye, belly, heart, brain, and hand, and it claimed wide-reaching cultural reorientation for the concept of fragmentation in both the early modern and post-modern periods. The editors enumerate cultural transformations in the Renaissance that eschewed the universal for the particular and the whole for the part, for example in the natural philosophy of atomism, the advent of moveable-type printing technology, the end of feudalism, the growing schisms in the Church, the Copernican assault on micro/macrocosmic correspondences, and the birth of the anatomical “culture of dissection” (Hillman and Mazzio 1997, xiii). And the late twentieth century seemed to be aligning itself with this kind of thinking as well: “The elevation of the fragment to a position of central significance is ... very much a topical matter in contemporary culture; the rejection of all forms of totality, including the corporeal, is one of the defining characteristics of post-modernism” (xii). Yet the logic of many rhetorical strategies, we should remember, entails frequent movement between the general and the particular, the overarching theory and

the specific example, the whole and the part. It is a stretch to characterize either the mid-sixteenth century or the late twentieth as an age of *all* wholes barred. The pervasive links between body parts and the larger physiological systems within which they function are essential to Vesalian as well as present-day anatomy.<sup>2</sup>

Acknowledging the “dialectic of unity and partition” (xiv), other Renaissance scholars have constructed careful histories of body parts. Human agency, largely denied by structuralist arguments for the deterministic power of history, was given a corporeal turn in Katherine Rowe’s *Dead Hands: Fictions of Agency, Renaissance to Modern* (1999). Rowe studies the “fiction” of a volitional interior self and how that “fiction” becomes alienated over time from the body, notably from its primary instrument, the human hand. By the later nineteenth century, according to Rowe, the notion of agency, along with the philosophical and theological orientations that sustained it in the Renaissance, had been largely eclipsed.

The religious impulses that distinguish Renaissance thought so starkly from our own found their “natural” home in one particular body part, the heart. More books were written about the Renaissance heart in the decade between 1998 and 2008 (see Slights 2008) than about any other body part. The attractions of the heart as an object of study are not hard to identify. As William Harvey (1578–1657) confidently asserts, “we may conclude (with *Aristotle*) that the *Heart* and not (with the *Physitians*) that the *Brain* is the first *Principle*” (1653, 348). The stylized shape of the heart became a powerful icon for both human and divine love. Scripture confirmed repeatedly that God’s word was inscribed in the human heart. The foundational truth of Christianity and the central informing concept in all Renaissance fictions of human life was the incarnational one – Word made flesh – and the center of that incarnate experience was the heart.

Renaissance authors created a richly emblematic language of the heart that owed as much to ancient and medieval art and literature as to sixteenth-century anatomical science. Within this language God’s word continued to be inscribed on the hearts of the faithful, and devouring the heart of an adversary was still an acceptable way to enhance a hero physically and morally. One of the best of the dedicated heart books and one committed to the idea of reading the body with philological rigor is Robert A. Erickson’s *The Language of the Heart, 1600–1750* (1997). While his literary concerns extend beyond the Renaissance, Erickson’s early chapters root his work firmly in the biblical theory and the robust feminism that had already established itself in studies of the literary figures he chooses to investigate: John Milton (1608–1674), Aphra Behn (?1640–1689), and Samuel Richardson (1689–1761). Throughout he remains healthily skeptical of the “competing single or special interest theories and theorists” that continued to dominate the interpretive landscape of the 1990s (xiv). Writing, he argues, “is a male act of power” in the Bible (xv), one that came to be increasingly identified with the virile thrust of the heart pumping blood through the body in William Harvey’s circulatory model. From these models, one spiritual, the other predominantly scientific, evolves a new role for the heart in prose fiction. Erickson’s historicist project, carried out through close readings of a few selected texts, traces a centuries-long evolution of the gendered heart as a culturally telling metaphor, a body part writ large by poets and physicians alike.

In the same year that Erickson's book appeared Milad Doueïhi published his *A Perverse History of the Human Heart*, in which he tracks the interaction of the twin tropes of the heart as divine book and as proffered morsel of food, the *coeur mangé*, from the early Greeks to the early moderns. In his intellectual history of the heart Doueïhi links divine incarnation to cannibalism in such texts as Dante's *Vita Nuova* (1295) and Bacon's "Of Friendship" (1625).

Grounded in early literature of the Middle Ages, Eric Jager's *The Book of the Heart* (2000) focuses primarily on the heart as a site of inscription. "The book of the heart," he says, "is a quintessentially medieval trope in that it combines the central symbol of medieval textual culture, the manuscript codex, with a psychology and anthropology that were centered on the heart rather than the head" (xv). The heart was the place to record internally the experience of love. When surveying the boundary between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Jager dismisses the notion of pinpointing the precise moment when the medieval heart was first thought to reflect the modern self.

To follow the debates over whether this being [the modern "subject"] made its first appearance in Petrarch's sonnets, on Shakespeare's stage, or yet another place, is like receiving frequently updated news bulletins to the effect that one fine day, in 1359 (with the *Canzoniere*) or 1603 (*Hamlet*), the Western self awoke from its medieval slumbers, looked into the mirror of modernity, and recognized its own reflection. (xix–xx)

Clearly this is a mug's game, yet some version of it still dominates much thinking about the body, and the heart in particular. Such arguments are frequently invoked to pinpoint the advent of the Scientific Revolution. The mechanizing of the body is a key component in the supposedly sudden Renaissance shift away from Galenic humoralism to experimental body science based on dissection practices. Radical intellectual and cultural changes flowed from this narrative in the arresting work of Jonathan Sawday in the mid-1990s. "As a machine" Sawday proposes, "the body became objectified; a focus of intense curiosity, but entirely divorced from the world of the speaking and thinking subject" (1995, 29). And yet John Donne, a keen student of his own body as well as his soul, could speak confidently in the *Devotions* ([1624] 1987) of the thinking heart, and, as Robert Erickson has shown, the heart remained the home of the sexual self well into the eighteenth century.

Was Vesalius really turning away from the ancients to usher in a brand new age of body science? To be sure he assembled an anatomy textbook that would dominate the field for decades, even centuries, to come. He did this by building on the work of such predecessors as De' Luzzi Modino, Realdo Columbo, and Hieronymus Fabricius from his own age, and these men in turn knew that they were standing on the shoulders of the ancients. The historian of medicine Andrew Cunningham discovered in the process of reconstructing Fabricius's project of inquiry that he "was trying to reconstruct the research programme of Aristotle" in anatomy, not to tear it down (1997, 6). While William Harvey's *Exercitatio anatomica de motu cordis in*

*animalibus* (1628) explains the propulsive action of the heart in circulating the blood and the valves that keep blood from running backward in the system, it venerated Aristotle, Cunningham insists, by extending his programmatic studies. The continuities between the work of the ancients and that of Renaissance physicians and barber-surgeons is more striking than the number of fresh departures in their work.

The heart, a symbolic center of religious and erotic experience, affords a measure of the gradual renovation of body thinking that occurred in the early modern period. It took centuries, for example, to displace belief in a heart bone, the Galenic miasma theory of contagion, and such superstitions as the one that required a “serpent” removed surgically from the heart of one John Pennant to be subdued by a circle of garlic (May 1639). There was an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary alteration in the ways that body language and body art have helped to shape Western culture. Throughout the period in question the body retained its crucial place in the theology of incarnation and in the love motifs of secular drama and poetry while at the same time featuring prominently in the medical developments of the day. Its subtle but steady transformation through the growth of systematic medical practice in England has contributed in major ways to modern theories of Renaissance corporality.

## **The Medicalized Body**

The injured and diseased body had, of course, been a large part of life since earliest times, but the theoretical component of the response to bodily damage and deficiency lagged well behind the practice of physicians and surgeons. Designing implements to set broken bones and to cut away diseased flesh far outstripped any new formulations of, for example, the causes of epidemic disease. Disfiguring diseases such as the pox required immediate surgical and other cosmetic interventions in a society that focused its moral condemnation vigorously on the sexual licentiousness believed to be the cause of any unsightly lesions on the body. As Margaret Pelling (1986), Roy Porter (2001), and others have observed, a great deal of medical practice was aimed not at curing ailments but at an uneasy mix of probing and covering up sores that provided fodder for the moralizers of the period.

At a certain point in the history of twentieth-century body theory, it became fashionable to follow Michel Foucault in ascribing the suppression of bodily freedom not to religious taboos but to a system of state surveillance and incarceration. This rush into the methodology and rhetoric of politicized sociology sometimes oversimplified the relation of medicine to literature as it allowed a “scientific” discipline to overshadow the interpretive strategies of literary studies. As medical educators such as Rita Charon (2006) are now coming to realize, patient–physician conversations involve more than the exchange of factual information leading to a fixed diagnosis and plan of treatment. Rather, it resembles dialogue in a play that itself requires us to unpack each of its complex speech acts. Even symptoms measurable by testing bodily fluids and, in our own time, various forms of medical imaging must be closely

read and integrated with other forms of visual and auricular evidence into a coherent narrative of disease. Replacing the current heavy reliance on medical jargon with some of the strategies of literary interpretation could, perhaps, improve communications in the field of medicine, just as the persistence of the richly metaphorical language of humors theory added explorative vibrancy to Renaissance discourse.

According to the thread of medical history rigorously pursued by Andrew Cunningham (1997), Gail Kern Paster (1993), Michael C. Schoenfeldt (1999), and others, Galenic theory and practice continued to contribute to the discourse of medicine well beyond the period of the anatomical Renaissance. The theory of “contrary curatives” and the administration of sometimes violent bodily eliminatives, from emetics to blood-letting in quest of humoral balance, continued well into the eighteenth century. A systematic but not very successful challenge to these well-established practices was mounted in England by the followers of the Flemish physician Johannes Baptista van Helmont (1579–1644). The Helmontians deplored the harsh Galenic regimens of purgation and tried to counter the caricatures of physicians and apothecaries on the public stage, even as they were promoting their own chemical medications and speaking in what John Donne calls “Mountebankes drug-tongue” (“Satyre IV,” l.44). The intensity of these late Renaissance medical debates appeals to our own age, when the contrary opinions of doctors and medical researchers regularly appear in the media, offering, then dashing hopes for miraculous cures for cancer and AIDS.

### Textualized Bodies

The problem with subjecting the Renaissance body to the kinds of theorizing that I have been reviewing is that we can so easily lose sight of the exhilarating and often terrifyingly raw encounters with the flesh that lend such vibrancy to the literature of the period. Unusual effort is required to imagine living in a world where medical doctors were figures of menace and of fun and where there was no germ theory to make sense of disease. Yet this was the world in which Jonson, Shakespeare, and Donne lived and wrote. The reassuring effects of modern medicine in the age of aspirin, penicillin, and anesthesia were unavailable to them, and the agonies of the flesh lay right on the surface. Gloucester’s blinding, Lavinia’s amputations (*Titus Andronicus* 1591–1592), and Leartes’ poisoned sword (*Hamlet* 1600–1601) were not mitigated in any way.

When we turn to close readings of Renaissance texts, we consistently find the utility of strong theories of the body across the range of literary forms. We also find a host of negative representations of the body that temper the theoretician’s enthusiasm for the vibrant, orderly, classical body. George Herbert’s religious lyrics powerfully confront the distracting claims of the flesh in the poet’s quest for the true source of love. His poem “Dulnesse” ([1633] 2010) begins by linking his “drooping and dull” body with the element earth, even as “wanton lover[s]” rhapsodize over their “beauties.” The rhetoric of poetic failure, mired in the treacle of epideictic

conceits, leaves Herbert searching for the quality of mind that could look to God for true beauty and love.

But I am lost in Flesh, whose sugred lyes  
 Still mock me, and grow bold:  
 Sure thou didst put a minde there, if I could  
 Finde where it lies. (410–411)

While struggling with his personal version of the Manichean body/soul dilemma and a debased version of his poetic vocation, Herbert asserts that God has placed a mind *there*, amid the flesh. He will never accept a theory based on a fragmentary body devoid of the spiritual direction of the mind.

The same plea for a unified view of body and spirit underpins John Donne's most poignant encounter with his own flawed flesh, recorded in his *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*. In the eleventh meditation Donne registers the vulnerability of the flesh, especially the heart, not only to daily distractions but to fatal disease.

[T]he venime & poyson of every pestilentiall disease directs it selfe to the *heart*, affects that, (pernicious affection,) and the *malignity* of ill men, is also directed upon the *greatest*, and the *best*; and not only *greatnesse*, but *goodnesse* looses the vigour of beeing an *Antidote*, or *Cordiall* against it. (57)

With venom and malignity at work within the body and abroad in the world, even the existence of goodness fails to work as an antidote. Donne hovers on the brink of despair in his sickness, believing himself in the grip of an irreversible process in which successive body parts fail until life itself ceases. But by turning away from suicide, Elaine Scarry argues, he eventually asserts his own individual, inviolable will (1988, 96). It may be more accurate, however, to describe Donne's spiritual salvation as a meditative form of humoral purge, "an active engagement of inner space with an external force that rights it" (Selleck 2001, 164). Donne's corporal images depend upon the Galenic model in which "external elements not only penetrate but *add themselves* to the patient" (Selleck 2001, 159). The external force, whether material (diet, physic, etc.) or spiritual (the effects of prayer, the grace of God), once incorporated into Donne's body, offers the possibility of regeneration. The suffering body of Christ gives new life to the suffering body of man.

In the *Devotions* Donne reads his body as though it were a particularly knotty text. Then, having written the 23 meditations, expostulations, and prayers that carry him through his grave illness, he returns to a scriptural model of sickness and recovery. His dedication to Prince Charles cites Hezekiah's "Meditations of his Sicknesse" (2 Kings 20: 5–6) as the pattern for his own. Abasing himself before God and uttering heartfelt prayers, the deathly ill Hezekiah (?8C–7C BCE) had finally been spared by God for another 15 years, as was Donne for a dozen years. The Bible validates Donne's suffering: the process of writing the text of the body has proved curative. Such a process of writing could equally well prove fatal, of course, as seen in the contrasting case

of Jonson's Sejanus, with whom we started this inquiry. As the play draws to a close, Tiberius captures Sejanus in the text of a "huge, long, worded letter" (5. 806) that accuses Sejanus of betraying his emperor. This fatal encapsulation and denunciation is followed shortly by Terentius's detailed account of Sejanus's dismemberment quoted earlier. That description of the titular hero's body in pieces derives not from Jonson's primary source, the *Annals* of Tacitus (109), which fail to record the fall of Sejanus, nor from Dio Cassius's *Roman History* (?20–?22), another of the play's main sources. Rather, Jonson borrowed the detailed account of a horribly torn body almost verbatim from Claudian's life of the tyrant Rufinus (fl 392). Jonson specifically wanted this degree of anatomical detail at the climax of his first Roman tragedy. He had carefully prepared for it through his insistent iterative imagery of the body. In the opening lines of *Sejanus* Sabinus had discussed the revolting corporal condition of aristocratic Romans with their "soft and glutinous bodies, that can stick,/Like snails, on painted walls" (1.8–9). Tiberius, the glutinous sensualist, later repairs to his Capri estate where he delights in watching men pushed over a cliff and in sexually abusing the children of courtly aspirants (4.388–401). Sejanus himself has risen to power by offering his body to wealthy men as the most "noted pathic" or prostitute of his time (1.216).

Jonson's desire for a dramatic language rich in anatomical detail is echoed throughout the corpus of English Drama. Vital characters – and the actors who embody them – are often memorable precisely because of their prominent corporality on the stage. Consider, for example, Marlowe's anally impaled Edward II (1594), the obscenely overweight and comically detumescent Falstaff (*1 Henry IV* 1596–1597), the perspiring pig woman Ursula (*Bartholomew Fair* 1614), Middleton's leaky clubwomen (*Chaste Maid in Cheapside* 1613). Each has a distinctive sexual component, a characteristic focus on particular body parts, various identifiable medical conditions, and a powerful appeal for audiences. Most importantly, they are all what Andreas Carlino (1999) calls "paper bodies" that, like human ones, require imaginative interpretation. There are, finally, no interpretive short-cuts to understanding them, no single, unified, transhistorical theory that can unpack them. Instead, critics will continue to observe these particular bodies and to craft theoretical frameworks to house them in the restless world of literary interpretation.

### What to Read Next<sup>3</sup>

Bolens 2012; DiGangi 2011; Floyd-Wilson *et al.* 2005; Gallagher and Raman 2010; Sutton and Williamson 2014.

### Notes

1 In *The Archaeology of Knowledge* ([1969] 1972) and *The Order of Things* ([1966] 1970), Foucault argues that certain human epistemes or a priori grounds for knowledge are governed by rules that operate below the level of consciousness. Thus, he believed that he



had displaced the subject as the key element of traditional historiography. In *Discipline and Punish* ([1975] 1977) and *The History of Sexuality* (1976–1984] 1978–1986) he argues, for example, that any individual's knowledge of sexuality is governed by fixed power structures in society. As he says in *Power/Knowledge*, “The archaeology of the human sciences has to be established through studying the mechanisms of power which have invested human bodies, acts and forms of behaviour” (1980, 61). This investment was both incarnational and, as Marx (1818–1883) posited, economic.

- 2 In the *Fabrica* each body part is presented in the context of some larger system – the pulmonary or digestive or nervous system, for example – never in isolation. Hillman and Mazzio acknowledge that “the isolated part can never be fully autonomous” (1997, xiv).
- 3 Whether writing about poetry, drama, or expository prose of the period, the student of the Renaissance body would do well to establish a grounding in theories of embodiment such as those available in Sutton and Williamson (2014) and in Bolens (2012). Gallagher and Raman (2010) and the electronic conversation involving Floyd-Wilson *et al.* (2005) offer models of critical thinking and historically based essay writing that address Shakespeare. For work on post-Shakespearean playwrights concerned with the theatrical representation of sexuality, DiGangi's 2011 monograph provides a strong model.

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# Objects and Things

*Julian Yates*

The last two decades of literary and historical scholarship have seen a remarkable turn towards manufactured objects and *things* as forms of evidence. Scholars ask what we may learn by attending to the “social life of things” (Appadurai 1986) or even to their forms of “finitude” or “being” (Harman 2002; Morton 2013). Tables and chairs; stage props; false beards, wigs, hats, coats, traveling trunks with false bottoms, portable altars, collapsible chalices, and the specialized objects of underground movements, along with all manner of *things* as mundane and obvious as loaves of bread, potatoes, stones, staircases, and toys become possible subjects for analysis. The list could simply continue – well beyond the word limit to this chapter – and still it would not be complete.

The phenomenon is not limited to Renaissance Studies, but ranges between and among periods, national literatures, and disciplines. The trend is so widespread that it seems difficult or artificial now to impose limits on the endeavor for this turn to things seems like a subset of larger discipline-wide movements in the humanities. The phenomenon can no longer be corralled as a specialist orientation or a singular mode of “thing theory” (Brown 2001). Sometimes the turn manifests in an object-specific, category-specific, or theoretically particular mode, as in the rich and varied field we call the “history of the book” which asks how various forms of the codex shape our lives. But even something as expansive as the history of the book might find itself provincialized by the arrival of a media studies (old and new) whose scope extends, at one end of the historical spectrum, beyond a world of paper to include the classical and medieval worlds of parchment manuscripts (manufactured from the hides of sheep and cows) and ink (made from iron gall and soot – minerals and forms of carbon); and, before that, to wax tablets (the wax courtesy of now endangered bees); and at the other end, to the worlds of film and TV (celluloid) and the

multiplying variety of digital platforms (the agglomeration of terrestrial resources that enable the Web, Cloud storage, and so on). I foreground the different beings (animals and plants) and substances (minerals) upon which these media rely in order to impress upon you the way this turn to things finds itself a neighbor and sometimes collaborator with critical animal studies (Wolfe 2003), the emerging field of plant studies (Marder 2013), as well as a general interest in questions of matter that goes by the name the “new materialism.” In Renaissance Studies, this materialism would refer to the rediscovery of the Renaissance rediscovery of Lucretius’ *De Rerum Natura* (Wilson 2008; Goldberg 2009; Brown 2010; Passanante 2011; Greenblatt 2011). In its contemporary forms, which remain deeply indebted to philosopher Michel Serres’s analysis of Lucretius in *The Birth of Physics* (Serres [1977] 2001), it refers to work in political science, ecology, and philosophy that seeks to re-open ontological categories such as human, animal, plant, mineral (Bennett 2010).

While it is tempting to assert some *Gestalt* or holism, I think the truth is a bit simpler (and the implications therefore a lot harder). Any confrontation with materiality, any questioning of fundamental categories (human, animal, plant), proves disorienting. It leads us to question what counts as the subject of our work, the limits to our *object*. Objects, true to their Latin name (*ob*/against, *iacere*/to throw), get in the way. They multiply; trip us up; slow us down; render us a figure of fun as they upend our handy ability to craft narratives about ourselves. Thus arrested, we find that we are suddenly present to an immense gathering of beings – a world of objects crafted from the remainders of differently animated animals, plants, and minerals. This altered and altering sense of the world teaches us that what we thought were just objects, were in fact *things*, or true to the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian origins of the word (*þing*), an assembly or assemblies – whole polities of beings that we come into being with. We arrive at a host of uncomfortable ethical, political, and ecological questions that, although not previously unasked, now become urgently and captivatingly the singular, if multiple, question.

My aim in this chapter is to offer you a route-map or account (in a small and highly schematic form) of this turn to objects and *things* in Renaissance English Studies sensitive to the possibilities it generates for new modes of work and new avenues of inquiry. I begin with an origin story of sorts and then go on to highlight what I consider to be some of the most valuable theoretical tools on offer. I end with a case study that I invite you to augment and continue, written not by the likes of you or I but by a poet who belongs to the period we study and whose voice was animated by the enduring strangeness that is matter.

### A Few Words About Worlds and Pictures

The first rule of origin stories is that they are all, without exception, logical fallacies. That said, this is the story I tell as I seek to make sense of how we got to now. By all means take up the burden of revising it or adding to it based on your own interests, expertise, or how *things* appear from where you sit. The stories we tell about this

“turn” to *things* are calibrated differently by the governing conversation and interests of different historical fields. And this partiality, this perspectival specificity, that requires multiple accounts or, in philosopher of science Isabelle Stengers’ terms, an “ecology of practices,” might stand as the first and most important lesson (Stengers 2001). Never a single story; never a picture of the whole; accounting for any phenomenon requires a multiplicity of words, pictures, and worlds.

Against what he considered the overly comfortable and rational view of Elizabethan England as “a secular period between two outbreaks of Puritanism” (Tillyard 1942, 3) typified, so he said, by the misleading accounts of Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando* (1943) and *Shakespeare’s England* (1917), E.M.W. Tillyard painted an *Elizabethan World Picture* that advanced the view that the Middle Ages and Renaissance shared a common vision of the world as a hierarchical organization ordained by god in the form of a *Great Chain of Being* (Lovejoy 1936). The links to this chain consisted of different species (humans, animals, plants) and objects (minerals) and the higher up the chain you found yourself, the greater your divinely authorized sovereignty over all you found below you. In the case of humans, this meant that natural law underwrote our use of the world but also demanded a certain order of stewardship over it. So also, a whole divinity of angels and spiritual beings ruled over or surveyed the world of humans. Everyone and everything, so it seemed, had its place.

The scandal to Tillyard’s model was two-fold. First, as generations of scholars would observe, the world picture was misleading and represented an overly idealized, stabilized, and simplified sense of things. Second, the world so imagined seemed stifling in its conservatism, rigid in its categories, and so it chafed against the political aspirations of later generations of readers eager, if not to unite, then at least to lose or loosen its chains.

Against Tillyard’s stasis, the cultural materialists of 1980s’ UK sought to politicize the very texts that he had taken for granted. Tragedy became radical (Dollimore [1984] 2004) and Shakespeare political (Dollimore and Sinfield [1975] 2012). So began an all-out attack on the core product of Tillyard’s and Lovejoy’s accounts: the humanist subject who might stand as steward of the age and his avatar or inheritor, the academic liberal humanist of a certain generation and social privilege. Fueled by the substantial and devastating critique of the human subject as a sovereign, organizing, self-grounding unit of analysis delivered by the arrival of French and German philosophy become literary or critical theory, cultural materialists painted smaller, intense scenes of class conflict, dissident sexualities, and seemed to open the possibility for radical futures.

In the United States, the same critique of the human subject resulted in the loose association of approaches that came to be known as the new historicism, whose fragmentary anecdotal forms, most closely associated with Stephen J. Greenblatt (Greenblatt 1980; 1988), resonated with Michel Foucault’s counter-history, genealogy of concepts, and ultimately “technologies of self” (routines for making persons) (Foucault 1988). One of the thrills of the new historicism, and points of conflict with cultural materialism, was the return of world-encompassing pictures or even,

so it seemed, moving pictures. Its practitioners created densely rhetorical spaces that seemed to touch the past, to reach towards *things*, in a manner that radicalized or perfected anthropologist Clifford Geertz's rhetorically "thick descriptions" of indigenous peoples (Geertz, 1973). Anecdotes – fragmentary, partial narratives, rich in detail, rich in historically particular persons and objects, were the *thing* – as long as they could keep them moving, orchestrating a succession of still static vignettes whose passage effectively animated the past.

Skimming along the surface tension generated by its analogies, new historicists covered distances quickly, shifting between and among different registers at speed. One moment you were in a village in France, your host a hermaphrodite, thence to a stage in Southwark, a plane at 30 000 feet, a plantation in Virginia (Greenblatt, 1988), in and out of the dreams of Court astrologer Simon Forman (Montrose 1988), on to a royal progress, or a potlatch perhaps with the indigenous peoples of the Pacific North West; and still you would make it home in time for this or that play by Shakespeare or some other brand-name canonical text. The method became fully, headily explicit in the work of Patricia Fumerton in *Cultural Aesthetics: Renaissance Literature and the Practice of Social Ornament* (1992), which offered itself as the putative origin of a "new new historicism" that attended specifically to things and was codified further by Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt, in *Practicing New Historicism*, which they jokingly described in their introduction as "two chapters on anecdotes, and four on bread, potatoes, and the dead" (Gallagher and Greenblatt 2000, 1).

But then the surface tension broke, as the pendulum swung from subject to object. What had gone un-thought in the rhetorical strategies of new historicist prose was its relationship to the narrative pattern we derive from the "Renaissance" itself as a moment which marks a transformation of relationships between human persons and the *things* of the world. The troubled figure of Jacob Burckhardt's humanist subject as a being essentially detached from *things* remained at the core of new historicist interests (Burckhardt [1860] 1878). The advent or arrival of thing theory in Renaissance Studies, by contrast, asked scholars to pay very particular, sometimes minutely empirical, attention to their object. If in new historicist practice an object (any object for they were, in essence, interchangeable) served as a point of passage, a conduit for "social energy" and so as a key to the culture, the "turn to things" took the particularity of its *things* very much more literally. *Things* mattered. They did not offer transit to a larger interpretive paradigm, but rather slowed down our ability to say anything, in some cases anything at all beyond an empirical description of the object at hand. No more world pictures. Instead scholars limned smaller and smaller views or orientations to the past anchored in particular objects.

Crucial to this movement was the work of anthropologists Arjun Appadurai and Igor Kopytoff, who approach the "social life of things," tracing their passage, in order to work out the mechanisms of exchange of a given cultural moment and to inquire into the nature of the commodity form as it creates our worlds (Appadurai 1986). In the collection of essays gathered in the book *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture* (1996), Margreta De Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybrass

opened the question of “the potential priority of the object ... the way material things – land, clothes, tools – might constitute subjects who in turn own, use, and transform them,” and offered a dialectical model for approaching what we call, in the last instance, a “person,” undoing the appearance of detachment from things that characterizes Burckhardt’s subject (De Grazia, Quilligan, and Stallybrass 1996, 4). Of signal importance here also remains Ann Rosalind Jones’s and Peter Stallybrass’s *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Jones and Stallybrass 2000) which offers the closest thing to an “A–Z” of Renaissance clothing, its range, conditions of manufacture and use. It also proposes a far-reaching thesis that reckons the historical difference between “then” and “now” in terms of how a Renaissance person understood his or her clothes and how we understand our own. For them, clothes were effective fetishes – “material mnemonics” – whereas for us, caught in a profit economy, they are essentially “detachable and disposable goods” (Jones and Stallybrass 2000, 9–11). With early modernity, then, we re-enter, so it seems, a world in which *things* matter, serving as good fetishes or fetish relations in place of the “bad fetish” of the commodity form (Stallybrass 1998).

All this talk of fetishes may seem idiosyncratic, but stems from two sources. In his introduction to *The Social Life Of Things*, Appadurai worried that his method may appear to constitute a mode of fetishism (the irrational investment of significance in a mere object) – a worry he finesses by advocating “methodological fetishism” (Appadurai 1986, 5) which treats objects “as if” they were animate all the while knowing (of course) that they are not. At the same time, anthropologist William Pietz was publishing a series of three essays (1985, 1986, 1988) that provided a value neutral or even positive genealogy of the fetish as a “concept-problem,” from its emergence as the “pidgin word *Fetisso*” combining Portuguese and indigenous languages in the “cross cultural spaces of the coast of West Africa during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries,” through to its negative recasting in Enlightenment discourses and eventually in the hands of Sigmund Freud and Karl Marx in the nineteenth century (Pietz 1985, 5). The story he traces figures the “fetish” as an ongoing production, as a category of *things* with a problematic or contested relationship to rationalized modes of exchange. His genealogy demonstrates how, in all discourses, regardless of which particular *thing* is in question, the “fetish not only originated in, but remains specific to, the problematic of the social value of material objects as revealed in situations by the encounter of radically heterogeneous value systems” (Pietz 1985, 7) (native and Portuguese; Catholic and Protestant; religious and rational; fetishistic and psychoanalytic; capitalist and Marxist). As fellow anthropologist Michael Taussig observes, what Pietz “does for us with his genealogizing is restore certain traces and erasures and weave a spell around what is, socially speaking, at stake in making” and manufacture (*poiesis* generally), suggesting a way of approaching the story of the West through its successive rewriting of the contracts that pertain between “person” and “thing” (Taussig 1992, 118–119).

But if *things* now seemed to matter in and for themselves, the problem seemed to be that the story of the West tended to default to abusive forms of mastery. Whatever *things* said, whatever orientations they provided, they were still stitched into



narratives oriented to a human subject. *Things* seemed to turn too readily into words and so into stories or were used to build familiar narratives or world pictures, stories that seemed, whatever their new plot, to re-enact narratives of emergence and “renaissance” (Grady 1996; Bruster 2003; Harris 2001). And as Pietz might have told us, or we should have realized for ourselves, these problems signaled that the very terms of what counts as evidence were now at issue as *things* became a contested object of value in how we frame our stories about the past.

Another way forward lay in keeping Taussig’s sense of “person” and “thing” in play and attending very carefully to the co-making of persons and *things*, the way they exchange properties by their associations (Yates 2003). Key influences here came from the philosopher Michel Serres and sociologist Bruno Latour, who offered a way of modeling the world as an on-going production in which categories of being and whole infrastructures arose from the co-modeling of people with the host of objects, animals, and plants they come into being with (Serres [1990] 1995). Latour developed a language of “actants” and “actor networks” to describe the way persons and the vast array of other entities formed aggregates or assemblages (Latour [1998] 1999). The key to Serres’s and Latour’s mode of description is to approach a *thing* not in isolation, as a stable entity, but as a “quasi-object,” a folding together of all the persons, different forms of matter, and times and places that make them up (Latour [1991] 1993, 51–55; Serres [1990] 1995). These aggregates or assemblages produce differing concepts of person and so also of object-hood, but they also produce different temporal and spatial effects. Objects, so it seemed, did not belong to one time or place but to many. They were multiple.

In *Untimely Matter in the Time of Shakespeare* (2009), Jonathan Gil Harris made the polytemporality of objects explicit and asked scholars to consider the assumptions their modeling of *things* made about questions of temporality and place. Any given object became, for Harris, a palimpsest or folding together of differently timed orientations. Crucial to this model was Serres’s sense of space and time as a crumpled or folded series of forms (Serres with Latour [1990] 1995, 57). One of Serres’s favorite illustrations of how this model of reversible, non-linear time shapes our worlds is the everyday example of a “late-model car.” How do we date this car? To what period does it belong? The answer Serres offers runs as follows: the car is

a disparate aggregate of scientific and technical solutions dating from different periods. One can date it component by component: this part was invented at the turn of the century, another, then years ago, and Carnot’s cycle [key to the workings of the combustion engine] is almost two hundred years old. Not to mention that the wheel dates back to Neolithic times. (45)

When is your car exactly? When are you and your car? Adapting Serres’s insights, Latour offers that this “disparate aggregate” might best be described not as a palimpsest exactly (for palimpsests imply an interruption of surfaces) but a more neutral overlay or string of only sometimes intersecting superscripted dates, [4500 BCE, 1824 CE, 1900, 2004]<sup>2014</sup> (Latour [1993] 1996). The chain of time indices continues

obviously, the status of the gathering or *thing* that is your car keeps changing as it unfolds or is performed, as it sits in your driveway and rusts or drives down the road. The *thing* as aggregation or gathering changes, dropping and adding components or, in Latour's terminology "actants." You and your car constitute an "actor network" whose reach is global and whose time is multiple (Latour [1987] 1988, [1998] 1999). You shall always be able to say quite precisely when and where you are, but the stories you have to tell about how you got there and what might happen next become multiple, for every *object*, everything that gets in your way, constitutes a waxing and waning multiplicity.

The story whose lineaments I have assembled thus far might be described as one in which a certain dominant, still humanist, scenography of the world came unstuck. World pictures lost their clarity and certainty, dissolving into eddies of competing objects swarming around us or even seeming to reduce the likes of you and I to merely one or more objects amid the flux. The name given to this new (but not really new) subject would be "posthuman" (Wolfe, 2010), not something that comes after or beyond the human but which, instead, describes the way the "human" emerges from the aggregates of mineral, plant, animal, and technical resources with which we formalize or format our world, weaving the routines that constitute our infrastructures. These infrastructures are never complete, never finished, and create much negative feedback in the process (pollution, mass extinctions, genocides, global geothermal change). The humanist fantasy of detachment from a world of objects might be said to be the governing fantasy that enabled this settlement. It holds no longer. And in its place has emerged a much more chaotic, dangerous, perhaps, but also promising place in which every *thing*, so it would seem, needs to be re-described in terms of how it produces categories, time indices, and all manner of effects.

In the place of a world picture or even a series of world pictures, we have now, then, to build multiple, shifting, partial, time and space bound "prospects" tied to how *things* stand in what seems like *now* (Latour 2010, 474). And this *now* is made from and an effect of how we combine components or objects into *things*, how we perform them or understand ourselves, in Ian Hodder's terms, to be "entangled" with them (Hodder 2012). It is here also that we arrive at the new materialism, with a constellation of approaches that, in their application to early modern texts inquire into the status of matter in our discourses, and which, in contemporary modes (Bennett 2010), entertain a non-anthropocentric set of world views that allow *things* (animals, plants, minerals, even planets) to have their own orders of experience and finitude. The aim is not "to bust through human finitude" to reach things in themselves without us," writes Timothy Morton, "but to place that finitude in a universe of trillions of finitudes, as many as there are things – because a thing just is a rift between what is and how it appears, for any entity whatsoever, not simply for that special entity called the (human) subject" (Morton 2013, 18). The exercise, he hopes, might lead to the production of less lethal futures, of more hospitable infrastructures.

As giddy as my story about objects and things may seem to have become, my aim has been to orient you to the way attending as carefully and closely as possible to objects and *things* transforms what it means to read texts, encounter objects, and to

enlist them in writing stories about the past, the present, and the future – time-frames that, following Serres and Latour, emerge out of how we combine objects. In what remains of this chapter, I aim to show you what attending to some of these issues while reading might mean. I shall do so in the company of someone who, like Pietz, Serres, and Latour, thought a lot about how to make things (*poiesis*); and, like Bennett and Morton and a host of others, thought a bit about matter also. I refer to poet, Anglican, and sometimes Catholic, John Donne, whose poem “The Relic” I shall read through a series of different frames, each of which poses or parses the question of matter slightly differently. If, as I read, it seems that Donne has beaten me to pretty much everything, then that seems just about right. The poem anticipates all of my questions and concerns, positing, as it does, a putative future discovery of a relic, an object, that is, manufactured from hair and bone, supplemented by another object (a poem), written on a piece of paper, read, or even read aloud by another object (the breathing sound boxes that are “you” and “me”) spoken as we shall be by the poem’s dead “voice” that imagines both the speaker’s and his lover’s burial, exhumation, resurrection and possible re-uniting come the end of times (and of time itself) that is Judgment Day, before falling back on the exhaustion of his own poetic language in the face of the person he is trying to memorialize. As the poem accretes objects, it meditates on the gatherings or *things* that result, on the worlds that shall be made.

### Donne’s Relics

As you read the poem below you will notice that I have chosen to host it *here* in its early modern English spelling as it appeared in the first edition of Donne’s *Songs and Sonnets* in 1633 and as it appears translated to *The Complete English Poems of John Donne*, edited by C.A. Patrides (Donne [1633] 1985, 112). Other early editions date from 1635, 1667, and 1669, which augment and emend poems based on multiple manuscript copies. Unpublished during his own lifetime, Donne preferred to circulate his lyric poems and paradoxes in manuscript to specific readers (Marotti 1986); their circulation describes a network we may only partially reconstruct of friendship, intellectual engagement, and mere acquaintance.

What and when is “The Relique?” The poem inhabits many times and places. Any movement of text between and among different media, from manuscript to commonplace book to print, to the Web and into your or my essay, transforms the poem in and by the act of translation. As Latour might opine “no transmission without transformation,” which is to say, every time a text or object is moved, remediated, translated (the Latin *trans* means “across,” the verb *fero, tuli, latum*, means “to carry”), it becomes subject to change, alteration, deformation, loss, and gain. Traditionally, textual editing attempts to keep a textual object still by and through its successive passages. Latour’s “no transport without transformation” (Latour [1993] 1996, 119), on the contrary, sees transformation as good, necessary, and important. A translation or a reading should transform a text; it should think about the passage

it makes possible and attempt to do its duty to the *thing* it carries across, which shall mean losing some attachments and forging others. Translation (editing or reading) comes freighted always with the full heft of moral philosophy, ethics, and politics. What, then, are my responsibilities to Donne's poem, his textual object, as it moves? Am I being responsible? Such concerns might set you running after all the poem's many iterations, after all of Donne's "Relics." You might consult the ongoing variorum edition of the works that aims to inventory the forms the poems take in manuscript and print editions. You can do so now – partially – in print (Johnson 1995-) and online (<http://donnevariorum.tamu.edu>).

Before I even start reading, then, there are choices to be made as to what and when this poem *is*. The poem exists as a multiplicity of texts, which exist in relation to a multiplicity of associations between historical persons. The choice of text, your choice of text, as you enter into a relation with this multiplicity, as you join its gathering, already decides and so alters the boundaries of this *thing*. Here then, is Donne's poem – or one iteration of it:

#### THE RELIQUE

When my grave is broke up againe  
 Some second ghest to entertaine,  
 (For graves have learn'd that woman-head  
 To be to more than one a Bed)  
 And he that digs it, spies  
 A bracelet of bright haire about the bone,  
 Will he not let'us alone,  
 And thinke that there a loving couple lies,  
 Who thought that this device might be some way  
 To make their soules, at the last busie day,  
 Meet at this grave, and make a little stay?

If this fall in a time, or land,  
 Where mis-devotion doth command,  
 Then he that digges us up will bring  
 Us to the Bishop and the King,  
 To make us Reliques; then  
 Thou shalt be a Mary Magdalen, and I  
 A something else thereby;  
 All women shall adore us, and some men;  
 And since at such time, miracles are sought,  
 I would have that age by this paper taught  
 What miracles wee harmlesse lovers wrought.

First, we lov'd well and faithfully,  
 Yet knew not what we lov'd, nor why;  
 Difference of sex no more wee never knew,  
 Than Guardian Angells doe;  
 Coming and going wee,  
 Perchance might kisse, but not between those meales.

Our hands ne'r toucht the seales,  
Which nature, injur'd by late law, sets free:  
These miracles we did; but now alas,  
All measure, and all language, I should passe,  
Should I tell what a miracle shee was.

It seems impossible to begin other than by noting the way the poem already anticipates every one of my concerns. The story it offers projects the speaker's voice into an impossible future as he imagines his grave being re-opened (as was a common practice) "some second ghest to entertaine." The new body is interred; the old (the speaker) transferred to the charnel house. This involuntary but not exactly unexpected translation of the speaker's corpse provides the occasion for a scene of reading or encounter, the occasion, in fact, to which the poem is addressed.

Enter the gravedigger, who "spies/A bracelet of bright haire about the bone." Here the voice intervenes, so it hopes, in this putative and unpredictable future to prevent the gravedigger from removing this hair bracelet from his corpse. The voice speaks so as to cancel out an act it imagines. As it does so, the bracelet morphs from an object into a physical gathering of the two lovers that manifests in the poem as the first person plural "us." Matter (or the effect of matter as generated by the poem) and language cohere. This "us" unfolds by and through the grafting or touching of hair and bone and by the use of the substance of both to create an object that formalizes and preserves the joining of two to produce an "us." Combining the hair of one lover with the bone of the other in a contiguous relation, the bracelet attempts to ensure that come Judgment Day – "the last busie day" – when Christians shall be resurrected, the two lovers might "meet at this grave, and make a little stay" prior to their souls' translation to heaven. The bracelet hovers somewhere between or ministers to secular and sacred temporalities, conceding to biblical time as a dominant, paradigmatic template for life (and death) and nesting within that temporality a world (in small) of human time, a time so personal to this "us" imagined by the "I" the speaker speaks.

That this future "stay" enters the poem only through what it is hoped the gravedigger might not do speaks to its fragility. And this fragility, the impossibility for the bracelet, even when supplemented by a papery poem, to have efficacy speaks to the second stanza's widening concerns about dissemination, about further or successive acts of translation. For, "if this fall in a time, or land,/Where mis-devotion doth command," where Catholicism holds sway ("mis-devotion" is frequently rendered by editors as "mass-devotion;"), then the gravedigger will not linger by the grave, the speaker imagines, but make the bracelet into a relic, a relic that travels a circuit of Kings and Bishops. Relics and reliquaries were not something from a recent Medieval past, but an active culture of memory and devotion that, in the case of England's remaining or recusant Catholic community, served as key anchoring points for identity, community, and belief. Relics from the bodies of martyred Catholic priests were regularly collected and circulated between and among well-to-do Catholic families.

But Donne's poem and its "haire bracelet" are not quite relics. Indeed, the hair bracelet's misapprehension as a relic in stanza two generates another set of

interpretive misunderstandings and possibilities as the pattern of lyric poetry and amatory verse collides with biblical narrative and Catholic devotion. As the bracelet become relic circulates, attracts devotees, becomes a different kind of *thing*, the woman whom it addressed is re-written typologically as a Mary Magdalen (fl.1C). But there is no proper typology that can accommodate the speaker – he cannot be Jesus (c.4 BCE–c.33) – and so, somewhat crestfallen or wistfully, he goes untranslated to become an un-imagined “something else thereby”; a nameless or dropped actant who nevertheless remains. And because in such a world “miracles are sought,” we come to the occasion for the existence of the very piece of paper on which the words of the speaker are written. For, he would have “that age by this paper taught” the miracles that these “harmlesse lovers wrought.” The voice, supplemented or translated to paper, re-activated or spoken by the hopefully literate and lyrically inclined gravedigger or, if not, the representatives of King and Bishop, shall learn that the lovers “lov’d well and faithfully.” They loved chastely, Platonically – even though nature, unlike the law, makes no claims upon them to do so. This, then, shall be the text that the gravedigger shall or shall have found and that the widening circles of the relic-devoted shall read.

To what does the title of the poem refer: the “haire bracelet;” the piece of paper; the poem itself as if a relic or reliquary (the protective cover or case and adornment) to the bracelet; or more emphatically, still, the “thou” it comes to address and the “she” it comes to represent – for it is she, finally, says the speaker, who was the true “miracle”? The answer is all and none – for depending on how we read this poem, depending on how we perform its successive translations and the translations it imagines, we shall decide this question and so the limits of its gathering, its *thingliness*. If the poem ends in dissolution – true to the conventions of the amatory discourse, were it to succeed, to prove an effective translation of her miracle, then, “all measure, and all language, I should passe” – then in doing so it marks the end of Donne’s stacking of semi-equivalent objects (the “haire bracelet,” the relic, the paper copy of the poem) upon one another, for they are all exceeded by the burden of an impossible representation. That said, their stacking becomes the occasion to explore the way matter enters into language (and vice versa), a way of inhabiting the co-imbriation of secular and sacred time, and so of imagining and feeling the effects of joining or being joined to what we, and they, name or named a *thing*.

Hair bracelets, we know, were given as love-tokens. Among other “conceits,” in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (1595–1596), Egeus accuses Lysander of having seduced Hermia with bracelets of hair (Fleming 2001, 144). The co-incidence of Donne’s poem, migrated to paper, buried with the bracelet (and the speaker’s body) would have been legible to those that Donne allowed to read his poem as a meditation on the function of the posy, a time-bound, occasion-specific, text that unfolds in and as space in a specific medium. “The posy,” as Juliet Fleming offers, “is a form of poetry that takes in its fully material, visual mode, as it exists in its moment, at a particular site” (Fleming 2001, 20). “Paradoxically,” she continues, “such poetry is portable (‘something to be carried away’) precisely because it has not achieved, and does not hope to achieve, the immaterial, abstracted, status of the infinitely transmissible

text.” Donne’s poem is posy-like or, better, attempts both cognitively and affectively to own or understand the involutions of matter and consciousness that occasions such time- and space-bound objects, objects whose efficacy lies in their muteness or laconic volubility.

Obviously, there is more to say. The trick would be to keep the poem turning by allowing it to gather other texts and objects to it so that the network in which it is entered produces different effects. The most immediate thing to do would be to read “The Relique” with what seems its closest companion, “The Funerall” (Donne [1633] 1985, 108–109), a poem that replays the imagined scenography of the discovery of the bracelet. From there, you could enter these two poems into a relation with Donne’s parade of object-specific poems of remembrance: “Witchcraft by a picture” (92), “A Jeat [Jet] Ring sent” (116), “Valediction of my name in the window” (70), and more. To do so would be to embark on a trajectory that unfolded Donne’s own performance of matter, his ongoing meditations on the significant *things* that anchored his world, a cast of objects analogous to relics, yes, but which also interrogated or worried the status of the Sacraments, those that remained, in a reformed England whose altars had been stripped (Duffy [1992] 2005), and so also of the Eucharist as a defining presence “real,” “commemorative,” and otherwise.

So, as I bring this chapter to a close, a chapter that posy-like I hope you shall carry away along with Donne’s poem, I invite you to take your cue from its speaker and, please, to consider what attending to objects and *things* in all their creaturely density may mean for you, sensitive to the way in which at the moment you allow a *thing* to stop turning you will have decided what it means; how it functions; when and where you are; and so settled also a host of ethical and political questions that you might not have anticipated answering.

### What to Read Next

Appadurai (1986); Bennett (2010); Brown (2001); Harris (2009); Yates (2003).

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Part II

Places, Spaces, and Forms

## The Market

*David J. Baker*

In *The Terrors of the Night* (1594), Thomas Nashe (1567–c.1601) – the exuberant satirist, avid polemicist, and shrewd social observer – takes a few lines to sketch in a history of the “market” in England. There was a time, he says, when the Devil was wont to “play the good fellowe.” Among the “countrey people,” he would hobnob “in an euening by the fire” or court “kitchin-wenches” in the likeness of a “curmogionly purchaser.” He might courteously don a barber’s clothes to “wash and shaue all those that laye in such a chamber.” Later, more ominously, but still without needless sobriety, he would “daunce in chaynes from one chamber to another.” And then he would send men dreams, chimeras of wealth – “a pot of golde, or a money bag that is hid in the eaues of a thacht house.”

But now, says Nashe, Satan is everywhere: “Priuate and disguised he passeth too and fro, and is in a thousand places in an houre.” In his dealings, he has abandoned all civility and has instead taken up the arid ethos of the market economy. “Faire words cannot anie longer beguile him, for not a cue of curtsie will he doo anie man, except it be vpon a flat bill of sale.” “[H]e hath left forme” – Nashe seems to mean the social formalities of the past – “and is all for matter,” for payment in the present, by whatever means. “[H]e stay not to dwell vpon complements.” And in this, Nashe charges, he resembles almost everyone else in England, not just the “Peeres” and “Princes,” the traditional emblems of avarice, but also the “puritane[s],” those new avatars of cupidity. “[N]ow there is no goodnes in him but miserablenes and couetousnes” (Nashe 1958, I: 366–368).

It’s not hard to see how Nashe’s anecdote of Satan as a market operator would feature in a story often told in today’s economic criticism of early modern England, the story of how, as Marx (1818–1883) put it, “the exchange of commodities breaks through all local and personal bounds inseparable from direct barter” and “develops a whole network of social relations spontaneous in their growth and

entirely beyond the control of the actors” (Agnew 1986, 52). (For Marx on the effects of commodity circulation, see “The Metamorphosis of Commodities” in *Capital* [1886] 1906, vol. 1, Part 1, Section 2 (a).) On this account, by now a familiar one, there are two types of economic relation: one is defined by “specific obligations, utilities, and meanings” (or what Nashe calls “forme”). These harness cash money to a specific site – the “marketplace” – and to a useful role there: it serves as a go-between among persons and enables their exchanges. In the other, money has no master. It is now defined as a system of “general, fungible equivalents” (or what Nashe calls “matter”). The marketplace is one, but hardly the only place where such money circulates. It has expanded its domain to become a “market,” “a boundless and timeless phenomenon,” as Jean-Christophe Agnew puts it in a classic account (1986, 41–42). It operates both independently of and through the choices of the actors it subsumes, whether they understand this or not. The “marketplace” and the “market” are incompatible. The first dies when the second is born, however slowly or suddenly, and this birth is invariably malign. “Four or five hundred years ago,” as David Hawkes says in one recent retelling of this story, “the people of England became convinced that an aggressive, evil, supernatural force was active among them.” This force, which Hawkes identifies variously as “usury,” “capitalism,” and “commodity exchange,” “was visibly damaging traditional social relations and disrupting the ways of life to which people had long grown accustomed” (Hawkes 2010, 13; Hawkes 2001).

Nashe’s tale of the Devil, lately grown so cold and miserly, seems to capture all of this, although with an ironic twist. His Satan is not so much capitalism itself; he is rather its victim: “those dayes are gone with him” (I: 368). Just as much as anyone in England, he suffers the slow and uneven emergence of capitalism out of feudalism. The delights of face-to-face exchange within a society ordered on a human scale are gone, and in their place, the misery and “couetousnes” of an economy stripped of intimacy and permeated by money and money-mediated relations. Like the widening market economy itself, the Devil must now be ubiquitous, “a thousand places in an hour.” And, like that economy, his doings have come to seem occult, “priuate and disguised.” Satan has been dragged, by the inexorable logic of history, into what Marx called the “cash nexus.”

This is a powerful story. There are several problems with it, though. Here’s one: there was no cash nexus in early modern England. There was cash, certainly, but not enough of it to bring into being a web of money-mediated relations, and not enough cash, therefore, for such relations to take the place of face-to-face exchange, with all of its immediacy.

The issue, as always in economics, was scarcity. As Craig Muldrew explains in *The Economy of Obligation* (1998), the early modern English were cash-strapped. Their need for coin far exceeded the amount they actually had: at “the end of the sixteenth century the demand for money had probably increased by something like 500 percent, while the supply had expanded by only 63 percent.” Consequently, he says, “[m]oney was ... never used on a large enough scale to alienate economic exchange from social exchanges in the Marxist sense of a ‘cash nexus.’” The English were cash-poor, too poor to allow mere money – or at least, only such money – to come between them.

How, then, did the English of this period manage their economic affairs? How did they do without money, either in its most tangible form as coin, or in the aggregated, more abstract form that, today, we know as a “market”? The answer Muldrew gives has become well known, although, I think, its implications have yet to be thoroughly worked out, at least in the sub-field of early modern literary criticism that currently takes money and markets as central tropes. Without much cash on hand, the English of this time devised a hybrid economy for and among themselves. Scale, as Muldrew says, was key. Coin was used for the minutiae, the brief encounters of market dealing, “very small transactions between strangers ... market sales between sellers and purchasers who might see each other only irregularly.” And it was used on a “much larger scale,” as, for instance, “by landowners to pay bills drawn on the London market ... by merchants who needed it for overseas exchanges ... it was also collected by the government in the form of taxes.” For the rest, for the great bulk of transactions that fell between the small and the large, the English relied on credit. Often, though by no means always, their deals were made by means of formal instruments – bills, bonds, receipts, and the like – exchanged in lieu of (or really, as a form of) cash. But much of the credit extended and accepted was informal and relied on mutual and reciprocal trust. As Muldrew stresses, this was largely a *social* economy. Face-to-face interactions, that is to say, were *not* on the way out. To the contrary, they remained the *sine qua non* of most exchanges. Whom you knew, what others thought of you, and whether or not you had a reputation for honesty were the prime determinants of economic life, whether for good or ill. Not the only determinants. “Informal credit, money and written instruments of credit all existed in tandem,” just as they had in England for centuries and as they would well into the seventeenth century (Muldrew 1998, 98–101).

To say, though, that early modern England’s credit economy was largely social is not to say that it was untroubled. On the contrary, this credit economy was rife with conflict and uncertainty, precisely *because* it was a credit economy. An Englishman of this period was probably better off than his counterpart a century before. In the 1520s, as the plague abated, England’s population began to grow. This demographic cause had a powerful economic effect: demand. “A continually increasing number of mouths to feed and bodies to clothe and house” created a need for what farmers, clothiers, and builders had to sell, even as it provided them with a compelling motive to sell yet more. For those who were especially lucky or industrious, demand created the means and opportunity, too. A yeoman farmer, for instance, might respond to rising demand by raising his prices. He might acquire several smallholdings in his area and consolidate them, practicing economies of scale. He might take advantage of new “[n]etworks of distribution and marketing” that allowed him to ship his goods to places where prices were higher (Muldrew 1998, 15). If he grew wealthier as he did so, so too did the trader with whom he dealt, the artisan who made his tools, the chandler who made his candles, and so on. Of course, there were those who got few benefits from this commercialization – the smallholder, for instance, who lost his farm to our yeoman and found himself among the “masterless men” on the kingdom’s highways. In general, though, rising demand drove rising

consumption, and, as Nashe wrote, his kingdom had seen about 50 years of slow but steady economic growth (Baker 2010).

For our purposes, though, what's crucial is this: most of this business was conducted using promissory notes, and, without banks and other such institutions to undergird them, these notes were volatile instruments, subject to all the vagaries of an unregulated market. The same economy that spread profits spread its risks: "More wealth meant that more people owed more, and in turn were owed more by others." Among the enterprising, debt levels were often unsustainable, and the effects of a bankruptcy – or a crop failure, or a fire, or even, Muldrew notes, an especially prodigal son (Muldrew 1998, 17) – could be felt all the way up and down a chain of borrowers. Throughout the sixteenth century and into the seventeenth, litigation mounted as lenders and debtors took one another to court. Nashe's England, then, *was* in the midst of a crisis. But it was a crisis of credit, not cash.

This chapter unpacks the implications of this account of English markets, first for economically inflected early modern criticism, and then for Nashe. Muldrew's claims offer us, as early modern readers, an opportunity to rethink much that we have taken for granted about the economic history of early modern England, and especially, much that we have assumed about the emergence and nature of a market economy in the kingdom. As we detach ourselves from the story of how cash (and cash alone) inexorably became king in England, something happens: we find that we can hear other stories, some that are more multiple and more contingent in their outcome. Nashe's story is one of these. His economic sensibility, as we will see in both *Terrors of the Night* and *Pierce Penilesse* (1592), is shaped by the exigencies of credit, not the conundrums of cash. The notion that a cash nexus emerged among the English is clearly right in its very large outlines and over the very *longue durée*. It's much less clear that it can help us, as readers, to make sense of an early modern author such as Nashe, for whom cash was not, at that moment, on the throne, or even near to it.

Muldrew's claims have implications of two sorts for early modern critics. As for the first: if there was no cash nexus, and Muldrew argues that there wasn't, then we have probably been making more of coins and cash than we should. Without a cash nexus, cash, or cash alone, cannot do the explanatory work that as critics we often ask it to do. We are sometimes told, as recently by David Landreth, that coins in this period "propel" themselves "beyond the circuits of exchange they are minted to serve into literary texts" and thus "[intrude] into literary contexts that otherwise ... don't seem directly motivated by the concerns we'd call economic, those of getting saving, and spending" (Landreth 2012, 5–6). Often, this intrusion is distinctly ominous. "The more abstract and self-referential money grows," says Hawkes along some of the same lines, "the less reference it bears to the physical world or to any objective reality, and the more energetic, voracious, and destructive it becomes" (Hawkes 2010, 3). But that money in the form of cash has not yet achieved this horrifying critical mass in early modern England is just Muldrew's point, and so cash, when it does put in its appearance in literary texts, may adumbrate many things, but it does not signal the emergence of an economy in which all transactional

relations have been ground down into mere commodity exchange, or one in which Mammon – a “demon we have made in our own image,” as Landreth (2012, 6) describes him – has arrived to claim his dominion. Instead, when we come upon coins or coin-based exchange in literary works, what we have found is evidence of a somewhat alien form of market life, familiar enough to most English people, but not altogether compelling in its imperatives, and certainly not totalizing in the claims it can make on them (Landreth 2012; Deng 2011). Money, as cash, may seem to have a lot to say for itself in this period – well, money talks, as Landreth notes – and there are certainly many who in turn assail it and all its works. But when early modern people denounce the (growing?) influence of cash, they do not yet announce the advent of a cash-based economy. Whatever social evils cash might bring, it does not bring such an economy, and they know it. (On early modern market experience and thought, see Leinwald 1999, where he listens for what “rings true” when the early modern English tell us about “what *the market* felt like” (5) and Baker 2010, where I ask what it also “meant to “think” that market” (xiii).)

The second implication also turns on what the English knew. We are often told that there was a particular teleology at work in early modern England. As markets give way to “the” market, cash corrodes English society from within, and then replaces every human relationship with its own sickly simulacrum. Agnew (1986), for example, locates the “opening decades of the seventeenth century” as the moment when a “significant number of Britons” came to realize that their “marketplace had been seriously compromised” (40). In the “late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries,” Hawkes (2010) asserts, and “in a few major European cities,” an “epochal shift in consciousness” began, brought about by the discovery of America and the consequent flood of silver into Europe, “which monetarized what had been a largely feudal, barter economy, [and] forever changed the way people thought” about money matters. This shift of consciousness was one that “challenged and violated very ancient habits of mind, riding roughshod over long-established philosophical assumptions and moral precepts” (7–8). According to this line of thought, derived in part from Marx’s views on “primitive accumulation” (see de Vries 1976, 210–214; Halpern, 1991), not only do the early modern English fall into the vortex of the cash nexus, they know it. What the English believed, supposedly, and what early modern texts then reflect, is exactly what we are prepared to discover.

But it would be odd if the early modern English managed to realize the existence of a cash nexus before there was one, and in fact they do not. A cash-driven economy, remember, was a thing of the future for these people. Some few, perhaps, were prescient enough to extrapolate such an economy, to glimpse its futurity. But, for most, that prognostication would have had little to do with the present. What the market realities of their own day had taught them (and we should relearn) was that cash was mostly confined to certain sectors of their economy, and that its influence, even there, was “constrained by other cognitive and affective priorities,” just as it had been in the past (Agnew 1986, 27). And if they recognized a crisis in their economic affairs – as in fact they did – it was a predicament that their own credit-based economy had brought about. This predicament would be resolved only much later,

when the institutions on which we now depend to stabilize credit – “government regulated central and private banks, insurance companies and a myriad of other financial investment agencies” (Muldrew 1998, 6) – had come into being. Of course, the early modern English were quite capable of realizing that something was wrong, often terribly wrong, with their marketplace. Of malfeasance and profiteering, they saw more than enough all around them. What they did not see was an economy divided into a “before” when a cash nexus had not coalesced and then an “after” when it had. Instead, what they saw and knew was something much more heterogeneous: a slowly and unevenly developing economy that was made up of markets on different scales and of different types, intersecting, even nesting within one another, each with its own medium of exchange, its own implicit obligations, and its own built-in problems.

Now, we can find all of this – both the multiplicity of markets and their concomitant difficulties – interwoven throughout the ramifying prose in which Nashe does his economic thinking. “[F]or he that hath no mony in his purse,” he says in *Pierce Penilesse*, “must go dine with sir Iohn Best-betrust, at the signe of the chalk and the Post” (I: 163) Credit is what you turn to when your cash runs out.

In his ruminations on England’s markets, is there one that he puts first, one that drives the others? In particular, is cash the *primum mobile*? As it turns out: no. And is the credit market ramping up, almost to the point that, as Hawkes might say, it is “visibly damaging traditional social relations and disrupting the ways of life to which people had long grown accustomed?” As it turns out: yes.

In many recent accounts of early modern economic life, cash, as we have seen, takes on a demonic life of its own. Its advent in the form of a nexus signals the arrival of an “aggressive, evil, supernatural force.” In his writings, Nashe also, as we see in *Terrors of the Night*, invokes the Devil to figure his understanding of money and markets. This, in fact, is the governing conceit of his economic meditations. However, it soon emerges that Nashe has no problem with cash money as such, or with cash as a reward for industry and talent. On the contrary, he is very much in favor of both. He does have a problem, though, with the current distribution of wealth, by whom and to whom. In *Terrors of the Night*, he handles this problem with a light touch. Now Satan is so harassed by the busy pace of modern life, he says with mock outrage, that he has abandoned all those who could once count on his favors: “Augurers and Soothsayers,” “Alchumists,” and the like (I: 367). But with this touch, however light, Nashe has returned to an issue that bothers him throughout his writings: the breakdown in the system of patronage and largess that once supported deserving writers (like him). In *Pierce Penilesse*, he takes a more serious tone, assailing the “lamentable condition of our Times, that men of Arte must seeke almes of Cormorantes, and those that deserue best, be kept vnder by Dunces” (I: 159–160). In particular, he condemns the “filthie vnquenchable auarice” of those “shallow-braind censurers” who disparage the “Artes” (the theater, in particular), and mostly because they fail to acknowledge that writers should be paid for the work that they do: they bestow the “right of Fame” on “true Nobilitie deceased,” offer “hopes of eternitie” to “aduentrous mindes” and “encourage them forward,” and so on (I: 212, 213).



But, while Nashe thinks that writers should be paid, he does not think that they should be paid just in coin. To do so, he says, is to shortchange their efforts. He likens the writer to “any handycraft man, be he Carpenter, Ioyner, or Painter,” who will “ploddingly do his day labor” if money is all that he is given, but if “credit and fame” is added to his “workmanship,” “hee will make a further assay in his trade than euer hitherto he did; he will haue a thousand flourishes.” “[S]o in Artes...” (I: 180).

In *Pierce Penilesse*, therefore, Nashe’s criticism is directed at those who hold that cash alone, or what he calls “execrable luker” (I: 213), could compensate the labor of those who work in the “Artes,” or, as he implies by his artisanal comparison, those who provide any good or service in the English kingdom. That there is more than one market in operation is exactly his point. There is the cash market, and then also the market in what he (and Muldrew) calls “credit,” and then also the market that deals in the artistic equivalent of credit, “fame.” Traducers of the arts try to reduce the transactions involved down to a cash nexus, and only a cash nexus, but, Nashe reminds them, by doing so they are purging the early modern marketplace of its complexities and misconstruing the real market forces at work. “[F]orward minds” are motivated by “fame and glory.” To get it, they will “make a ladder of cord of the links of their braines.” Nashe thinks this is obvious; he apologizes for explaining it. “Experience reprocues me for a foole, for dilating on so manifest a case” (I: 180). And he approves of these drives, insofar as the money they generate is well deserved. If a man grows suddenly wealthy, he says in one place, after having neither “comlinesse nor coine to commend him” (I: 176), he is probably a cheat and should be avoided. Money and the social virtues go inextricably together. The absence of the one suggests the absence of the other.

We find this same association between money, on the one hand, and aspiration, on the other, in *Terrors of the Night*, where Nashe offers a subtle analysis of how cash works upon the psyches of early modern people. It is its very absence, he insists, and not its presence, that stimulates them to success in their markets. Or, at least, this is what it should do. In these works, Nashe does not describe an economy where cash and cash flow have corrupted market dealings. He describes an economy where cash has lost its efficacy, and where credit is corrosive of the very trust on which it depends, and this is what has corrupted market dealings. In the old days, remember, Satan would send men visions of wealth, of a “pot of golde, or a money bag that is hid in the eaues of a thatcht house.” Now, Nashe complains, cash-driven dreams are a thing of the past, along with cash itself. Now that the Devil has stopped conjuring up imaginary windfalls, he reports, the engine of wealth creation has halted. And, immediately upon saying this, he inserts a parenthesis to remind us that Satan’s once-upon-a-time dream work was all to the good. Spectral cash is not in and of itself pernicious, “not altogether ridiculous or impertinent.” No, it is rather a “blessed thing but to dreame of golde,” he insists, and this is not because the cash will soon materialize, but precisely because it won’t, because “a man” will “neuer haue it.” Images of coin, Nashe says, keep “flesh and bloud from despaire: all other are but as dust we raise by our steps; which awwhyte mounteth aloft, and annoyeth our ey-sight, but presently disperseth and vanisheth” (I: 368). Unsubstantial as these coin-images

may be, our desires lend them a concreteness that makes everything else as “dust.” While other motives envanesce, the pot of gold that we cannot have keeps us working for a reward that transcends gold – “credite and fame.” To Nashe’s early modern way of thinking, that is, England’s cash economy is so thoroughly subsumed in the larger credit economy that English coin can have value only if it can be converted into social advantages, into what Muldrew (1998) calls the “currency of reputation” (3). When this conversion stops, then the “animal spirits” (Keynes 1936, 161–162) of the marketplace begin to falter. What Nashe decries in the present is an economy in which coins no longer do the work of encouragement they did in the past. Even the Devil does not trade in mere currency now, not even in its most ephemeral form, and so the dreams that should keep the marketplace lively and men full of hope have died. What bothers Nashe is the paucity of cash on hand (imaginary or otherwise), not the plethora of it.

Nashe, it’s true, sees social decay all around him. But if cash were somehow responsible, we might expect him to intimate that, and he doesn’t. Nor do we find in his tale a direct link between cash and covetousness. For him, cash does not lead to covetousness. Rather, the line of causality runs the other way. People are not more greedy because of the advent of cash-based economy. Instead, the advent of a cash-based economy is – or, perhaps, would be – a symptom of widespread and debilitating greed. Nashe begins his (comic) analysis of the corruption that has afflicted England in the social matrix in which the cash economy is embedded, and he ends it there, too.

What, then, of teleology, the story of how antique social relations are inexorably disrupted and displaced by cash-based market mechanisms? Here too, Nashe tells an exactly opposite story to what we might expect. He sees cash on demand transactions as a thing of the past, a vestige of the time when “Senior Sathan ... was a yong stripling.” They are belated, now, because a sophisticated market has sprung up that runs on other instruments of exchange, not only “bill[s] of sale,” but also “credit,” of which, it emerges, this new-style Satan is a master. He may have abandoned the social “forme[s]” of the past, but the new economy over which he presides is just as elaborately social, or even more so, with intricate protocols of intimacy and collusion. The Devil, says Nashe, is a prodigious networker. He embeds his informers among “fraternitie[s]” of thieves and cut purses only so that he can know “when any thing is stoln” and who “it is that hath it.” This scuttlebutt he then parlays into access to “great Peeres,” who in turn “entertaine him for one of their priuie counsaile” and “consulte with him about successe.” (This is also why the devil goes about “priuate and disguised”: he is collecting market intelligence.) But why bother with go-betweens when you can get the scoop for yourself? “All malcontents ... runne headlong to his oracle. Contrarie factions embosome vnto him their inwardest complots” (I: 366–368). He receives “no intelligence from anie familiar, but [from] their own mouths.” In this information economy, coin is mostly irrelevant. What matters more is whom you know and what you know and how you can translate that knowledge into social pull. Nashe looks about him and sees canny market operators for whom the secret of success is secrecy itself, secrecy betrayed. The days in which honest

work was repaid with honest coin (or, at least, an inspiring dream version thereof)? Those days are gone. Nashe regards them with nostalgia. The complexities of a socially mediated economy have now trumped the simplicities of a cash-mediated economy.

How far does Nashe take these claims? All the way to their conclusion. The insufficiency of coins, and their belatedness in the market of his day, are not incidental insights. They inform all of his economic thinking and storytelling. In *Pierce Penilesse*, Nashe first goes to the Devil because he is tired of being poor; “those that stand most on their honour, haue shut vp their purses” to such as he. In the “late dayes,” he has heard, a “Retayler called the Diuell, vsed to lend money vpon pawnes, or any thing.” Now, he decides, he will importune Satan with a “Supplication” to remedy his condition. And, as he achieves an insider’s understanding of the market, what he learns is that he does not need cash to flourish. Rather, he needs various cash equivalents, each of them underwritten by Satan, who guarantees their value. When the Devil is given his due, a merchant might get a “thousand poundes” for his soul. Another man might have nothing to offer but his loyalty, but he will be “trust[ed] ... vppon a Bill of his hande, without any more circumstance” (I: 161). Nashe has been trapped in a cash economy, he comes to realize, by a failure of his own imagination. This has kept him dependent and poor, and now he must learn to match his economic thinking to the economy that is really operating about him. In it, coins function within a system of “general, fungible equivalents.” Cash in hand is just as good as a “Bill of... hande,” which in turn is just as good as a soul, which is just as good as.... But this is not because a “simplified cash nexus of commerce [has] begun to supplant the complex human nexus of society and culture” (Agnew 1986, 2). What gives coins and bills and other pledges their value is *not* that each of them can be exchanged for another, but that any of them can be exchanged for what really counts: the inside story, and especially about matters social and political. Satan is a “greedy pursuer of newes” and has now become “so famous a Politician in purchasing” that he has built up “Hel ... a huge Cittie,” one that runs on nothing but the gossip he has collected. Hell is not, as someone has said, other people. Hell, for Nashe, is knowing other people, knowing what you need to know about them, and thus being able to get what you need and want from them. He means, he says, to “clawe Auarice by the elbowe, till his full belly [gives] mee a full hande.” He will make the greed that animates this market his own, as he must, if he is to prosper in it.

All of this – “[t]hese manifest coniectures of Plentie” – is what Nashe slyly claims to have grasped from his study of the Devil’s economics. And, as readers, he intimates, we must also come to accept these “coniectures,” at least if we too hope to prosper. In this work, Nashe, as the author, is offering us exactly the sort of acumen that he supposedly gets from Satan, and he is as much a trafficker in it as this “Retayler.” The work we’re perusing, “this Paper-monster, *Pierce Penilesse*,” as he calls it, is a sardonic breakdown of the trade in economic hearsay, and it is also an item in that trade. When we buy it, money changes hands, of course, but the value thus conveyed has more to do with the pact we have made, the deal with the Devil that, Nashe suggests, permeates economic exchanges in his day. Because, as it turns

out, a socially regulated economy is not at all a relic of the past. Do you think the Devil is too “graue” for such commerce, Nashe asks us? “Oh then you are in an error, for hee is as formall as the best Scriuener of them all.” The Devil writes, or rather, as a scrivener does, he rewrites, copying out and re-circulating the instruments, the tokens of obligation that keep such an economy going. And this, notice, is a “formall” Devil after all. He has not abandoned social “forme” (as, supposedly, in *Terrors of the Night*). “Forme” is his element, the sociability that is inseparable from, because it constitutes, the (im)moral economy of “our Common-wealth” (I: 160–162).

We are used, then, to hearing the story of how cash achieves a velocity of its own, becoming more charged and destructive as it goes. Nashe tells the story another way. In his rendering, it is a different sort of entity that has emerged, though its energies, too, are ruinous. As the Devil “passeth too and fro” in his quest for “credit,” lighting upon “a thousand places in an houre,” the shuttling about of “petie trifles,” of financial gossip and reportage, is almost frictionless; coinage just can’t keep up. And, as it turns out, neither can Nashe. “I haue rid a false gallop these three or foure pages,” he confesses after his excursus on Satan’s economics in *Terrors of the Night*, “now I care not if I breathe mee, and walke soberly and demurely halfe a dozen turns, like a graue Citizen going about to take the ayre.” The Devil might be in a thousand places in an hour. Nashe cannot be. His prose, his witty diatribe on a social economy driven beyond the limits of social decorum, must slow and return to those limits, to the more manageable pace of the “citizen” at leisure, freed, for the moment, from “this drumbling ... of dreames” – the dream of gold, for instance, that keeps us from “despaire,” but “presently disperseth and vanisheth” (I: 367–368).

And, in a way, in the end, so too does the object of Nashe’s critique, the economy he abominates, but cannot quite capture, convey, or escape. As I’ve argued elsewhere, it is a mistake to try to reduce Nashe’s views down to a set of “claims.” Almost always, his opinionizing is much more subtle than that. Rather, he incorporates into his prose multiple voices that then “play off one another, insinuating and responding” in a manner that allows for a “certain meaningful inexplicitness” about economic matters (Baker, 2010, 51, 52). And, here, I’d add that it is precisely this vocal multiplicity that makes Nashe such a sensitive register of the inherent problems of early modern England’s economy. The multiplicity of its markets is matched by, and articulated by, the multiplicity of his voicing. What works such as *Pierce Penilesse* and *Terrors of the Night* offer us is not so much an analysis as an *experience* of such an economy. As we read, we track a mind operating through and by means of its own perplexities, struggling to grasp a credit (not cash) market that has come to seem, as Agnew might put it, a “boundless and timeless phenomenon.”

Even Nashe’s diabolical tropology has its limits. We’ve seen that Nashe deploys the Devil as a device, an organizing principle, by which to think the kingdom’s market realities. And yet, he never zeroes in on him as the source or cause of the corruption. Instead, his lesson throughout is that there is no final organizing principle to England’s market, not even the Devil – who has his own financial troubles, after all – and it seems unlikely to Nashe that there ever will be. There is only the casting about for advantage, a “hedonistic calculus” (Agnew 1986, 7), but quite unlike the

one that prevails in the economic thought of our own time. The “market,” as Nashe understands it, is network of contingent and ceaselessly re-negotiated obligations. It has no heart, not even a dark one. Its links can be traced, but not evaded. In his market critique, there is no place for progress or strict linearity (no teleology). There is instead a playfulness in Nashe’s economic temporality, a shifting between a sense of an ending and a sense of endlessly continuing. On the one hand, England’s marketplace has reached an apotheosis of corruption. Now – right now! – we are in a hell of “miserableness and couetousnes” (and it wasn’t like this in the old days). “Now the world is almost at an end,” he tells us in *Terrors of the Night*, and this is why Satan must make the most of his time and dispense with “complements.” “[L]ike an Embroyderer or a Tailer he maketh hast of worke against a good time, which is the day of iudgment” (I: 367). The Devil, ever a good workman, rushes to complete his tasks before a final reckoning. On the other hand, it will always be like this (the more things change, etc.). In *Pierce Penilesse*, the Devil, that wily market operator, shows no real urgency, no premonition of the end of days. In fact, he cannot even be found. After all of the searching about and importuning of passersby in that text, Nashe never does locate Satan and has to content himself instead with a “knight of the Post,” a devilish hanger-on who promises to deliver his “Paper-monster” to his master (I: 164). He will hand it along, in other words, as one more item in the traffic in cash and credit in England at the turn of the seventeenth century. This, for Nashe, is the economic endgame – a game that isn’t over until it’s over, and that won’t be over anytime soon.

### What to Read Next

Bruster (2005); Woodmansee and Osteen (1999); Woodbridge (2003; especially Bruster’s essay); Wrightson (2000).

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## Nature and the Non-Human

*Bruce Boehrer*

Early modern writers thought long and hard about humankind's ability to harm the natural world. In *Paradise Lost* ([1667] 1998), for instance, John Milton twice presents original sin as an injury done to the earth, inflicted first by Eve and then again by Adam:

Earth felt the Wound, and Nature from her seat  
Sighing through all her Works gave signs of woe,  
That all was lost.  
...  
Earth trembl'd from her entrails, as again  
In pangs, and Nature gave a second groan,  
Skie lowr'd and muttering Thunder, som sad drops  
Wept at compleating of the mortal Sin. (9.782–784; 1000–1003)

For Milton (1608–1674) this language is not mere ornament. He understands the Fall as a crime against nature, with real consequences for the natural world. These include permanent global climate change such “As might affect the Earth with cold and heat/Scarce tolerable” (10.654–655); a frightening change in relations between different forms of life (“Beast now with Beast gan war,.../... nor stood much in awe/Of Man” [10.710, 712–713]); and the threat of human species extinction, as provided by the postlapsarian penalty of death generalized to Adam’s “whole posteritie” (3.209) (see also Hiltner 2003, 48–54; McColley 2007, 197–228; Marcus 2015). Thus it has been justly observed that “the fallen human state in *Paradise Lost* is forever connected to the wounded state of the Earth” (Hiltner 2003, 125). Indeed, one might

argue that for Milton, the fall into history – into life as we know it – is precipitated by Adam and Eve’s primordial violation of the natural world.

While Milton begins history with an act of environmental violence, Michael Drayton (1563–1631) lends a more contemporary setting to the human despoliation of nature. Drayton’s *Poly-Olbion* (1612–1622) – the poet’s immense versified survey of British geography and local history – worries repeatedly about the recent decline of the island’s forests due to over-logging and related activities. The poem lends voice to various features of the British landscape, allowing anthropomorphized hills and woods to address the reader *in propria persona*, and in the process it attributes the following complaint to the Forest of Arden in Drayton’s native Warwickshire:

My many goodly sites when first I came to showe,  
Here opened I the way to myne owne ouer-throwe:  
For, when the world found out the fitnessse of my soyle,  
The gripple [greedy] wretch began immediately to spoyle  
My tall and goodly woods, and did my grounds inclose:  
By which, in little time my bounds I came to lose. (Drayton 1961, 13.19–24)

Similar concerns recur elsewhere in *Poly-Olbion*, too, as when Drayton prophesies of Feckenham Forest that “The time shall quickly come, thy Groves and pleasant Springs,/. . ./The painfull laborers hand shall stock [pull up] the roote, to burne” (14.55, 57), or when Waltham Forest laments how “the Share and Coulter [parts of a plough] teare/The full corne-bearing Gleabe, where sometimes forests were” (19.45–46). Such passages have earned Drayton praise as “the most outspoken defender of the English forests in early English literature,” a proto-environmentalist whose work bears comparison with Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962) (Borlik 2011, 97; Dasgupta 2010). The latter claim exaggerates, but even so, this much is clear: Drayton saw deforestation as a calamity of trans-regional proportions, one inflicted on the natural world specifically by human agency.

If anything, Shakespeare’s treatment of anthropogenic environmental damage proves even more complex and extensive than that of Milton or Drayton. At the risk of oversimplifying, we may pick one major passage as illustration – Titania’s account in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (1595–1596) of the evils resulting from her quarrel with Oberon:

Contagious fogs...falling in the land  
Hath every pelting river made so proud  
That they have overborne their continents.  
The ox hath therefore stretch’d his yoke in vain,  
The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn  
Hath rotted ere his youth attain’d a beard.  
...  
The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts  
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,  
And on old Hiems’ thin and icy crown



An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds  
Is, as in mockery, set....

...

And this same progeny of evils comes

From our debate, from our dissension. (1997, 2.1.90–95, 107–111, 115–116)

This vision of environmental disaster at first seems coy, couched in classical myth and native English folklore, the anthropogenic nature of the crisis in question itself unsettled by the agency of fairies. Yet the fairies, represented by human actors, also speak and act like human beings. They quarrel, they threaten, they love and hate, and at heart they disagree about human beings: Oberon's "buskin'd mistress" Hippolyta (2.1.71), Titania's "love" Theseus (2.1.76), and the "little changeling boy" (2.1.120) Titania has fostered out of respect for the human mother who died giving him birth. In this context, environmental disorder derives from the fairies' misplaced human entanglements, which disrupt the otherwise-harmonious balance of nature.

To this one must further add that the events of Shakespeare's play, which at first seem safely confined to the realm of fantasy, refuse to remain there. In fact, Titania's complaint about the weather has long been used to date *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to the mid-1590s, a decade infamous in England for summers that were, in the words of the doctor and astrologer, Simon Forman (1552–1611), "very wet and wonderfull cold like winter" (quoted in Brooks [1595–1596] 1979, xxxvii). These frigid summers, in turn, now serve as a defining feature of the Little Ice Age, that climatological period peaking roughly between 1550 and 1800 when mean temperatures in Europe dropped from one to two degrees centigrade, in the process triggering increased glaciation, flooding, drought, poor harvests, famine, and a host of other evils for the continent's human populace (Grove 1988; Lamb 1995, 192–221; Fagan 2000). Recent scholarship has detailed the impact of the Little Ice Age on Shakespeare's work, both in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and elsewhere, with the result that Titania's speech now appears quite clearly to reach into the immediacy of Elizabethan eco-historical experience (Borlik 2011, 118–129; Markley 2008). But insofar as this is so, Shakespeare's language also violates our modern understanding of that experience, erroneously attributing human responsibility to an environmental crisis that present-day science has concluded to be non-anthropogenic in nature, caused mainly by volcanic rather than human activity (Miller *et al.* 2012).

## I

Of course there are limits to what the foregoing passages can tell us about how the early moderns viewed anthropogenic environmental damage. For one thing, such passages represent only a fraction of their respective authors' overall output, the vast majority of which concerns other matters. And these same passages say nothing about the practice of other early modern writers, most of whom express no such qualms about the environmental impact of human behavior. As Keith Thomas

observed some 30 years ago, “ascendancy of man over nature ... had by the early modern period become the accepted goal of human endeavour” (1983, 22), a goal which left little room for any developing ethic of environmental care. Yet even so, the most successful writers of early modern England repeatedly conjured up scenarios in which the human race inflicts catastrophic damage on the natural world, scenarios which play out in both mythic and historically specific contexts.

This fact in itself has been enough to embolden ecocritical scholars keen to trace the lineage of contemporary environmentalism to early modern literary contexts. (For surveys of key critical works see Glotfelty and Fromm 1996; Kerridge and Sammells 1998 and Coupe 2000.) Works that deal with the seventeenth-century deforestation crisis (Merchant 1980, 61–68; Williams 2006) – including both *Poly-Olbion* and John Evelyn’s later *Sylva* ([1662] 1729) – are now sometimes described as “proto-ecological” or “proto-environmentalist” (Borlik 2011, 8; Theis 2009, 238), while Milton’s response to the “massive ecological upheavals” of his day has been used to “put ... him in the company of some very modern environmentalists” (Hiltner 2003, 2, 3). The Diggers and Levellers with whom Milton is sometimes associated (Hill 1978, 95–102; Loewenstein 2001, 95–96) have been depicted as “early seventeenth-century environmental protesters” (Hiltner 2011, 126). “Shakespearian comedies and ... Metaphysical poems” have been said to offer “the very model of a modern ecological education” (Watson 2015, 22). And it has been claimed that “[t]he modern term *ecology* describes the work of ... poets [like Milton and Marvell] better than the classical and early modern *economy*” (McColley 2007, 1).

These are large claims, and while they contain an element of truth, that element is easy to distort. Take, for instance, the term *ecology*. This may in some way better describe Milton’s and Marvell’s work than the noun *economy*, but the latter at least has the advantage of being a word both poets knew and used. The word *ecology*, by contrast, was not even coined until some two centuries after Milton’s death. Moreover, when it first saw print, in Ernst Haeckel’s *Generelle Morphologie* of 1866, the term *Ökologie* served a purpose neither Milton nor Marvell (1621–1678) could have ascribed to or even foreseen: “to forward the cause of Darwinism” by “naming ... one of many notable aspects of Darwin’s thought” (Stauffer 1957, 138, 139). The aspect of Darwinian thought thus described – the dynamic equilibrium that obtains between a species, its inanimate environment, and the other species inhabiting that environment – serves as a key instrument of natural selection, determining which forms of life will survive in a particular locale and how they must evolve in the process. As Darwin (1809–1882) himself observed, “Natural selection acts by ... adapting the varying parts of each being to its organic and inorganic conditions of life” ([1859] 1936, 152). In its original sense, the term *ecology* refers to this aspect of the natural selection process.

This original, biologically specific, Darwinian definition of *ecology* obviously cannot apply to pre-Darwinian authors of the seventeenth century, authors for whom the theory of natural selection has not yet even been identified as a subject for debate. Instead, those who attribute an ecological sensibility to early modern writers must do so in a broader sense, consonant with the term’s recent figurative

assimilation to concepts like “information ecology” and “human ecology.” Such concepts, which are not strictly speaking biological and which have little direct bearing on the theory of natural selection, nonetheless share with Darwinian ecology an emphasis upon the dynamic interdependence of human populations and their surroundings – a sense that all living and non-living beings are mutually implicated in each other’s existence. On this very expansive and basic level one may indeed argue that seventeenth-century writers display the beginnings of Green awareness, giving voice to the idea that “our use of knowledge needs to be good for the whole household of living things” (McColley 2007, 1).

Unfortunately, this notion of Greenness proves too broad to carry much descriptive value. The idea of universal symbiosis may indeed inform modern ecological practice, but it is neither unique to nor fully distinctive of ecological consciousness. Modern ecology does not simply believe that forms of life and non-life are interrelated (although it does believe this), nor does it simply worry about humankind’s effect on the natural world (although it does this as well); it also believes in the scientific method and in the theory of evolution. Likewise, one is hard pressed to find a religio-cultural tradition that does not believe on some level in the interdependence of life and non-life. The European tradition, for its part, approaches this concept through the Great Chain of Being, that unified yet hierarchical model of the universe transmitted to early Christendom via the works of Plato (?429–347 BCE), Aristotle (384–22 BCE), and Plotinus (204/5–270) and described for twentieth-century scholarship by A.O. Lovejoy (1936) and E.M.W. Tillyard ([1943] 1959, 25–36. More recently, Gabriel Egan has reconsidered the Great Chain from an ecocritical standpoint, depicting it as the repository for powerful proto-environmentalist energies (2006, 25–33). This view is undoubtedly correct: Milton, Drayton, and Shakespeare all attend to the environment not because they subscribe to the modern science of ecology but because they share a traditional, Christianized, theocentric understanding of the cosmos whereby all elements of creation conjointly participate in the sustaining virtue of the divine and are therefore equally worthy of care and respect. This fact may annoy Christians and Greens alike, given that Christianity has often proved hostile to the modern environmentalist movement, and vice versa. The Christian opposition to Darwin is well attested; in the United States, evangelical Christians have resisted environmentalist political agendas; and Green scholars have replied in kind, deploring Christianity as “the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen” (White [1967] 1996, 9). But two centuries before *The Origin of Species*, the ethic of environmental care is clearly anticipated by English writers working within the Christian confessional tradition.

In his reappraisal of the Great Chain of Being, Egan observes that it generates a variety of insights that anticipate modern scientific findings, albeit from a broadly different perspective. Notable among these anticipations is the “cosmic connectedness voiced in Elizabethan drama and poetry” (2006, 30), which prefigures the modern Gaia hypothesis: James Lovelock’s argument that “the entire range of living matter on Earth, from whales to viruses, and from oaks to algae, could be regarded as constituting a single living entity, capable of manipulating the Earth’s atmosphere

to suit its overall needs and endowed with faculties and powers far beyond those of its constituent parts” (Lovelock [1979] 2009, 9). When viewed from this perspective, the personifications of nature so common in early English literature acquire a new quality as language. No longer simply figures of speech, they migrate instead into the territory of the literal, in the process coloring our sense of the world they depict. “Throughout the drama of Shakespeare,” Egan remarks, “characters speak of the world around them as though it is alive” (2006, 22), so that viewers and readers find themselves steadily enticed into a relationship of conscious mutuality with a sentient universe, a relationship that then becomes available for contrast with other, more mechanistic views.

The environmental-disaster scenarios with which this chapter begins all share a heavy investment in this organic and sentient understanding of the universe, an understanding to which they give form through the device of personification. The trope is prominent in *Poly-Olbion*, where Drayton deploys it through the articulate figures of various *genii loci*, the tutelary deities of forests and rivers and hills, who speak directly for the features of the British landscape they represent. Milton’s wounded earth expresses herself similarly, sighing and trembling throughout her fabric in a manner independent of human speech but nonetheless perfectly intelligible to human readers. And *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* takes such figurations into the performative realm, investing its forest gods not only with human speech but also with human bodies and emotional entanglements. Scholars sometimes depict this order of personification as inherently anti-ecological, since modern environmentalism is “generally believed to be based on a non-anthropocentric (hence non-anthropomorphic) view of the world,” whereas “personification is tied to the attribution of human thoughts and behaviour to a non-sentient being” (Trevisan 2011, 242). In fact, however, a poet like Milton sees no contradiction at all between anthropocentrism and an ethic of care for other species. Adam and Eve are commanded to “tend Plant, Herb and Flour” (9.206) notwithstanding their status as “Lords of all” (4.290) in Eden, and when Adam names the animals, human speech enables him to “underst[an]d/Thir Nature” (8.352–353) without compromising it in the process. Criticism fixated on the incompatibility of anthropocentric and ecological mentalities succumbs in the process to anachronism, failing to take early modern writers on their own terms.

But if we do take these writers on their own terms, what kind of picture emerges? Lacking a foundation in the scientific method and the theory of evolution, their thinking does not conform to any ecological sensibility that we might properly recognize as such today. But at the same time these authors clearly display certain concerns and attitudes characteristic of modern environmentalism, and to this extent they contribute to the movement’s prehistory. Not only do they understand that human beings can damage the natural world around them; they also understand that such damage is being done in their own day, in specific places, as a result of specific practices. These writers may lack the base concepts and terminology of ecological science, but they possess a strong intuitive sense of the interdependence of being – that reciprocal connectedness of different species (and their non-living environment) that also underpins later ecological thinking. And they tend, therefore, to

regard the earth as in some sense a living entity, one with whom humanity is bound in a mutually defining and perhaps mutually destructive relationship. In all these ways, the writers of early modern England give voice to perceptions and concerns that persist today as distinctive features of the modern environmentalist sensibility. One might say that they voice an intuitive and pre-methodological environmentalism – a Green consciousness still in search of its guiding theory.

## II

Yet despite all these similarities, the pre-ecological attitudes occasionally displayed by early modern writers lack still one more major feature of the modern Green consciousness: its commitment to a process of political reform aimed at preserving and restoring the natural world. Early modern writers will at times offer more or less practical solutions to specific, limited environmental dilemmas, as when John Evelyn (1620–1706) proposes to shore up England’s diminishing supplies of timber by removing the nation’s iron foundries to the new colonies in America ([1662] 1729, 251). But what Sara Trevisan has observed of Drayton may be said of his contemporaries more generally: on the whole, they “do ... not address ecological issues as we see them nowadays: that is to say, [they do] not give ... political value to any proposed restrictions of human activities for the sake of the environment (OED 2), a concept which began to be used only in the late nineteenth century” (242). In a sense, this observation approaches tautology. One can hardly formulate a Green agenda for curtailing human activities without a governing system – that is, an ecology – to determine what activities should be curtailed.

This mutual enablement of science and politics forms the basis for Bruno Latour’s critique of “the modern constitution” ([1991] 1993, 13) – the Enlightenment-era reorganization of fields of knowledge that (he argues) inaugurates modern life in the West. Latour first evolves his account of the modern constitution in the 1991 classic of science studies *We Have Never Been Modern*, where he traces it to the contemporaneous late-seventeenth-century development of Thomas Hobbes’s political theories and Robert Boyle’s theories of natural philosophy. Between them, these bodies of work define a new order of thought, one “in which the representation of things through the intermediary of the laboratory is forever dissociated from the representation of people through the intermediary of the social contract” (27), with the order of things understood to be transcendent and given – coinciding, in effect, with the realm of nature – and the order of people taken as immanent and constructed, the province of the humanities and social sciences. In their joint creation, the spheres of scientific inquiry and political philosophy thus enable and reinforce one another, functioning in effect as “the two branches of a single new government” (31). The scholarly disciplines thus produced, impressive as they are, prove less important than the divided categories of thought that empower them, and the resulting intellectual divisions operate on different levels at once, enforcing a strict separation of culture from nature, subject from object, sciences from humanities, past from present.

From Latour's perspective, however, these divisions remain imperfectly realized and indeed unrealizable, for the supposedly distinct conceptual fields of the modern constitution remain distinct in theory alone. In reality, "the sociology of science ... has demonstrated ... how facts and theories themselves are constructed [via professional protocols and rituals]," while also pointing out that nature itself "is not fully transcendent, but also partly immanent," since "scientific theories and facts only have a certain duration in time and a certain scale of outreach in space" (Lash 1999, 271). And something comparable may be said of the social world: it is immanent in the sense of being self-constructed, yet in its corporate nature society achieves extension in space and time, becoming part of the landscape of fact. On this view, the modern constitution is built around a core of denial: denial of the ways in which subjects and objects, society and nature interconnect, act like each other, and influence each other. To correct the faulty bicameralism of the modern constitution, Latour proposes instead that reality be redistributed into "associations of humans and nonhumans" which he designates as "collectives" ([1999] 2004, 238) and to which he assigns the political capacities to account for, order, and explore the consequences of their own interrelation.

Ecological issues hold a central place in Latour's critique of the modern constitution. On one hand, they illustrate how the modern constitution "*short-circuit[s]* any and all questioning as to the nature of the complex bonds between the sciences and societies" (13). Hence, for instance, the frequent calls for professional ecologists to "keep to [their] science and not meddle in philosophical and political matters" (Naess 1995, 64). Yet simultaneously and by their very nature, ecological crises challenge the bicameralism of the modern constitution. Refusing to confine themselves either to the realm of nature or to that of culture, they insist instead on being understood as "*simultaneously real, like nature, narrated, like discourse, and collective, like society*" (Latour [1991] 1993, 6). In this sense, ecological catastrophes illustrate the inherent deficiency of our concept of nature itself, a concept that only becomes thinkable through the modern constitution's insistence upon generating mutually-exclusive analytical categories. And thus, for Latour, any really effective ecological activism must begin by doing away with this notion of nature and the science that investigates it: "Political ecology does not speak about nature and has never sought to do so. It has to do with associations of beings that take complicated forms ... and that it is completely superfluous to include in an inhuman and ahistorical nature" ([1999] 2004, *Politics* 21).

So one may discern some irony in ecocritical efforts to differentiate between ecological and non-ecological mentalities via the very disciplinarity Latour critiques. Indeed, the modern constitution, Latour argues, not only enforces a separation of objects in space (things, people; nature, society), but also insists upon a similar division of time:

The modern passage of time is nothing but a particular form of historicity. Where do we get the idea that time passes? From the modern Constitution itself. Anthropology is here to remind us: the passage of time can be interpreted in several ways ... The

moderns have a peculiar propensity for understanding time that passes as if it were really abolishing the past behind it. They do not feel that they are removed from the Middle Ages by a certain number of centuries, but that they are separated by ... epistemic ruptures so radical that nothing of that past survives in them. ([1991] 1993, 68)

In denying the existence of pre-ecological concerns among the pre-moderns, one commits just this error, an error made all the more attractive by the “science envy” currently afflicting academic life in the humanities (Garber 2003, 71). Scholastic institutions whose “hierarchy of the disciplines” (65) favors the sciences may be expected to view the emergence of modern science as a moment of revolutionary rupture: a repudiation rather than a continuation of what has gone before.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, those same institutions will incline to judge what has gone before by their own standards, anachronistic or not.

Such standards will not, of course, prove wholly favorable to the environmentally-conscious writers of early modern England. Yet even so, late modern environmental attitudes display clearly enough their similarity to early modern forms of understanding. Of the “four currents of thought” John Rodman has discerned within “the contemporary environmental movement” (1995, 120) – “resource conservation” à la Gifford Pinchot (120), Muir-style “wilderness preservation” (123), the “moral extensionism” associated with thinkers like Peter Singer (124), and an “ecological sensibility” deriving from Aldo Leopold (125) – the third sounds like a rough formulation of attitudes expressed or implied by Milton, Drayton, and Shakespeare: “Moral extensionism ... contend[s] that humans have duties not only concerning but also directly to (some) nonhuman natural entities, and that these rights are grounded in the possession by the natural entities of an intrinsically valuable quality such as intelligence, sentience, or consciousness” (124). Since Christian theocentrism relays all its ethical obligations through a paramount duty to God – an intelligent non-human natural entity construed as the source of universal value – one needs few adjustments to reconfigure Christian obedience in the image of moral extensionism. Likewise, Rodman notes that Muir-style wilderness preservationists “articulate their vision in predominantly religious and aesthetic terms” (123–124).

But the connection between early modern religious experience and emergent environmentalism receives perhaps its best expression in the figure of Charles Darwin himself, that quondam student for the ministry who, along with Milton, would become one of Christ’s College, Cambridge’s two most distinguished alumni. Darwin’s interest in natural selection in fact grew directly out of his undergraduate study of William Paley’s natural theology – one of deism’s most resonant efforts to harmonize experimental science with Christian belief. Paley (1743–1805), too, had studied at Christ’s, and Darwin, when himself a student there, lived in Paley’s old room. For both men, “Science ... with its privileged access to the laws of nature, spoke to the rest of the world about God’s ultimate truths,” so that “To study nature was to study the work of the Lord” (Browne 1995, 129). This attitude, in turn, came straight from the well-attested medieval and early modern doctrine of the Two Books of God (Howell 2003), as Darwin himself well understood. Hence his decision

to preface *The Origin of Species* with the following epigraph from Sir Francis Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* ([1605] 1965):

To conclude, therefore, let no man, upon a weak conceit of sobriety or an ill-applied moderation, think or maintain that a man can search too far or be too well studied in the book of God's word or the book of God's works, divinity or [natural] philosophy, but rather let men endeavour an endless progress or proficience in both. (205)

It may seem ironic given Bacon's status as a progenitor of the scientific method, but here he grounds his own procedure in conventional Christian doctrine. And so too with Darwin: both men derived major impetus for their projects from a religious and cultural dispensation their work is more commonly understood to repudiate.

### III

This is not to claim that the Christian tradition inherently favors or opposes either scientific or ecological concerns, or vice versa. In fact, as one scholar of Darwin's Christianity has observed, the relationship is far more fluid: "science and belief are neither uncoupled nor simply in opposition, but are interwoven, mutually influencing and undermining each other and, indirectly, even undermine themselves" (von Sydow 2005, 155). Just as Darwin's research, although inspired by Enlightenment natural theology, at length undercut his own faith, so too ecological practice gains its initial energy from the new science while ultimately pointing to the shortcomings of the scientific method in its contemporary sociopolitical applications. In the process, ecology calls for a return to some sort of holistic, integrated vision, a deliberative body like the "Parliament of Things" proposed by Latour ([1991] 1993, 142), within whose confines

the continuity of the collective is reconfigured. There are no more naked truths, but there are no more naked citizens either. The mediators have the whole space to themselves ... Let one of the representatives talk, for instance, about the ozone hole, another represent the Monsanto chemical industry, a third the workers of the same chemical industry, another the voters of New Hampshire, a fifth the meteorology of the polar regions ... The imbroglions and networks that had no place now have the whole place to themselves. They are the ones that have to be represented; it is around them that the Parliament of things gathers henceforth. (144)

For all its progressive character, Latour's proposal constructs itself from the rhetorical materials of the pre-modern period: not just the fabular genre of bird- and beast-parliaments, with its star turns by Sir Philip Sidney (1554–1586) and Robert Henryson (d. c. 1490) and Geoffrey Chaucer (c. 1340–1400), but also the broader investment in tropes of personification deemed unacceptably anthropocentric by much ecocriticism.



As for the contemporary Green politics deriving from this anti-anthropocentrism, its early modern counterpart operates mainly in the ethical rather than the political register, and the poets who open this chapter all seem to regard ethical failure as inevitable. Certainly Milton's God views the Fall this way, irrespective of free will and human sufficiency:

[Adam and Eve] themselves decreed  
 Their own revolt, not I: if I foreknew,  
 Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,  
 Which had no less prov'd certain unforeknown. (3.116–119)

For its part, Drayton's *Poly-Olbion* attributes its environmental degradation to human activity as driven by "Insatiable Time" (2.145), thus producing "a kind of circular causation in which the degeneration of human behavior is related to the flow [of time], which is related to the degeneration of human behavior, and so forth" (Trevisan 2011, 249). In *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, to be sure, the matter remains more ambiguous. The play's destructive energies are in the end contained and environmental disaster presumably averted for the time being, but the capricious appetites of Shakespeare's characters, both human and fairy, inspire little enough confidence going forward. With his admiration of "cool reason" and his contempt for "[t]he lunatic, the lover, and the poet" (5.1.6, 7), Duke Theseus is the closest thing to a modern scientist that Shakespeare's comedy has to offer. But he seems unable even to comprehend the play's events, let alone control them. Likewise, it remains to be seen whether modern scientific technocracy can resolve the environmental problems it has been so adept at creating. So far, however, there appears no reason to believe that science can possibly keep pace with the desires and energies it has released.

In Book 11 of *Paradise Lost*, the archangel Michael enumerates for Adam the various forms death can assume in the newly fallen world:

[A]ll maladies  
 Of gastly Spasm, or racking torture, qualms  
 Of heart-sick Agonie, all feavorous kinds,  
 Convulsions, Epilepsies, fierce Catarrhs  
 Intestin stone and Ulcer, Colic pangs, (11.481–485)

and so on for another half-dozen lines. Given the variety and immediacy of such dangers in Milton's England, it may seem a tribute to the poet's imagination that he should also spare time considering the far more remote prospect of environmental suicide. But in fact this response distorts Milton's message: it is environmental suicide – human disobedience and the Fall – that precedes and enables Book 11's catalogue of diseases, whereas the convulsions and epilepsies and catarrhs actually function as particular manifestations of Adam and Eve's prevenient crime against nature. Here Milton broadly anticipates modern ecological concerns; the World

Health Organization's 2006 report *Preventing Disease Through Healthy Environments – Towards an Estimate of the Environmental Burden of Disease* estimates that “more than 13 million deaths annually are due to preventable environmental causes” such as “unsafe water, sanitation and hygiene,” “poor water resource, housing and land use management,” and “indoor and outdoor air pollution.” However, unlike the WHO, Milton depicts death not as a problem to be managed but as a fate we cannot outrun. This vision also animates Milton's most resonant figure for environmental suicide: the character of Satan himself, the gunpowder-inventing technocrat who is already dead, just too stupid to realize it.

### What to Read Next

Boehrer (2013); Borlik (2011); Hiltner (2003); Merchant (1980); Thomas (1983).

### Note

1 For an influential model of science history based on this dynamic of crisis and rupture, see Kuhn (1962). For the philosophical problem of the new and its relation to concepts of modernity and modernism, see North (2013).

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# Nation and Archipelago

*Willy Maley*

## Context

John Milton (1608–1674) became a key spokesperson for the Cromwellian regime when on March 13, 1649 Cromwell's Council of State offered to make him "Secretary for the fforeigne tongues," a post Milton accepted two days later (French 1950, 234, 236). On March 28, the Council passed an order "That M<sup>r</sup>. Milton be appointed to make some observations vpon the Complicacon of interests w<sup>ch</sup> is now amongst the severall designers against the peace of the Commonwealth. And that it be made ready to be printed w<sup>th</sup> the papers out of Ireland w<sup>ch</sup> the House hath ordered to be printed" (French 1950, 240). On May 16 Milton's observations duly appeared appended to a sequence of items comprising: the articles of James Butler, Marquess of Ormond's peace with the Catholic Confederacy (January 17); an exchange of letters between Ormond and Colonel Michael Jones, Governor of Dublin (March 9 and 14 respectively); Ormond's proclamation of Charles II as king (February 26); and an attack on the English parliament by the Scottish Presbytery at Belfast (February 15).

Milton's *Observations upon the Articles of Peace with the Irish Rebels* (1649) is a complicated document, made clear by the fact that his observations are only part of the story the text tells. Milton's *Observations*, in its depiction of the interdependence of the three nations of England, Ireland, and Scotland revolving around the recently planted province of Ulster (Figure 12.1), is a vital resource for understanding archipelagic history, yet its brevity and derivative nature as an official response to diverse documents mean its importance – even at times its authorship – is doubted. "Published by Authoritie," as it says on the title page, anonymously, and never acknowledged by Milton, his voice is only one of several at odds in the bundle of papers printed under that title. Its latest editors speak of "the tract's corporate voice"



**Figure 12.1** Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain (no. 2 Gt Britain and Ireland). John Speed, Atlas.2.61.1. Reproduced with the permission of Cambridge University Library.

with its use of the republican “we” (Keeble and McDowell 2013, 48). Although the attribution is secure, it remains an overlooked corner of Milton’s corpus (192). Milton’s task entails quoting extensively from arguments he is charged with refuting, arguments that occupy two-thirds of the text before his own observations (Egan 2009). This makes for a disparate discourse, yet it is precisely its mosaic form that makes the *Observations* an exemplary text for critical study.

The *Observations* has been viewed chiefly as a discourse on Ireland and those involved there in defying English power in the Rising of 1641. (For an account of these and related events see Mac Cuarta 1993.) In fact its remit is much wider. It offers a target-rich environment for critics concerned with nationalism, colonialism, and the vexed politics of the Atlantic Archipelago. The archipelagic approach focuses on how the interaction of the three Stuart kingdoms complicates Anglocentric viewpoints. What began as a shift in the historiography of the “English Revolution” from an insular perspective to a broad islands outlook has become a way of looking at the early modern period as a whole. Having famously directed attention to “the plural history of a group of cultures situated along an Anglo-Celtic frontier and marked by an increasing English political and cultural domination,” John Pocock came to see the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as “an age of the Three Kingdoms” (Pocock 1975, 605–6; 1996, 176). (The absence of Wales is explained by the fact that “the political union of England and Wales by the statutes of 1536 and 1542 was heralded as a return to a pre-existing national condition, Wales having ever ‘been incorporated annexed united and subject to and under the Imperial Crown of this Realm, as a very Member and Joint of the same’” (Schwyzer 2012, 599).) Milton’s *Observations* charts what is arguably the most highly charged moment of danger on the Anglo-Celtic frontier, when for England the loss of Ireland, both the English-planted South and the Scottish-settled North, seemed a serious prospect, with all the consequences that would have for an English-dominated British state. In what follows I aim to introduce and describe the documents on which Milton has been asked to comment, summarize his responses, and map out some critical approaches that underline the cultural and political reach and significance of the *Observations*, which I offer here as a fracture-point and fulcrum for Archipelagic identity politics. The multivocal nature of the text and the interweaving voices employed by Milton to produce a position against which he can argue make it an exemplary document for addressing the tensions and contradictions in British state formation.

### Articles of Peace

Ormond’s short statement introducing the Articles of Peace ends with “GOD SAVE THE KING.” God could not save Charles I (1600–1649) from God’s Englishman, nor would he save the Irish from Cromwell (1599–1658) later that year. The Articles themselves are introduced thus:

Articles of Peace, made, concluded, accorded and agreed upon, by and between his Excellency *James* Lord Marquesse of *Ormond*, Lord Lieutenant General, and Generall

of his Majesties Kingdome of *Ireland*, for and on the behalfe of His most Excellent Majesty, by vertue of the authority wherewith the said Lord Lieutenant is intrusted, on the one part; And the Generall Assembly of the Roman Catholickes of the said Kingdome, for and on the behalfe of His Majesties Roman Catholicke Subjects of the same, on the other part. (Milton 1649, 2)

The 35 Articles of Peace are part of a peace process torn up by Cromwell, with far-reaching consequences, and thus represent a lost opportunity. The Cromwellian Conquest of Ireland, and with it the notorious massacres at Drogheda and Wexford, was the direct result of the English commonwealth's refusal to accept a compromise solution in Ireland (Ó Siochrú 2008). For that reason, and because they are the most neglected part of a neglected text, surrounded by silence, I propose to summarize the Articles of Peace fully here. The 35 articles presuppose a knowledge of the previous 150 years of Anglo-Irish history, and encompass (1) religious freedom; (2) a "free Parliament" held in Ireland within six months, or a "General Assembly of the Lords and Commons" within two years, and a debate on the repeal or suspension of Poyning's Law (1494), whereby Irish acts are provisional until ratified in London; (3) the lifting of acts and ordinances imposed on Catholics; (4) the repeal of anti-Catholic legislation dating from the Rising of 1641, including confiscations, with Catholics "restored to their respective possessions"; (5) outlawed Catholics free to be elected, to vote, and act as knights and burghers; (6) all financial penalties imposed after 1641 to be cancelled at the next parliament; (7) Irish landholders in the province of Connaught to be confirmed and made secure in their estates; (8) anti-Catholic "incapacities" to be lifted and Catholics allowed their own inns of Court, their own oath to the monarch, and "free schools for education of youths in this Kingdom"; (9) prominent positions in the army to be open on an equal basis to Catholics; (10) the Court of Wards to be abolished and instead 12,000 pounds a year paid to the Crown; (11) an end to proxies in the Irish parliament and all peers to have title and property in Ireland; (12) independence of the Irish parliament; (13) "Pattents of Plantation" and other grants of land to be open and transparent as "matters of State and weight"; (14) repeal of 1569–1571 Elizabethan acts "concerning staple or native commodities" such as "Wooll, Flockes, Tallow"; (15) justice for those who lost land "by attainders or forfeitures, or by pretence and coulour thereof"; (16) a list to be drawn up of those to petition his majesty at the next parliament for restoration of their lands; (17) inhabitants of the garrison towns of Cork, Youghal, and Dungiven to be restored to their possessions "respectively where the same extends not to the endangering of the said Garrisons in the said City and Townes"; (18) an act of oblivion extending to all the king's subjects in Ireland exonerating them "of all Treasons and offences, capitall, criminall and personall, and other offences of what nature, kind, or quality soever, in such manner as if such Treasons or offences had never been committed, perpetrated or don"; (19) no leading Irish officials "or Judges of the foure courts be farmers of his Majesties customes within this Kingdome"; (20) an Irish act against monopolies matching James I's 1624 Statute to be implemented, especially with regard to "*Aquavitae, Wine, Oile, Yarne and Tobacco*"; (21) leading



Irish figures to control the Court of Castle Chamber; (22) “that two acts lately passed in this Kingdom, one prohibiting the plowing with Horses by the tail, and the other prohibiting the burning of Oates in the straw bee repealed”; (23) redress of grievances; (24) settlement of “maritime causes” in the Irish Chancery rather than England; (25) all rent increases under the Earl of Strafford’s deputyship (1632–1640) to be reversed; (26) all arrears to be “fully forgiven and be released”; (27) the longest article at five and a half pages assigns sovereignty to a non-sectarian Irish leadership who can impose penalties on disloyal breakers of the peace “with indifferencie and equalitie,” and “in the directions which shall issue to any such County, for the applotting, subdividing, and levying of the said publike assessments, some of the said Protestant party shall be joyned with others of the Roman Catholike party to that purpose, and for effecting that service”; (28) Commissioners of the Peace to be appointed to “do equall right to the poore, and to the Rich,” but in keeping with the Articles their reach is “not to extend unto any crime or offence committed before the first of *May* last past”; (29) “that his Majesties Roman Catholicke Subjects, do continue the possession of such of his Majesties Cities, Garrisons, Townes, Forts and Castles which are within their now Quarters, untill settlement by Parliament”; (30) decisions concerning payment of customs to the crown to rest with the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, for “the defence and safety of the Kingdome”; (31) deferral of his majesty’s rents until a full settlement in parliament; (32) power to consider all crimes from May 1, 1648 to the first day of the next parliament; (33) establishment of a new system of courts and judges in Ireland to resolve disputes; (34) protection of the rights and properties of Catholic clergy; and finally (35) an open-ended article holding out promise of “further concessions” for Catholics.

The articles end with a (perhaps prophetic) typo, dating them to January 17, “2648” (for “1648”, i.e., 1649 – the legal year began at this time on March 25), and hail Charles I, 13 days from his death, as “King of *Great Brittain, France and Ireland*” (Milton 1649, 34). There is no mention of England or Scotland. Cromwell’s title of Lord Protector, taken in 1653, gave him control of “the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland and of the dominions thereunto belonging” (Gardiner 1906, 406). After the Articles the rest of the documents are dated subsequent to the king’s execution.

### The Ormond-Jones Letters

Ormond’s letter to Colonel Jones (c. 1608–1649) of March 9 denounces “those that have late usurped power over the Subjects of *England*”. Ormond (1610–1688) says he would have written earlier but waited till he was sure the army would be disaffected with events in England:

now that the mask of hypocrisie, by which the Independent Armie hath ensnared and enslaved all estates and degrees of men is laid aside, now that barefaced, they evidently appear to bee the subverters of true religion, and to be the protectors and inviters, not

only of all false ones, but of irreligion and Atheisme, now that they have barbarously and inhumanely laid violent, sacrilegious hands upon, and murdered Gods annointed, and our King, not as heretofore some Patricides have done to make room for some usurper, but in a way plainly manifesting their intentions to change the Monarchy of *England* into Anarchy. (35)

Ormond's appeal to Jones to endorse the Articles of Peace and join him in opposing Cromwellian "anarchy" earns a stern rebuff from Jones, who informs Ormond:

[It] is not in the power of any without the Parliament of *England* to give and assure pardon to those bloodie Rebels [...] I am also well assured that the Parliament of *England* would never assent to such a Peace [...] wherein is little or no provision made either for the Protestants or the Protestant Religion. Nor can I understand how the Protestant Religion should bee settled and restored to its puritie by an Armie of Papists, or the Protestant interests maintained by those very enemies by whom they have been spoiled and there slaughtered: And very evident it is that both the Protestants and Protestant Religion are[,] in that your Lordships Treaty, left as in the power of the Rebels to be by them born down, and rooted out at pleasure. (37)

Jones reminds Ormond that faction and opportunism have beset relations between England and Ireland in the past:

Most certain it is, and former ages have approved it, that the intermedling of Governors and parties in this Kingdom, with sidings and parties in *England*, have been the very betraying of this kingdom to the Irish, whiles the Brittish forces here had bin there-upon called off, and the place therein laid open, and as it were given up to the common enimie. (38)

Jones adds a comment that is cruelly ironic given the Cromwellian conquest that followed within a few months of his writing when he says:

And how much the dangers are at present (more then in former ages) of hazarding the English interest in this Kingdom, by sending any parties hence into any other Kingdom upon any pretences whatsoever is very apparent, as in the generalitie of the Rebellion, now more then formerly. (38)

Jones concludes by reminding Ormond of his own former adherence to English sovereignty:

Therein I cannot but mind your Lordship of what hath been sometimes by your self delivered, as your sence in this particular; that the English interest in *Ireland* must be preserved by the English, and not by Irish, and upon that ground [...] did your Lordship then capitulate with the Parliament of *England*, from which cleer principle I am sorrie to see your Lordship now receding. (39)

Jones uses the term "English" or "England" twelve times, "Irish" or "Ireland" eight, and "Brittish" twice, making his patriotic priorities clear. Ormond uses the word

“England” or “English” four times in his letter, but while referring repeatedly to religion and monarchy makes no mention of Ireland. The letters of Ormond and Jones are followed by Ormond’s proclamation “that *Charles* the second, son and heir of our late Sovereign King *Charles* the first of happy memory, is, by the grace of God the undoubted King of *England, Scotland, France, and Ireland*, Defender of the Faith, &c” (40).

### The Belfast Presbytery

After the Ormond-Jones letters and proclamation there follows the Statement of the Belfast Presbytery. The “Necessary Representation” opens with a direct assault upon the English “Sectarian party” that executed the king:

In this discharge of the trust put upon us by God, we would not be looked upon as sowers of sedition, or broachers of Nationall and divisive motions, our record is in heaven, that nothing is more hatefull unto us, nor lesse intended by us, and therefore we shall not feare the malicious, and wicked aspersion, which we know Satan by his Instruments is ready to cast, not onely upon us, but on all who sincerely endeavour the advancement of Reformation. (41–42)

The Belfast Presbytery focuses on the national dissent and disunion fomented by the English sectarians who

without all rule, or example, being but private men [...] have proceeded to the tryall of the King, against both the Interest, and Protestation of the Kingdome of *Scotland*, and the former publique Declarations of both Kingdomes (besides the violent hast, reiecting the hearing of any defences) with cruell hands have put him to death; an act so horrible, as no history, divine or humane, hath laid a President [precedent] of the like. (43)

The Solemn League and Covenant of 1643 invoked by the Belfast Presbytery upheld “the Peace and Safety of the three Kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland” (Perceval-Maxwell 1978). Citing four duties demanded by the Covenant – to God, Church Government, monarchy and parliament combined, and Union – the Belfast Presbytery conclude their objections to the English parliament’s unilateral execution of the king by finding Cromwell’s party “guilty of the great evill of these times [...] the despising of Dominion, and speaking evill of Dignities” (Milton 1649, 44). By contrast, they insist:

That they doe cordially endeavour the preservation of the Union amongst the well-affected in the Kingdomes, not being swayed by any Nationall respect: remembering that part of the Covenant; *That wee shall not suffer our selves directly, nor indirectly, by whatsoever Combination, perswasion, or terrour, to be divided, or withdrawne from this blessed Union, and Conjunction.* (44)

The language of the Belfast Presbytery – “preservation of the Union,” “not being swayed by any Nationall respect,” “*this blessed Union, and Conjunction*” – is archipelagic in its insistence on the co-dependency of the three kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland.

### Milton's Observations

The thirty-five Articles of Peace occupy thirty-four of the sixty-four and a half pages of the *Observations*. Milton's commentary, less than four pages, confines itself to seven articles, taken out of sequence (1, 2, 12, 22, 9, 4, and 18). Milton's reference point is the 1641 Irish “rebellion” which he sees rewarded rather than punished in the agreement brokered by Ormond:

As for these Articles of Peace made with those inhumane Rebels and Papists of *Ireland* by the late King, as one of his last Master-pieces. We may be confidently perswaded, that no true borne *English-man*, can so much as barely reade them without indignation and disdain, that those bloody Rebels, and so proclaim'd and judg'd of by the King himself, after the merciless and barbarous Massacre of so many thousand *English* [...] should be now grac'd and rewarded with such freedoms and enlargements, as none of their Ancestors could ever merit by their best obedience, which at best was alwaies treacherous, to be infranchiz'd with full liberty equall to their Conquerours, whom the just revenge of ancient Pyracies, cruell Captivities, and the causlesse infestation of our Coast, had warrantably call'd over, and the long prescription of many hundred yeares; besides what other titles are acknowledg'd by their own *Irish* Parliaments, had fixt and seated in that soile with as good a right as the meerest Natives. (46)

As a “true borne *English-man*,” 50 years before Defoe satirized the species, Milton is outraged that the Irish, “justly made our vassals, are by the first Article of this peace advanc'd to a Condition of freedome superior to what any *English* Protestants durst have demanded” (46). To Article 2 and 12, Milton declares the Irish “deserv'd to hold no Parliamt at all, but to be govern'd by Edicts and Garrisons” (47). In the most quoted passage of the *Observations*, Milton calls article 22, on ploughing by the tail, “more ridiculous then dangerous,” showing the Irish to be

averse from all Civility and amendment [...] who rejecting the ingenuity of all other Nations to improve and waxe more civill by a civilizing Conquest, though all these many yeares better shown and taught, preferre their own absurd and savage Customes before the most convincing evidence of reason and demonstration: a testimony of their true Barbarisme and obdurate wilfulnesse to be expected no lesse in other matters of greatest moment. (47)

Recalling the “barbarous Massacre” of English planters Milton mocks the king's peace as royal folly fueling the insolence of upstart colonial subjects, saying of Article 9, which proposes that Catholics be eligible as army leaders: “Now let all men judge

what this wants of utter alienating and acquitting the whole Province of *Ireland* from all true fealty and obedience to the Common-wealth of *England*' (48). Milton's repeated references to English superiority are punctured briefly when he slips into a British perspective, claiming Charles I's pro-Irish peace sacrifices "Brittish Loyalty" to "*Irish* Rebels," privileging them over "all his Subjects of *Brittaine*" (47).

To the charge of breaching the Covenant and dividing the kingdoms in Article 4 Milton counters: "And what greater dividing then by a pernicious and hostile Peace, to disalliege a whole Feudary Kingdome from the ancient Dominion of *England*?" (49). Milton concludes with Article 18, in which the late king offers amnesty to those involved in the events of 1641, "wherein without the least regard of Justice to avenge the dead, while he thirsts to be aveng'd upon the living, to all the Murders, Massacres, Treasons, Pyracies, from the very fatal day wherein that Rebellion first broke out, he grants an act of Oblivion" (49).

Milton then briefly discusses Ormond's letter to Jones, "attempting his fidelity, which the discretion and true worth of that Gentleman hath so well answerd and repulst" (49). Mocking Ormond's title – since councils like Cromwell's had been around long before "such a thing as a Titular Marquess had either name or being in the World" (53) – Milton's riposte focuses on Ormond's remarks regarding religion and regicide. To the charge of being too tolerant in matters of faith leveled at the Independents, Milton counters that they have defended true religion, confining Catholics "to the bare enjoyment of that which is not in our reach, their Consciences" (50). To the charge of having "murderd the King," and Ormond's claim that the only liberty left under Cromwell's rule is "to tread underfoot Magistracie, to murder Magistrates, and oppresse and undoe all that are not like minded with them" (35), Milton asks "who are those that have trod under foot Magistracy, murder'd Magistrates, oppress'd & undone all that syded not with them, but the *Irish* Rebels, in that horrible Conspiracy, for which Ormond himselfe hath either been or seem'd to be their enemy; though now their Ringleader" (54).

Turning to the Belfast Presbytery, Milton declares:

We have now to deale, though in the same Country, with another sort of Adversaries, in show farr different, in substance much what the same. These write themselves the Presbytery of *Belfast*, a place [...] whose obscurity till now never came to our hearing. And surely wee should think this their Representment farr beneath considerable [...] were it not to observe in some particulars the Sympathy, good Intelligence, and joynt pace which they goe in the North of *Ireland*, with their Copartnering Rebels in the South, driving on the same Interest to loose us that Kingdome, that they may gaine it themselves, or at least share in the spoile: though the other be op'n enemies, these pretended Brethren [...] is the Presbytery of *Belfast*, a small Town in *Ulster*, of so large extent that their voyces cannot serve to teach duties in the Congregation which they oversee, without spreading and divulging to all parts farr beyond the Diocesse of *Patrick*, or *Columba*, their writ'n Representation, under the suttle pretence of Feeding their owne Flock? [...] And surely when we put down Bishops, and put up Presbyters, which the most of them have made use of to enrich and exalt themselves, and turn the first heele against their Benefactors, we did not think that one Classick Fraternity so obscure and

so remote, should involve us and all State affairs within the Censure and Jurisdiction of *Belfast*, upon pretence of overseeing their own charge. (54–55)

Having established the Belfast Presbytery's obscurity and impertinence, Milton insists on the separation of church and state:

Wee very well know that Church Censures are limited to Church matters, and these within the compasse of their own Province [...] that affaires of State are not for their Medling. (55)

In answering the Belfast Presbytery's charge that the English republic allows all and no religion Milton observes:

Nor doth the *Covnant* any way engage us to extirpate, or to prosecute the men, but the heresies and errors in them, which we tell these Divines and the rest that understand not, belongs chiefly to their own Function, in the diligent preaching and insisting upon sound Doctrin, in the confuting not the railing down errors, encountring both in public and private Conference, and by the power of truth, not of persecution, subduing those authors of hereticall opinions, & lastly in the spirituall execution of Church discipline within thir own congregations. In all these ways wee shall assist them, favour them, and as far as appertains to us joyn with them, and moreover not tolerate the free exercise of any Religion, which shall be found absolutely contrary to sound Doctrin or the power of godliness; for the conscience we must have patience till it be within our verge. (59)

To the suggestion that the English republic has set up servants as rulers, Milton retorts:

they talke at random of *servants raigning, servants riding, and wonder how the Earth can beare them*. Either those men imagin themselves to be marvellously high set and exalted in the chaire of *Belfast*, to voutsafe the Parliament of *England* no better stile then *servants*, or els thir high notion, which wee rather beleeve, falls as low as Court parasitism; supposing all men to be servants, but the King. (64)

Not content with equating Scottish Presbyterians with Irish Catholics, Milton likens them to the Spanish Inquisition:

Thir next impeachment is, *that we oppose the Presbyteriall government, the hedg and bulwark of Religion*. Which all the Land knows to be a most impudent falshood, having established it with all freedom, wherever it hath been desir'd. Nevertheless as we perceave it aspiring to be a compulsive power upon all without exception in Parochiall, Classicall, and Provinciall Hierarchies, or to require the fleshly arm of Magistracy in the execution of a spirituall Discipline, to punish and amerce by any corporall infliction those whose consciences cannot be edifi'd by what authority they are compell'd, we hold it no more to be *the hedg and bulwark of Religion*, than the Popish and Prelaticall Courts, or the *Spanish Inquisition*. (Milton 1649, 60)

The accusation of “the despising of Dominion” Milton throws back in his opponents’ faces, since they are a mere dominion and must accept the dominance of England and her parliament.

Milton’s most telling point against the Belfast Presbyterians is their apparent ignorance of their own history:

Thir grand accusation is our Justice don on the King, which that they may prove to be *without rule or example*, they venture all the credit they have in divine and human history; and by the same desperate boldness detect themselves to be egregious liars and impostors, seeking to abuse the multitude with a show of that gravity and learning which never was their portion. Had thir knowledge bin equall to the knowledge of any stupid Monk, or Abbot, they would have known at least, though ignorant of all things else, the life and acts of him, who first instituted thir order: but these blockish Presbyters of *Clandeboy* know not that *John Knox*, who was the first founder of Presbytery in *Scotland*, taught professedly the doctrine of deposing, and of killing Kings. And thus while they deny that any such rule can be found, the rule is found in their own Country, givn them by thir own first presbyterian institutor; and they themselves like irregular Friers walking contrary to the rule of thir own foundation, deserv for so grosse an ignorance and transgression to be disciplin’d upon thir own stools. (61–62)

The Belfast Presbytery has forgotten its republican principles, leading to “a co-interest and partaking with the *Irish* Rebels,” confirming its colonial subordinate status (65). The fact that Milton devotes nine pages of commentary to the forty pages comprising the Articles of Peace, the Ormond-Jones letters and proclamation of Charles II, and eleven pages to the four and a half pages of the *Necessary Representation* has been seen to reflect his priorities in the *Observations* (Raymond 2004, 338, 340; Kerrigan 2008, 231–232). He recognizes Ulster as a crucial setting in the drama being played out between the nations of the Archipelago.

The difference between an imperial monarchy and a colonial republic is one of degree; and for the colonized such distinctions are largely irrelevant. If Milton was, as Armitage suggests, a “poet against empire” (Armitage 1995), he was not a poet against plantation, and if he was a poet against sovereigns, he was not against the sovereignty of England or “the sovrain Planter” – God in *Paradise Lost* (Campbell 1980, 4.691) – who gave England dominion over Ireland. Much depends on whether we see the colonization of Ireland as a “domestic” matter or as a staging post for the pursuit of plantations in the so-called New World. Armitage may be right to see Milton as opposed to the aggrandizement of imperial monarchies, but Milton’s support for the Cromwellian occupation of Ireland and his language in the *Observations*, where Ireland is characterized as a “Feudary Kingdome,” suggests otherwise (49). This is a complicated debate, since although in *The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* Milton asked, “Where is this goodly tower of a Commonwealth, which the English boasted they would build, to overshadow kings, and be another *Rome* in the west?” (Milton 1660, 21–22), by the time of *Paradise Lost* (1667) it is Satan who is upholding “Imperial Titles” and the prospect of a British imperial monarchy supplanting

Rome is less appealing (5.801). The key question is whether it is a monarchy or a commonwealth/republic that is leading the scramble for colonies.

The *Observations* implicates Milton within the discourse of English colonialism. Seeing Milton as a poet against empire is an Anglocentric perspective that overlooks the internal colonialism of the emerging British state. The running header of the earliest editions of Milton's *History of Britain* (1670) reads "The History of England," a revealing glimpse into the Anglocentric mindset. In *Of Reformation* (1641) Milton praises God who "having first welnigh freed us from *Antichristian* thraldome, didst build up this *Britannick Empire* to a glorious and enviable heighth with all her Daughter Ilands about her" (Milton 1641, 87–88). In the *Observations* Milton backs Britain's imperial project and places England at the cutting-edge of the Anglo-Celtic frontier identified by Pocock. Milton's strategy in the *Observations*, his response to the "complication of interests," is to stage a four-way struggle as a straight fight between on the one hand Irish royalists – Catholic, Protestant, and Ulster Scots – and on the other English republicans. Confederate Catholics in the South and Presbyterians in the North were equally opposed to the actions of the English parliament in executing the king. Milton's response was to identify an underlying complicity between these apparent enemies. The crucible of conflict in which this unique intervention occurs, in the context of a prismatic debate over sovereignty and statehood, makes the *Observations* a proving ground for the politics of the period.

### Critical Perspectives

I hope I have done enough here to suggest the importance of the *Observations* as a case study in the complexities of archipelagic interactions. In what follows I want to suggest some critical approaches to the text, a series of observation posts from which to view this multi-authored text, which can be viewed as secondary effects of archipelagic studies insofar as each approach draws on or builds on the non-Anglocentric perspective mapped out in the preceding pages:

1. The first is Cultural Materialism. The cultural materialist commitment to context, to Marxism, and to the continuing relevance of Renaissance texts makes the *Observations* a perfect platform for this critical theory. Marx (1818–1883) claimed the English republic was shipwrecked on Ireland (Marx and Engels [1867] 1986, 378–379). Radical English historians agree that colonialism undid the commonwealth (Durstun 1986; Hill 1985). Marx's reading of the English revolution as meeting its doom in Ireland is borne out by the displacement of the social and political energies released in England in the 1640s in the Cromwellian conquest of Ireland, and by the real revolution in land ownership that occurred there (Bottigheimer 1972). According to his most recent editors, Milton's 1649 writings are "deeply concerned with how the three former Stuart kingdoms can be unified under a new republican regime" (Keeble and McDowell 2013, 33). If the answer lies in subjection to English authority then from a native



standpoint it matters little whether such unity is achieved under an imperial monarchy or colonial republic.

2. New Historicism. Rather than tracking Renaissance afterlives, new historicists happily inhabit the period. They like to place a short non-fiction text, usually a minor or neglected work, alongside a major canonical one in order to argue their shared concerns. Pairing the *Observations* with *Paradise Lost* – and *Paradise Regained* – reveals the complexities of the poet's attitude to empire, race and slavery. There is now an established strand of criticism that considers the *Observations* a scenario for Milton's epic poetry, including work by Canino (1998), Daems (1999), Harrington (2007), Kerrigan (2008, 230), and Loewenstein (1992, 310).

3. Deconstruction. There are several ways of thinking about the *Observations* as a text ripe for a deconstructive reading. The first lies in the status of the *Observations* as a marginal text within Milton's voluminous prose. Its liminal status – and composite nature – immediately renders it of interest, for as Derrida observed marginal or fringe cases “always constitute the most certain and most decisive indices wherever essential conditions are to be grasped” (Derrida 1977, 209). The second is Milton's own interpretative strategy in relation to the multifaceted material he was commissioned to critique. Milton sets out to reveal an underlying complicity between two apparent opposites, and carries out the classic two-stage process of reversal and displacement characteristic of deconstruction. When in his sonnet “On the New Forcers of Conscience under the Long Parliament” (1673) Milton declares “*New Presbyter* is but *Old Priest* writ Large” he is deconstructing a false opposition, as when he compares the Belfast Presbytery to the Spanish Inquisition (Campbell 1980, 81; Milton 1649, 60). A third deconstructive dimension is the characteristic of becoming like the thing to which you are ostensibly opposed by closely inhabiting the discourse of your adversary. Milton turns royalist and imperialist in accusing Ormond of attempting “to disalliege a whole Feudary Kingdome from the ancient Dominion of *England*.” Milton's commentators fall into this trap too. Corns (1990), Kerrigan (2008) and Raymond (2004) have all viewed the *Observations* as primarily preoccupied with Scotland or England, as though Ireland, specifically Ulster, could not be the true topic of discussion, yet on March 23, 1649 Cromwell declared the “Irish interest [...] the most dangerous” (Keeble and McDowell 2013, 49).

4. Postcolonialism. Quinn (1958) saw Elizabethan Ireland as a unique instance of a country colonized twice over, its twelfth-century settlers displaced by sixteenth-century planters (20). In fact, Ireland's uniqueness lies in its being triple colonized. The 1609 Ulster plantation, a predominantly Scottish affair made possible by the accession of James I as king of Britain in 1603, laid the foundations for partition three centuries later. The English Pale around Dublin became a British Pale around Belfast. Modern Ireland's provisional independence saw the country partitioned between the parts planted by England and those settled by the Scots. The colonial complexities of Ireland are laid bare in the *Observations*, and for those interested in postcolonial criticism it is a paradigmatic text where the roots of partition and the complexities of the modern British problem can be traced.

5. Animal Studies. In the most-quoted lines of his commentary, Milton singles out the proposed repeal of the act against ploughing by the tail as a piece of barbarism. Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford had introduced in 1635 an “Act Against Plowing by the Tayle, and Pulling the Wooll Off Living Sheep” (Wentworth 1786), considered the earliest animal welfare legislation in the English-speaking world (Beirne 2009). “One of the first anti-cruelty laws” (Kalof 2007, 125) was passed by a man Milton detested (Merritt 1996, 5–6), an English colonial governor later tried as a tyrant and a traitor whose execution was a dress rehearsal for the king’s. The background to the legislation against ploughing by the tail suggests that it was as much about colonial authority and taxation as it was about advocating humane practice (Pinkerton 1858, 212–213). Within Irish ethnology, ploughing by the tail has a complicated history as an embarrassment to nationalist or anti-colonial narratives (Evans 1976, 34). The relationship between colonialism and animal welfare is complex, since brutalization of natives accompanies both cruelty to and concern for animals (Coughlan 1990). An earlier Archipelagic moment saw an Irish lord in 1317 address a “Remonstrance” to Pope John XXII, encouraging the presence of the Scots in Ireland in the shape of the brothers Bruce, Edward and Robert, by complaining of the Anglo-Normans, or English: “For not only their laymen and secular clergy but some also of their regular clergy dogmatically assert the heresy that it is no more sin to kill an Irishman than a dog or any other brute” (Lydon 1972, 289).

## Conclusion

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a “handbook” as “a book small enough to be easily portable and intended to be kept close to hand, typically one containing a collection of passages important for reference or a compendium of information on a particular subject, *esp.* a book of religious instruction.” The *Observations* is such a book, a rare pamphlet that is a real Renaissance handbook, offering insights into the formation of a multi-nation state that is only now beginning to unravel. It raises questions of enduring concern about colonialism, monarchy, nationalism, religion, republicanism, sovereignty, and civil society, and should be of interest to all students of the early modern period and beyond. Two recent developments may bring the *Observations* back into view. The first is the publication of the new Oxford edition of Milton’s 1649 prose (Keeble and McDowell 2013), providing excellent notes by Nick McDowell not just on Milton’s contribution, as previous editions have done, but on the whole text of the *Observations*. The second development is the debate around Scottish independence, and related issues around federalism, English Votes for English Laws, and the fallout from Brexit. The complication of interests along the Anglo-Celtic frontier persists.

## What to Read Next

Carlin (1993); Fenton (2005); Gregerson (1999); Harrington (2007); Sauer (2014).

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# London

*Ian Munro*

When we say that we *know* a city, what is it that we know? Late in Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, the reader (who is, in another sense, the Renaissance traveler Marco Polo (1254–1324), or perhaps the emperor Kublai Khan (1215–1294), who hears Polo's descriptions of the cities of his vast empire) reaches Eudoxia, a city of "winding alleys, steps, dead ends, hovels," which is notable for containing a beautiful carpet "in which you can observe the city's true form" ([1972] 1979, 76). Although the carpet resembles the city in no obvious way, a close perusal of its lines and "symmetrical motives" makes the connection clear:

But if you pause and examine it carefully, you become convinced that all the things contained in the city are included in the design, arranged according to their true relationship, which escapes your eye distracted by the bustle, the throngs, the shoving. All of Eudoxia's confusion, the mules' braying, the lampblack stains, the fish smell is what is evident in the incomplete perspective you grasp: but the carpet proves that there is a point from which the city shows its true proportions, the geometrical scheme implicit in its every, tiniest detail. (76)

Thus those who are lost in the city consult the carpet to discover their destinations, and each citizen "compares the carpet's immobile order with his own image of the city," in search of "an answer, the story of his life, the twists of fate" (76). Asked about "the mysterious bond between two objects so dissimilar as the carpet and the city," an oracle replied that one object "has the form the gods gave the starry sky," while the other is an "approximate reflection, like every human creation" (76). While it was assumed that "the carpet's harmonious pattern was of divine origin," the story concludes, the opposite deduction is also possible: "that the true map of the universe

is the city of Eudoxia, just as it is, a stain that spreads out shapelessly, with crooked streets, houses that crumble one upon the other amid clouds of dust, fires, screams in the darkness” (77).

The subject of this chapter is the epistemologies of early modern London, how critics over the past generation have approached the topic of the city, and where this critical discourse might move (or might be moving) now. I began with Calvino’s parable because it offers a complex, perhaps cautionary, tale about how urban representation and urban knowledge work. The carpet – a textile artifact that recalls the etymology of *text*, at once narrational in its threads and “motives,” and spatial in its geometries and patterns – substitutes for Eudoxia itself because it is more useful, more orderly, and more legible. The implications of this substitution extend to Polo’s description of Eudoxia, itself a tightly woven, harmonious, and elegant representation of “a stain that spreads out shapelessly.” Not only does this report necessarily replace the real city for Kublai Khan, but by this point in the book we (and the emperor) have long known that all of Polo’s cities are only imaginary: rather than providing Kublai Khan with detailed knowledge of his imperial possessions, Polo invents places that describe different aspects of his own, unrecoverable city, Venice. The carpet-city is thus at least doubly virtual, a representation of a representation.

It seems appropriate that Renaissance Venice would stand as a kind of origin point for these urban virtualities, given its modern status as less a city than a unified work of art. “Venice, more than any other place, bears witness to the existence, from the sixteenth century on, of a unitary code or common language of the city,” Henri Lefebvre declares in *The Production of Space*, through which “everyday life and its functions are coextensive with, and utterly transformed by, a theatricality as sophisticated as it is unsought, a sort of involuntary *mise-en-scène*” (Lefebvre [1974] 1991, 73–74). For Lefebvre space is a social production, something that has meaning because of how it is practiced, and it is mainly through the work of Lefebvre, directly or indirectly, that we have come to understand the experience of space, especially urban space, in terms of the social practices and relations that constitute it. In Lefebvre’s model, Venice is a kind of relic, an improbable remnant of a common socio-spatial legibility destroyed by capitalism; by venerating it in these terms, he creates a crucial foil for his critique of modern urban experience, which lacks this animating theatricality. In Venice alone, by virtue of its architectural unity, it is still possible to imagine a world in which social practices, “everyday life and its functions,” are lucid and coherent, as if they are performed upon an urban stage. One might say that Eudoxia’s carpet creates such a theatricality for a city whose shapelessness cannot create it for itself, inscribing an urban code that renders it legible, mappable, and meaningful – although it is important to note that in this comparison the scene of the *mise-en-scène* is reversed. Instead of holding the carpet in their mind while they walk the streets of the city, the inhabitants of Eudoxia conjure up their image of the real city while they contemplate the carpet, indoors: what the artifact provides is thus not an urban theatricality but a theatrical city, necessarily experienced at a remove from the real thing.

As modern critics of early modern London, artifacts are all we have to contemplate, as we attempt to find our way through our unrecoverable city, and we therefore tend to read from available signifiers to unavailable signifieds, to ground an overarching and coherent picture of urban experience in the objects, especially the representations, that have survived. These representations – the early modern period's extraordinary efflorescence of urban plays, masques, pageants, histories, satires, poems, ballads, epigrams, maps, engravings, diagrams, panoramas, and so on – seem an almost-inexhaustible archive of urban knowledge, a principal reason London emerged as a preeminent focus of early modern historicism over the past quarter century. While it is perhaps wrong to generalize about such an extensive and varied body of critical work, it would be fair to say that the dominant approach has been to construct early modern London as an urban space engaged in an ongoing process of making new sense of itself. In his seminal *Literature and Culture in Early Modern London*, Lawrence Manley characterized urban writing in the period as responding to political and social anxieties about London's population growth, its expansion and densification, the rise of new economic systems, and increasingly fluid social hierarchies; by establishing "fictions of settlement," urban representation provided a dialectical space in which the relationship between past, present, and future Londons could be articulated and new understandings of the mutable city might be framed (Manley 1995, 125–167). Within the critical tradition exemplified by Manley's work (see also Orlin 2000, Smith, Strier, and Bevington 1995, and Dillon 2000), representations act as urban travelers, exploring and mapping the terrain of a city that economic and demographic forces have rendered illegible. Such a critical perspective is especially predicated on one extraordinary traveler: John Stow's 1598 *Survey of London* (Stow [1598] 1908), which catalogues the city by ward, street, and building, detailing the historical events and civic practices of each location. It is from Stow that we most vividly derive our sense of early modern London's loss of spatial coherence and meaning – as the *Survey* extensively chronicles the infilling of properties, the degradation of former monastic areas, the spread of suburban development, the loss of open spaces, the decline of public ritual, the crowding of streets, and so on – as well as our sense that a work like the *Survey* might seek to rectify these changes. As Andrew Gordon has argued, by leading "the reader on a tour of each ward . . . designed to foster a textual experience of urban community," Stow's *Survey* "proposes itself as complementary to the experience of inhabiting London" (2013, 112, 115). As with Eudoxia's carpet, however, the complement becomes the replacement: "Stow's text comes to substitute for the city," Gordon observes, "stand[ing] in place of the phenomenological experience of space itself" (118, 153).

As modern critics use early modern representations to ascertain what "everyday life and its functions" looked like for early modern London, the space of the city is often expressly fashioned in Lefebvrian terms, as a kind of theater in which social relations are made manifest. When the specific subject of analysis is the early modern theater itself, this tendency is reinforced, so that the act of representation constitutes an active theatricalization of urban space, inscribing legible meaning



onto its increasingly illegible body. “The theater helped to make sense of city life,” Jean Howard asserts in *Theater of a City*, a work that might be taken as paradigmatic of recent criticism of urban theater in the period: “In invoking the places of the city and filling them with action, the plays ... *construct* the city and make it intelligible” (2007, 12, 23). In describing London as a “theater of a city,” a phrase that evokes Lefebvre’s “involuntary *mise en scène*,” Howard uses a particular idea of theatrical space to define urban space, and vice versa. City and theater are mutually framed as rational spaces of knowledge: to know the city is to know its dense network of social practices, as represented by the theater in legible terms; the work of the theater, in complementary fashion, is defined as representing the urban reality that surrounds it with clarity. Yet theatricality and representation are not coextensive terms: “the theatrical medium,” as Samuel Weber has argued, cannot be reduced to “a means of meaningful representation” (2004, x). What makes theatrical experience something more, or something other, than an epistemological space is the process of representation itself: “signifying always leaves something out and something over,” Weber continues, “an excess that is also a deficit, or, as Derrida has formulated it, a ‘remainder’ ... It is the irreducibility of this remainder that, ultimately, renders language theatrical and theatricality *significant*” (x). In one sense, this theatrical remainder might be linked to the mechanical apparatus of staging, the physical medium whereby representation takes place; in another sense, it might be linked to those phenomena that elude or exceed the space of representation.

Calvino’s parable tells us what this remainder might look like in an urban context: “winding alleys, steps, dead ends, hovels ... the bustle, the throngs, the shoving ... the mules’ braying, the lampblack stains, the fish smell.” Such chaotic, mobile elements, and “all of Eudoxia’s confusion,” are deemed insignificant to the city’s meaning because they cannot be made legible within the representational fictions of the carpet (for critical works attentive to such non-legible urban elements, see especially Newman 2007, Harris 2008, and Stanev 2014). Moreover, it is only in relation to the “geometrical scheme” of the carpet that Eudoxia is merely “a stain that spreads out shapelessly.” Describing the panoramic view of New York City from the top of the World Trade Center as a “fiction of knowledge,” Michel de Certeau remarks, “It transforms the bewitching world by which one was ‘possessed’ into a text that lies before one’s eyes” ([1980] 1984, 92). He then contrasts this “immense texturology ... a representation, an optical artifact” to the ambulatory practices of the city’s inhabitants: “The networks of these moving, intersecting writings compose a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces: in relation to representations, it remains daily and indefinitely other ... A migrational, or metaphorical, city thus slips into the clear text of the planned and readable city” (93). This urban writing, “the bustle, the throngs, the shoving,” is knowledge of a different order than representation: it is not *useful* knowledge, and through its lack of utility it eludes capture by representational strategies.

## I

In previous work, I have used de Certeau's idea of the migrational city to talk about the urban crowd, and crowdedness in general, as a kind of urban meaning without place in early modern London (Munro 2005). In what follows, I want to talk about the city in motion in a somewhat different way, to explore some of the implications of a mobile theatricality – a concept that might make phrases like “theater of a city” take on different significances. In this exploration, my theoretical model is mostly drawn from *A Thousand Plateaus* ([1980] 1987), by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari – in particular, their tracing of a “nomadology” that stands in opposition to static epistemologies. Deleuze and Guattari's nomadology begins with an anthropological fable, in which they imagine nomadic, itinerant collectives of herders and warriors whose way of life stands in direct opposition to the stratified social apparatus of the state or *polis*. Encountering the nomadic collective, the state seeks not only to neutralize its threat but also to capture it, to capitalize on its martial power. Yet once captured, the nomadic extends beyond its initial martial domain, becoming a kind of viral or rhizomatic ordering system working within the space of the *polis* yet remaining other to it. These rival ordering systems are especially understood in spatial terms, which Deleuze and Guattari illustrate through an opposition between two board games, chess and Go. Chess pieces are ranked, have intrinsic properties, and interact according to established rules on a bounded, checkered board. Go pieces, on the other hand, are interchangeable discs that only acquire meaning positionally, as they are placed on a theoretically infinite board. The space of chess is thus *striated*, like the ideal, abstract space of the *polis*, with its streets, enclosures, and property lines, while the space of Go is *smooth*, like the unmarked nomadic space of the wilderness or desert. “Chess codes and decodes space,” Deleuze and Guattari argue, “whereas Go proceeds altogether differently, territorializing or deterritorializing it” (353). Deleuze and Guattari declare, “What interests us in operations of striation and smoothing are precisely the passages or combinations: how the forces at work within space continually striate it, and how in the course of its striation it develops other forces and emits new smooth spaces” (500). Urban space illustrates these interacting forces vividly: on the one hand, “the city is striated space *par excellence* ... the force of striation that reimparts smooth space, puts it back into operation everywhere”; on the other hand, in terms that parallel de Certeau's city of walkers, “it is possible to live smooth even in the cities, to be an urban nomad,” and “even the most striated city gives rise to smooth spaces” (481, 482, 500).

A similar interaction of striating and smoothing forces informs the space of the theater, in terms of both how it is structured and how it engages with the world. We can conceive of theatrical space as congruent with chess, as a striated, bounded space whose principal concern is mimetic representation; in particular, the apparatus of the stage seems inescapably striating, with walls, pillars, galleries, traps, and doors reinforcing an emplaced and customary semiology of scenery, lighting, sound, costume, gesture, *figureposition*, posture, and so on. Such a rational, semiotic theater is the kind of theater imagined by Howard and other critics, which in its engagements

with London effects a reterritorialization of the city's smoothed spaces by staging them in a way that inscribes legible meaning on them – an expressly *political* theater, a theater of the *polis*. But we can also conceive of theatrical space as congruent with Go and the nomadic. In a reading of Plato's discussion of theater in *The Laws*, Weber argues, "Theatricality demonstrates its subversive power when it forsakes the confines of the *theatron* [the place of seeing] and begins to wander: when, in short, it separates itself from *theater*. For in so doing it begins to escape control by the prevailing rules of representation, whether aesthetic, social, or political" (2004, 37). This separation of theatricality from its proper place is a central concern of the early modern antitheatrical discourse, which pervasively imagines a theater that will not stay where it belongs. "What voice is heard in our streets?" asks the author of *This World's Folly*: "Not but the squeaking out of those ... obscene and light jigs ... sucked from the poisonous dugs of sin-swelled theatres" (I. H. 1615, sig. B1v). In such accounts, the theater is set loose from its mooring, moving into the space of the city, deterritorializing it, smoothing the striated space of the *polis*. And instead of seeing the playhouse as a rational, mimetic space of representation, antitheatrical writers imagine it as an unbounded, wandering space of transforming interaction in which audience members "set open their eares & eies to suck vp variety of abominations, bewitching their minds with extrauagant thoughts" (I. H. 1615, sig. B1v). Theater that is "extra[v]agant" – from the Latin *vagari*, to wander – is spatially and semiotically out of bounds, both vagabond and excessively vague. In effect, the antitheatricalists label as satanic or perverse the nomadic theatricality that cannot be accommodated within, or captured by, the political epistemologies of representation (Reynolds 1997).

Stow's *Survey of London* provides what I will suggest is a complementary example of smoothing and striating forces at work in the streets of London, as well as in the *Survey* itself. In his perambulation of Cheap Ward (see Figure 13.1), Stow lingers on the monuments spaced along the high street, the heart of the city, working east to west from the Great Conduit to the entry to Saint Paul's Cathedral.<sup>1</sup> He spends considerable time on the Cross in West Cheap, one of the nine crosses erected by Edward I in 1290 to mark the funeral progress of his wife, Eleanor. The Cheapside cross is exemplary of the "involuntary mise-en-scène" that Lefebvre associates with monuments and the Renaissance city in general, where all aspects of spatial experience – space as perceived, conceived, and lived – are woven, carpet-like, into a single iconic, coherent form ([1974] 1991, 220–223). As a physical monument, the cross is central to one's understanding of the space of the city, a permanent marker through which one's mental map of the city is organized; as a kind of sacred space, the cross ratifies one's understanding of the relationship between this world and the next. Cheapside was the central ritual thoroughfare of early modern London as well as the commercial heart of the city, and the presence of Cheapside Cross serves as a constant reminder of that intermittent yet persistent sacralization of the street – especially in the context of royal entries to the city, which often occasioned the refurbishing and embellishing of the cross, as Stow details at some length. To describe this urban space as striated, therefore, is to acknowledge not only its dense imbrication of complementary civic codes, but also the effect it has on the rest of the city.

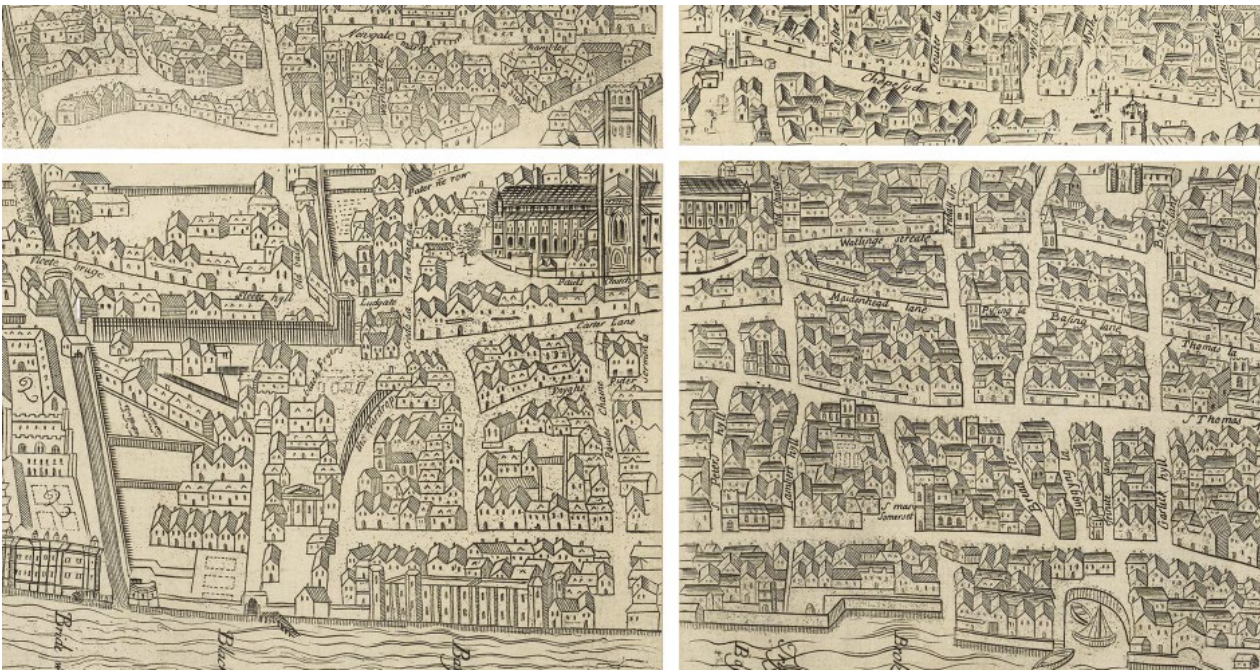


Figure 13.1 Cheapside, London. Source: Agas, Radulph, 1540?-1621.<sup>2</sup>

Yet after detailing the civic care of the cross over the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Stow continues by describing the smoothing of this striated space, the violent unraveling of the urban texturology:

Since the which time, the said crosse hauing beene presented by diuers Iuries ... to stand in the high way to the let of cariages (as they alledged) but could not haue it remoued, it followed that in the yeare 1581. the 21. of Iune, in the night, the lowest Images round about the said crosse (being of Christ his resurrection, of the virgin *Mary*, king *Ed.* the confessor, and such like) were broken, and defaced ... the image of the blessed virgin, at that time robbed of her son, and her armes broken, by which she staid him on her knees: her whole body also was haled with ropes, and left likely to fall: but in the yeare 1595. was againe fastned and repaired, and in the yeare next following, a new misshapen son, as borne out of time, all naked was laid in her armes, the other images remaying broke as afore. ([1598] 1908, 1.266)

What is especially interesting about this account is that Stow seems to attribute the illegal defacing of the cross not to iconoclastic fervor but to economic pressures. The subsequent history of Cheapside Cross would suggest otherwise; as David Cressy reports, Puritan opponents of the cross described it “as Baal’s image or as Dagon, the filthy god of the Philistines,” and “denounced [it] as an idol in the midst of the city” (2000, 240). But although Stow’s account includes iconoclastic details, the force of his complaint rests with the illegitimate needs of commercial traffic and a base desire to make the street *only* a street: the desecration “followed” the various wardmote inquests, with a strong implication of causality. The point for Stow is thus less about religious change than urban change, the ongoing transformation of the spaces of London under the pressures of population and commerce. Rather than a monument that orders the representational space of the city, helping to unify its social meanings, the cross has become an obstruction to the desacralized space of a city abstractly devoted to carriages, to passage and mobility, to efficiency.

Yet for Stow the broken statue, the degraded icon, has accrued rather than lost meaning: by being thus maimed by the values of the marketplace, it shows the disjointed, illegible, cart-ridden city that London has become. The denial of sacral power that the defacement and the half-hearted repair demonstrate has paradoxically increased its power, at least for those who will choose to see. In this manner, we might understand Stow’s explicit connection of the cross to royal entries, which appropriate the imagery of Christ’s symbolic marriage to Jerusalem (Manley 1995, 241), as tacitly suggesting a different kind of theatrical scene, in which the suffering body of the cross – and the body on the cross – is displayed to an indifferent or misunderstanding urban world. Through Stow’s description, the space of Cheapside Cross becomes congruent to the Corpus Christi play – in particular, the moment of the *ecce homo*, “behold the man,” when Pilate presents a stripped and beaten Jesus (c. 4 BCE–33) to the gathered population of Jerusalem, who cry out for his crucifixion. In spatial and symbolic terms the *ecce homo* counterpoints the entry of Christ to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, an entry scene which unifies the space of the city as a perfectly legible frame for the messianic advent of its king; in Stow’s

London, by contrast, the *ecce homo* shows the city's order to be merely superficial, its fictiveness demonstrated by its inability to provide an appropriate frame for the brutalized divinity.

Stow's staging of the Cheapside cross thus involves a complex, fugitive theatricality, through which the spatial and symbolic effects of the Corpus Christi play – a kind of theater no longer admissible under the dispensations of London's civic ritual-year – produces multiple deterritorializations and reterritorializations of the space of London. The initial defacing deterritorializes the cross by displacing its function as anchor of urban meaning, rendering its former significances illegible. Stow's recollection of the sacred urban functions of the cross in a sense reterritorializes it, but only in the context of the memorial city; as with Lefebvre's idolizing of Venice, Stow's civic nostalgia serves his critique of modern urban experience. In the context of present-day, desacralized London, the contrast between what the cross was and what it has been made into effects a further deterritorializing of the rationalized space of the commercial street, drawing attention to this remainder, this urban excess and deficit, that can no longer be articulated. It is precisely because the cross no longer signifies that it stands as the appropriate symbol for the London in which it exists. And it is precisely because this kind of theater no longer participates in the spatial textures of Stow's London that it has the power that it does. In effect, the displacement of religious civic drama in the sixteenth century transforms it from a political theater to a nomadic theater, out of time and place – its invocation no longer striates the space of the city but rather smoothes it.

## II

In the final section of this chapter I want to explore these issues in the context of Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (1614), which in some ways has been lurking underneath my discussion all along. The play's urban representations, I will argue, are a hybrid of political and nomadic energies, a combination of smooth and striated spaces that perpetually deterritorialize and reterritorialize each other. *Bartholomew Fair* is the most extensive attempt by any dramatist in the period to model urban space in a comprehensive fashion. With over 30 speaking roles and an incredibly complicated plot, the play seems an attempt to model the full complexity of urban life – albeit in a tightly choreographed form, so that the swirling movements of actors across the stage is less chaos than dance, busy but legible. In this sense, we might indeed understand the project of the play as seeking to articulate London, in both senses of the word: dividing it and linking it, and allowing it to speak. On the other hand, the play also includes the vapors scene, an irrational scene of anti-linguistic chaos – almost a kind of Bacchic frenzy – and the profoundly disturbing figure of Trouble-all, the madman who wanders the precincts of the fair in search of the authority of a judge. Such urban manifestations operate as a kind of countervailing energy in the play, troubling the lucidity of its apparent intentions.

In recent criticism *Bartholomew Fair* is increasingly positioned as the acme of Jonson's theatrical vision and theatrical control. In perhaps the strongest version of this line of argument, James Mardock calls the play "the culmination and fullest expression of Jonson's career-long concern with space and place," and suggests that it "allowed Jonson to articulate his ideal of authorship, and indeed of selfhood . . . It depends, more than any other play in Jonson's canon, on the space of the playhouse, on the power of theater to control urban space, to establish Jonson as the privileged interpreter of London" (2008, 97). Jonson's approach in *Bartholomew Fair* is radically different from his previous two city comedies, *Epicoene* and *The Alchemist*, which take place entirely in private houses; by imagining the movement of a series of urban dwellers through the public spaces of the Fair, *Bartholomew Fair* seems to return to the model of his earlier city comedies and comical satires, where urban space is a matrix of social encounters, the scene for a series of contests through which the witty and improvisatory demonstrate their superiority to the foolish and rigid. From this perspective, the play presents itself as a space of knowledge, in which competent observers like Winwife and Quarlous can read the "five acts" (3.2.2) of the fair fluently, and thus the space of the urban fair is made into a theater – specifically, theater as *theatron*, place of seeing, a frame also available to discerning spectators, who (as the contract that prefaces the play states) are invited to judge the urban scene presented before them (Brown 2012).

Nevertheless, Jonson (1572–1637) seems abundantly aware of the complexity of the bond between two objects so dissimilar as the stage and the fair. The Induction concludes with the comment, "And though the Fair be not kept in the same region that some here, perhaps, would have it, yet think that therein the author hath observed a special decorum, the place being as dirty as Smithfield, and as stinking every whit" (Ind.138–141). At the start of this comment, the question of the fair's "region" looks back to the opening of the Induction, where the Stagekeeper complains that Jonson has not represented the fair in the traditional fashion, which he presents as a problem of knowledge: "When 't comes to the Fair once, you were e'en as good go to Virginia, for anything there is of Smithfield. He has not hit the humours – he does not know 'em" (Ind.9–11). The implicit rebuttal is that the Stagekeeper is nostalgic for a fair that no longer exists, "the sword-and-buckler age of Smithfield" (Ind.104), and perhaps never did; a new mode of representation is necessary to show the fair as it is actually experienced in the present. Yet this phenomenological project is complicated by shifting the question of the fair's "region" from the accuracy of its representations to the experience of its place of enactment. The "special decorum" changes the normal rules of theatrical representation, proposing a novel kind of connection between urban location and theatrical space. It is in this sense a deterritorialization: rather than a mimetic link between the Hope Theater and Smithfield (see Figure 13.2), via a shared semiotic code, Jonson proposes a territorial congruency – a point made stronger by the emphasis on the dirt and stink of both places, which might remind us of the unrepresentable aspects of Eudoxia: "the mules' braying, the lampblack stains, the fish smell."



Figure 13.2 Smithfield, London. Source: Agas, Radulph, 1540?–1621.<sup>3</sup>

On another level, one might say that the special decorum between the theater and Smithfield comes from the smoothness of both spaces. As a number of critics have noted, Jonson's interest in Smithfield, and the specific manner in which he frames the fair, may owe something to his knowledge of Stow's *Survey*, which associates Smithfield with various urban activities: theater, moral disputations, chivalric entertainments, civic rituals, trials by combat, wrestling, executions, tournaments (Chalfant 1978, 5–6). Broadly understood, these are activities of recreation and spectacle, atypical practices separate from the quotidian business of urban life and thus of greater significance. Almost all have vanished from the city, victims of the desacralization of urban space caused by the Henrician dissolution of monastic properties (1536–1541) and the concomitant infilling of open spaces with new buildings (Stow [1598] 1908, 2.29; Zucker 2011). The fair is thus a relic of an abundant festive *mise-en-scène*, counterpoised to the striating energies of urban development that have claimed most of its open, undefined territory. In *Bartholomew Fair*, the Puritan Zeal-of-the-Land Busy declares, “The place is Smithfield, or the field of Smiths” (3.2.35), but Jonson would have known the correct derivation of the name from Stow: “Smithfield for a plain smooth ground, is called smeth and smothie” (1.80).



The smooth space of Smithfield is also reinforced by the intermittent presence of the Fair itself, an occasional marketplace made up of peddlers and performers, and of extremely limited duration. The center of the fair in Acts Two and Three is Ursula's pig booth, a location for bodily satisfactions (eating, drinking, urination, fornication) as well as the hub of the fair's criminal networks; Busy describes the booths of the fair as "the tents of the wicked" (1.6.64), a Biblical allusion that emphasizes the nomadic character of the fair's peddlers. The Court of Piepowders, presided over by Adam Overdo, is an apparatus of capture for these denizens, set up in order to adjudicate commercial matters at a swifter pace than the regular courts could manage, so that justice could be served before the fair ended and its mobile inhabitants dispersed. Overdo's investigation of the crimes, or "enormities," of the fair is a quest for knowledge of this elusive, impenetrable location; as he puts it, "For ... as we are public persons, what do we know? Nay, what can we know? We hear with other men's ears; we see with other men's eyes; a foolish constable or a sleepy watchman is all our information" (2.1.24–27). By abandoning the panoramic viewpoint of the court and walking the paths of the fair himself, Overdo seeks to control the fair, to make sense of it; instead, its anarchic energies possess him, causing him to repeatedly make a comic spectacle of himself. Overdo's failures of knowledge and control have a complement in Trouble-All, a former officer of the court driven mad after Overdo fired him, who now haunts the fair asking for Overdo's warrant for all actions. For Trouble-All alone, Overdo is a kind of god of the fair – the lawgiver, the overarching presence that legitimates all – but it is Trouble-All himself, the wandering lunatic, who truly plays this role, as it is through him that the play's romantic plotlines are resolved. Trouble-All randomly selects Winwife instead of Quarlous to be husband to Grace Wellborn; by impersonating Trouble-All, Quarlous lands a marriage himself with Dame Purecraft and acquires Overdo's actual warrant, which he uses to make Grace his ward instead of Overdo's. Any order and meaning that emerges from the play is predicated on randomness and madness.

A similar point could be made about the two kinds of theater present in *Bartholomew Fair*, the theater of the puppetshow and the theater of the play that surrounds it. At first, these would seem to form an antithesis: the maladroit puppetshow, written by a plagiarizing philistine, performed by a ham-fisted fairworker, beloved by simpletons like Cokes, is an abject foil for Jonson's theater, which – as he emphasizes in the Induction – is something new, a modern approach to both the fair specifically and the stage in general. The puppetshow is just the opposite. "O the motions that I, Lantern Leatherhead, have given light to i' my time, since my Master Pod died!" the puppetmaster declares: "*Jerusalem* was a stately thing, and so was *Nineveh*, and *The City of Norwich*, and *Sodom and Gomorrah*; with the rising o' the prentices, and pulling down the bawdy houses there, upon Shrove Tuesday" (5.1.5–10). With its explicit connection to religious drama, the puppetshow would seem to be a theatrical relic, part of the superseded world of the play, poorly suited to modern times. Yet as with the relation between Overdo and Trouble-All, a clear division between these two theatrical spaces is difficult to sustain – not least because it is through the puppetshow that Jonson both resolves the play and provides an illustration of the rational function of his own theater.

Throughout the play the puppetshow is called a “motion,” a word that carries a range of potentially relevant contemporary meanings, including political unrest, noise, irregular movement, manner of walking, bowel movement, the moving part of an apparatus; within the play the word is also associated with Busy’s facial expressions (1.3.125), Grace’s method of choosing her husband (4.3.38), and Knockem’s nonsensical “vapors” (3.2.39; on “motion,” see Shershow 1995 and Zucker 2011). The puppets themselves are called “motion[s]” (5.5.47), as well as “monuments” (5.3.2) and “monshters” (5.4.26), with the last title carrying a double sense of spectacle and abnormality. More generally, the label “motion” connects the puppetshow to the wandering, extravagant energies of the nomadic city and nomadic theater: “a city in motion” might be the mobile city of walkers imagined by de Certeau, but it could also refer to the play performed by the puppets, which localizes the myth of Hero and Leander to the contemporary space of London. After the ghost of Dionysius of Syracuse (c. 397–43 BCE) rises to stop the fighting of two other puppets, Busy leaps from the audience to denounce Dionysius as Dagon and the whole puppetshow as the work of Satan. Busy tries to start a physical fight with the motions, but the cutpurse Edgworth suggests instead that they have a disputation on the moral value of theater, to be judged by the audience. After various debating gambits fail, Busy attacks the theater for the abomination of crossdressing; Dionysius shoots back that this “old stale argument against the players . . . will not hold against the puppets, for we have neither male nor female amongst us. And that thou may’st see, if thou wilt, like a malicious purblind zeal as thou art!” (5.5.91–94). As the stage direction has it, “The puppet takes up his garment,” demonstrating that he is without sex; Busy, apparently stunned by the sight, says, “I am confuted, the cause hath failed me,” and begs that the show continue: “I am changed, and will become a beholder with you!” (s.d. 5.5.94, 101, 104–105).

How can we read this strange action that concludes the puppetshow, the motion that converts the antitheatricalist and catalyzes the ending of the play? There is, I would argue, a significant homology between the trope of *ecce homo* and the puppet’s gesture of revelation. Of course, this is not to argue that Jonson makes Dionysius into a Christ figure – although I would not be the first to note the verbal similarity between Dionysius and Dionysus, the god of theater and intoxication, or to suggest that Jonson may be making a sly joke through this conjunction (Barish 1959, 15). Rather, the ambiguous status of the puppet – like Cheapside Cross, figured as both god and idol – allows the implications of the gesture to play out through a double theatricality, political and nomadic. In a political reading of the scene, we would note that the urban spaces of *Bartholomew Fair* in no way resemble the transformative energies of the passion play: this is a profoundly disenchanted world, a world inherently separate from the power of religious fervor. Instead, it is a political theater of representation, interested less in the power of icons than the social and ethical issues that stand behind them. In this modern world, theater defends itself against those suspicious of its transcendent power by avoiding claims to sacral status in favor of judgment via secular representation: as the reformed Justice Overdo says, “*ad aedificandum, non ad diruendum,*” [for building up, not for tearing down] (5.6.108). However, if the puppet’s gesture ultimately allows the play to establish

itself as a space of edification (a location for making sense of the city and the theater) by repudiating the antitheatricalist position, the actual repudiation seems to work rather as the antitheatricalists feared it might: Busy is less convinced by the arguments of Dionysius than transformed by the extravagant spectacle of the motion's mystery. The puppet's declaration, as it makes it gesture, "that thou may'st see, if thou wilt, like a malicious purblind zeal as thou art!" (5.5.93–94) had just that rhetoric of blindness and insight which characterizes Biblical revelation, and it positions Busy as a kind of Paul, struck down on the road to Damascus, the scales falling from his eyes. If the puppet's gesture of revelation is dominantly a demonstration of the impotence of the theater, it can also be read as we must read the *ecce homo*, seeing the divinity of the maimed god.

Dionysius' lifting of his garment is thus less a continuation of the moral debate than a deterritorializing of it, an unexpected move that transcends the rules of the game; if the play subsequently reterritorializes the gesture by incorporating it into a new theatrical dispensation, the smooth space that it creates cannot be entirely striated. The revelation of the nothingness under the puppet's clothing is both representative of the rationalist theater and yet still tacitly connected to the irruptive, nomadic theatricality that we find in the Passion play and in Stow's degraded monument, gesturing towards what is absent (Levine 1994, 100–101). And if the puppet represents what is unrepresentable about the theater, its smooth body also connotes the smooth spaces of London, operating as an anti-map of the city, an inversion of the fictive knowledges of Eudoxia's carpet. This is the final urban discovery of the play, the endpoint of a centripetal movement from London to Fair to puppetshow to puppet – a monstrous monument, a monumental monstrosity. City in motion, city as motion: in the end, Jonson's urban epistemology, like his urban dramaturgy, is subtended by the action of this unreadable artifact.

### What to Read Next

Gordon (2013); Harris (2008); Howard (2007); Stanev (2014); Zucker (2011).

### Notes

- 1 For a helpfully useable map of Elizabethan London see the online version of the "Agas" map (c. 1570) at [mapoflondon.uvic.ca](http://mapoflondon.uvic.ca)
- 2 [http://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/detail/FOLGERCM1~6~6~569555~139311:Civitas-Londinum?sort=call\\_number%2Cauthor%2Ccd\\_title%2Cimprint&qvq=q:agas;sort:call\\_number%2Cauthor%2Ccd\\_title%2Cimprint;lc:FOLGERCM1~6~6&mi=0&trs=3](http://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/detail/FOLGERCM1~6~6~569555~139311:Civitas-Londinum?sort=call_number%2Cauthor%2Ccd_title%2Cimprint&qvq=q:agas;sort:call_number%2Cauthor%2Ccd_title%2Cimprint;lc:FOLGERCM1~6~6&mi=0&trs=3). Used under BY-SA 4.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>
- 3 [http://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/detail/FOLGERCM1~6~6~569555~139311:Civitas-Londinum?sort=call\\_number%2Cauthor%2Ccd\\_title%2Cimprint&qvq=q:agas;sort:call\\_number%2Cauthor%2Ccd\\_title%2Cimprint;lc:FOLGERCM1~6~6&mi=0&trs=3](http://luna.folger.edu/luna/servlet/detail/FOLGERCM1~6~6~569555~139311:Civitas-Londinum?sort=call_number%2Cauthor%2Ccd_title%2Cimprint&qvq=q:agas;sort:call_number%2Cauthor%2Ccd_title%2Cimprint;lc:FOLGERCM1~6~6&mi=0&trs=3). Used under BY-SA 4.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

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# The Church

Anne M. Myers

More than 20 years after Eamon Duffy published *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c.1400–c.1580* in 1992, this study continues to shape the way many scholars think about English church architecture in the post-Reformation period. Attesting to the widespread and persistent familiarity of Duffy's work, in 2007 Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke produced *The Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Religious Worship 1547–c.1700*, a book whose title indicates that readers should understand it as a response or sequel to Duffy's. I begin by citing these works because I think certain words in the titles themselves – “stripping” and “restored”; “traditional” and “changing” – provide a concise index of the way many scholars have tended to interpret the architectural settings of worship in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These words highlight the tension, instability, fractiousness, and even violence of England's political and religious history during this period. Moreover, the focus of both titles on “altars” exemplifies the way church architecture itself has been enlisted as evidence for these changes and fluctuations. The “altars” here refer at once metonymically to doctrinal and liturgical shifts and debates, even as they evoke the literal iconoclasm and architectural modification through which these changes were manifested on the physical fabrics of churches themselves, first during the early years of the Reformation and later during the English Civil Wars.

Especially given the increased critical appreciation, over the past two decades, of connections between sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English literature and its Reformation contexts, literary scholars have hastened to use historical studies, such as those by Duffy, Fincham and Tyacke, as lenses through which to view early modern literature, including drama, lyric poetry, and devotional verse. This approach has been fruitful in illuminating correspondences among literature and

post-Reformation culture, as well as among different genres of religious literature, such as poetry, sermons, polemical tracts, and devotional guides. These interdisciplinary efforts have been facilitated, first by the searchability of the online English Short Title Catalogue, and later, by the availability of *Early English Books Online*. Today, even the undergraduate researcher might easily draw on forms of religious writing – such as sermons and pamphlets – not generally available in a textbook anthology or Penguin paperback.

The use of Reformation doctrinal controversies – in both their printed and architectural forms – as a prominent contextual framework for early modern English literature, however, is not without its side effects and omissions. The result of this approach is often an attempt to place a text – or, more speculatively, its author – on a spectrum that runs from puritanism to high church Laudianism, or, architecturally speaking, from iconoclasm to iconophilia. This two-dimensional plotting limits the range of meanings we might see in a literary work as much as it expands our sense of that work's potential cultural resonances. Religious literature becomes less an account of lived individual or communal experience than a calculated expression of allegiance to a limited number of identifiable positions. Moreover, as I began to suggest by pointing to the titles *The Stripping of the Altars* and *The Altars Restored*, the approach imposes the assumption of constant tension and struggle, creating the idea that worship and devotion during the period are implicitly or explicitly responsive to some opposing position that can be deciphered if we only apply the right contexts.

To take only a few examples, poems such as George Herbert's "The Church-floore," "The Windows" and "The Altar" (1633) (Herbert [1633] 2007) have been read both as expressing Calvinist tendencies, and as a balancing act carried out on the tightrope of a judicious *via media* (Strier, 1983; Hodgkins, 1993; Doerkson and Hodgkins, 2004). For instance, we might look to Achsah Guibbory's richly-informed reading of "The Altar": "Herbert shares [the] puritan fear of framing or fashioning an idol. Yet his suspicion of art and invention in worship is at odds with his hopes for the poem's legitimacy and his claims for its devotional function" (1998, 48). Looking beyond poems that directly refer to church architecture or even religious ceremony, we see that the poems of Robert Herrick, from 1629 to 1647 the vicar of Dean Prior in Devon, which celebrate conviviality (e.g., "His Farewell to Sack") or local customs and festivals (e.g., "Corinna's Going A-Maying"), have frequently been understood as anti-puritan tracts infused with nostalgic longing and a distinctly Laudian political agenda (Herrick 1963; Marcus 1989; Summers 1990–1991).

By focusing attention on contested features of worship, church governance, and church architecture, it is possible to develop an overly simplified idea of what a church might signify to early modern readers, viewers, or communities, perhaps to vaguely suspect that by the seventeenth century anyone who wandered into a church would be likely to encounter a puritan and a bishop wrestling over an altar railing. There are aspects of the church to which the lens of Reformation controversy does not give access. As I have argued elsewhere, for instance, Herbert's longest poem about church architecture, "The Church-porch" has received only cursory critical

attention in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, partly because porches do not frequently appear in polemical literature, despite their status as important sites of community interaction and partly because the poem's smug didacticism does not lend itself to insertion in polemical schema (Myers 2013, 105–131). Likewise, studies of Herbert's lyric poetry have tended to ignore *The Country Parson* (1652) as a context for the poetry, and indeed it is difficult to reconcile the quotidian and practical nature of Herbert's manual for pastoral care with the idea of a man struggling in a spider's web of conflicting religious allegiances. Similarly, to read Herrick's works as primarily anti-puritan nostalgic idealizations is to mute the ways in which they depict an experience of the parish as a site of community, custom, local history, and memory.

In recent studies both literary and historical, the main subject of this chapter – an essay by Sir Thomas Browne (1605–1682) entitled *Repertorium* ([1712] 1931) – makes no appearance. This omission is not surprising, because although Browne's tract mentions the political and religious conflicts of the Reformation and English Civil War, and although it is a work about church architecture – being subtitled *Some Account of the Tombs and Monuments in the Cathedrall Church of Norwich, 1680* – conflict and polemic are not Browne's main interest. Perhaps surprisingly to readers of Duffy, Fincham, and Tyacke, Browne never mentions the altar, at least as a site of contention. He does mention once that the tomb of Bishop William Herbert was lowered because it became a “hindrance unto the people” when the pulpit and “High Altar” were rearranged “in the late confusion,” but attaches no particular doctrinal meaning to this fact (153). At least until recent sympathetic interventions by Reid Barbour (2013) and Jonathan F.S. Post (2008), *Repertorium* has been dismissed, even by Browne enthusiasts, as flat, antiquarian and limited in scope and imagination, particularly when compared to that other, far more famous essay about things people are buried in, *Urne-Buriall* (Preston 2005, 133; Killeen 2008, 181). I argue that Browne's *Repertorium*, narrow and local as its focus may be, serves not to restrict, but to broaden our vision of the early modern church as a physical, historical, and cultural space. Through his antiquarian approach, Browne elicits information that will appeal to the many contemporary scholars – literary and historical – who investigate the engagement of printed texts with their material surroundings and socially significant settings. This type of research has been applied to the church specifically, (Dyck 2004; Mears and Ryrie 2013), but scholars have also examined the connections among text, social practice, and other specific architectural spaces as well (Orlin 2000).

*Repertorium*, then, is worth reading precisely because of its antiquarian outlook; in this, it models a way of seeing and writing that informed much early modern writing about architecture of all kinds. With specific regard to the church, Browne prompts the recognition that early modern writers sometimes perceived church architecture as neither a polemical statement or an elegy for the past. Instead, churches were living buildings, ever-accruing collections of personal and communal stories, and these included a much broader cast of characters than those of the hierarchically-minded bishop and the angry puritan. The seventeenth-century



church was, indeed, a site of loss, but it also provided opportunities for ongoing conversation, memory, and recovery. Nostalgia and retrospection are not always the same things; and as early modern ecclesiologists and antiquarians looked back, they also looked forward by anticipating the future seekers of antiquity to whom their labors, records and memories would be handed down.

Browne's *Repertorium* is a short piece, running to only 22 pages in the modern collection of his *Miscellaneous Writings*. The tract was not published until well after Browne's death in 1682, yet, as Barbour points out, Browne clearly took care with it. Despite the date of 1680 given in the title, Browne apparently began the survey in the 1660s. In a letter to John Aubrey dated August 24, 1672, Browne noted Norwich cathedral's missing brass inscriptions, writing, "I tooke the best account I could of them at the Kings returne from an understanding singing-man of 91 yeares old" (Browne 1964, 395). He then left the work "in two distinctive manuscript versions dated 1679 and 1680 ... carefully revised" (Barbour 2013, 448).

One reason *Repertorium* has perhaps seemed to scholars more generic than Browne's other works is that it has many antecedents and analogs. Alongside John Weever's monumental collection of tomb inscriptions, published as *The Ancient Funerall Monuments* in 1631, and William Dugdale's *History of Saint Paul's Cathedral* (1658), sumptuously illustrated by Wenceslaus Hollar, numerous sets of less systematic "church notes" survive from the early modern period, and long afterward (Dodsworth 1904; Holles 1911). These are of a different genre from official visitation records meant to ensure decorum, uniformity, or compliance (Friar 2003, 476–477). Instead, these itinerant antiquarians, heralds, and local historians – often significantly overlapping categories (Broadway 2006) – did observe the effects of Reformation or civil war iconoclasm, but they also discovered a range of narratives about the church's history, survival and community.

The production of *Repertorium* was admittedly spurred by civil war iconoclasm. The first sentence reads,

In the time of the late civill warres, there were about a hundred brasse Incriptions torne and taken away from grave stones and tombs, in the cathedrall church of Norwich, as I was informed by John Wright a clark above 80 yeares old, and also by Mr John Sandlin one of the Quire, who lived 89 yeares. (147)

Throughout *Repertorium*, Browne refers to recent modifications and erasures. Only a page or two later, for instance, we are treated to a description of the dismantled monument of Bishop Edmund Scamler:

In the late times, the grate was taken away, the statua broken, and the free stone pulled downe, as far as the inward brick-work, which being unsightly was afterwards taken away, and the space between the pillars left voyd, as it now remaineth. (148)

And indeed his description of the cathedral is sporadically punctuated with such haunting "voyds," the dead themselves becoming victims of iconoclasm and greed.

Yet to overemphasize these examples of depredation and destruction is to risk distorting Browne's tone, perhaps leading us to read the piece as a lament, a political polemic, an act of nostalgia, or a desperate response to feared oblivion. In fact, Browne's experience of the cathedral – at least the one he shares with his reader – is far from being only a series of disturbing “voyds,” or poker-faced whitewashed walls. Nor is it a battlefield littered with aesthetic casualties or “the maimed statua's of Bishops” (162). As Barbour has noted, while “Browne does not flinch from the recognition that the erasure of the past in some measure will be irreversible, no matter what his labors,” his “re-creation and preservation of Norwich society, culture, and history are scarcely if ever nostalgic” (2013, 450, 451). Post also captures something of the treatise's tone and flavor – its leisurely pleasures – when he characterizes Browne as “the musing traveler visualizing and interpreting the customary life of the particular ... Whether in rural Norfolk or among cathedral tombs, miscellaneous Browne is essentially a browser” (2008, 263).

To a certain extent, I think, this notion of Browne as a “browser” is apt. *Repertorium* is full of interesting digressions and tantalizing details, such as the brief biography occasioned by the tomb of Bishop Richard Montague, who “came unto Norwich with the evell effects of a quartan ague ... Yet he studyed and writt very much. Hee left an excellent library of bookes and heapes of papers fayrly writt with his owne hand, concerning the ecclesiasticall history” (155).

Terser, yet equally colorful, is his mention of “Bishop Antonie de Beck, a person of an unquiet spirit, very much hated, and poysond by his servants” (157). In addition, Browne observes detail acutely, noting in the roof of the cathedral:

representations from scripture story, as the storie of Pharoah, of Sampson toward the east end, figures of the last supper and of our Saviour on the crosse toward the west end, beside others of foliage, and the like ornamentall figures. (163)

Moreover, he frequently reminds us of the multiple ways that biographical and architectural histories intertwine. To give only one of many examples, for instance, on the south side of the choir at the tomb of Bishop James Goldwell, “Deane of Salisbury, and Secretary unto King Edward the fourth, who sate in this see 25 years” Browne points out that tombs and monuments are not the only remains of the dead: “Hee is sayd to have much repayred the east end of this church, lived in a great esteeme and dyed 1536.” In an especially nice deduction, Browne shows that absence and deterioration might tell their own kind of story:

There was a chappell to the south of the Goal or prison ... This seemes to have been a much frequented chappell of the Priorie, by the wearing of the steppings unto it which are on the cloyster side. (166)

As much as Browne's description fills the space of Norwich cathedral with the presence of the dead, it construes that building itself as the product of vitality, the accumulated expression of individual characters and multiple lives.

In addition, Post's sensitivity to Browne's interest in the "customary life of the particular," as well as his earlier description of *Repertorium* as "this most Norwickean of Browne's writings" (262) points to another important aspect of early modern ecclesiology: the centrality of the church in writing local history. To map the cathedral was to create an eclectic map of Norwich itself, which is at once personal, political, social, geographical, and architectural. To get a sense of how these various categories are layered in *Repertorium*, we can begin with a single example, the first tomb we encounter in the treatise:

First in the body of the church, between the pillars of the south Isle, stands a Tomb, covered with a kind of Touchstone, which is the monument of Miles Spencer Doctor of Lawe, and chancellour of Norwich, who lived unto ninetie yeares. The topstone was entire, but now broken, splitt and depressed by blowes: more special notice being taken of this stone, because men used to trie their mony upon it, and because the chapter demanded their Rents at this tomb. Hee was Lord of the mannor of Bowthorp and Colney, which came unto the Yaxleys from him, and was also owner of chappell in the field Howse. I have his picture, drawne when he was ninetie yeares old, as the inscription doth declare, which was sent unto mee from Colney. (147)

The very first detail Browne gives us about the tomb itself – about the "broken, splitt" topstone – reminds us that for the seventeenth-century viewer, particularly a local resident such as Browne, who lived in the community from 1637 until his death in 1682, any experience of the cathedral's liturgical functions would have been mixed with social and political signifiers and associations, making the cathedral – or any ancient church – a particularly rich and inspiring archive for an account, not only of the nation's changing doctrinal allegiances, but of local history and culture. The touchstone of Spencer's tomb has been used, literally, as a touchstone to test the authenticity and integrity of coins, and apparently as a site for practical monetary transaction. Browne's syntax ("and because the chapter demanded their Rents") makes it difficult to determine whether the brokenness of the touchstone is due entirely to the trying of money or whether iconoclasts have also taken "special notice" of the tomb due to its involvement in a ritual that would, in any case, have enacted a power relation between the cathedral authorities and the community (Tanner 1996). In Norwich, the authority and rights of the cathedral had historically been contested, resulting, at times, in eruptions of violence, so it seems possible that the collection of rent may have been understood as the public manifestation of a power structure that was already controversial. The trying of money may also have been a personal memory for Browne: a glossy booklet available for purchase in the present-day cathedral gift shop claims, based on an entry in the Chapter's surviving ledger books, that Browne himself paid his rents at this tomb, although he does not say so in *Repertorium* (Shaw 2005, 10).

Although Browne does not explicitly note his participation in the rent-paying tradition, he does insert himself into the account of this tomb in other ways. There is a certain eclecticism and personal slant in the information that Browne gives about Spencer, which, in addition to Spencer's profession and political office, includes a

fact that Browne the physician might have found particularly interesting: that Spencer “lived unto ninetie yeares.” Browne’s interest in authenticating Spencer’s exceptional longevity is revisited in the final detail of the paragraph, which brings something intimate and idiosyncratic to the story: “I have his picture, drawne when hee was ninetie yeares old, as the inscription doth declare, which was sent unto mee from Colney.” Why exactly Browne should have Spencer’s picture, aside from the apparent interest of Spencer’s unusual age, remains unclear. Browne does not give the dates of Spencer’s birth and death, but in his multi-volume *History of Norfolk*, Francis Blomefield includes a catalog of Norwich ecclesiastical officials recording that Spencer was chancellor of Norwich in 1537, so it is unlikely that Browne, who was born in 1605, had any personal connection to him (Blomefield 1805).

By integrating himself into the account of Spencer’s picture and tomb, however, Browne establishes a different connection: his own association with the cathedral and with the Norwich community, along with his participation in local networks of scholarly or antiquarian exchange. This local knowledge-bartering is visible elsewhere in *Repertorium*, as when Browne writes:

In an old manuscript of a sacrist of the church, communicated unto mee by my worthy friend Mr John Burton, the learned and very deserving master of the Free-schoole, I find, that the priests had a provisionall allowance from the Rectorie of Westhall in Suffolk. (166)

Of course to readers of Browne’s letters, it will come as no surprise that Browne was part of an active scholarly community comprised of such renowned members as Dugdale, Elias Ashmole and John Aubrey (Browne 1964). But here we glimpse a smaller and more local circle, centered on knowledge of the cathedral and the people associated with it. The cathedral is not merely a repository of history; it is part of Browne’s personal and social experience, and he often reinforces the reader’s awareness of this fact by revealing his own ties to individuals he mentions. For instance, he speaks of “My Honord freind Bishop Joseph Hall” (who also, Browne notes, lived to “above fourscore yeares of age) (Browne [1712] 1931, 159).

Browne’s possession of the picture, moreover, points toward two features of antiquarian ecclesiology I would like to explore. First, as a kind of evidence related to Spencer’s tomb, the picture indicates the heterogeneity of antiquarian sources of knowledge. In *Repertorium*, these consist of objects (such as the picture and the tomb), of manuscript and printed sources, and of personal memory. Second, in hinting that Browne’s ecclesiological investigations drew on collective knowledge and amicable exchange, the picture attunes us to the importance of collaboration and conversation in *Repertorium*. To characterize Browne as a “musing traveler,” therefore, places emphasis on the visual and spatial experience of the cathedral but neglects the diversity of Browne’s resources. Put differently, Browne has many different ways of knowing about the building, not all of which involve empirical observation. Seventeenth-century antiquarianism has often been described as an evolution in method, taking history away from the murky waters of “medieval obscurities” – to

use T.D. Kendrick's phrase – such as myth and philology, and guiding it onto the solid empirical ground of a proto-archaeological approaches (1958, 155). Graham Parry, for instance, sees a parallel between the field work of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century antiquarians such as William Camden, and Francis Bacon's *Advancement of Learning*, in which, he says, "Bacon ... rightly drew a distinction between 'Words' and 'Things' as profitable and unprofitable methods of inquiry." An "attention to things," Parry argues, was "what the study of antiquity needed" (1995, 30). With increased reliance on corroborating evidence and first hand observation, Kendrick writes, "a new age ha[d] begun" (1958, 155).

I have argued elsewhere that this "attention to things" does not accurately encompass the interdisciplinarity of antiquarian practice (Myers 2013, 27–37) and Browne's *Repertorium* illustrates this point. As was seen above, Browne's knowledge of the "hundred brasse Incriptions" torn from the grave-stones and tombs during "the late civill warres" was owed not to his own examinations but to information from the aged clerk, John Wright, "above 80 yeares old," and one of the Quire, Mr John Sandlin, "who lived 89 yeares and, [as I remember, told mee that hee was a chorister in the reigne of Queen Elizabeth]" (147). Evidently, late seventeenth-century Norwich was a country for old men, but here, the ages of Wright and Sandlin provide more than a curious local demographic. This first paragraph registers a tension between political markers of historical periods ("the time of the late civill warres," "the reigne of Queen Elizabeth") and human experience and memory, which are rarely divided along the same lines. Thus, Browne creates an account of the cathedral and community that is not strictly limited by the presence or absence of physical evidence, and as a result, the impression of a church and a human community that both suffer change and outlive it. In this "account of the tombs and monuments," we are often subtly reminded that Browne is dealing not with actual tombs and monuments, but with stories about them. Describing the "voyd space" of a wall monument "pulled downe in the late times," for instance, Browne writes,

Upon this stone were the figures of two persons in a praying posture, upon their knees. I was told by Mr Sandlin that it was sayd to bee a monument for the Bigots, who built or beutified the Arch by it, which leadeth into the church. (153)

In this example, Browne's account of Sandlin indicates the way collective memory – more profound than a single lifespan – mixes with that of the individual, even if it is more difficult to verify through identification with a single source. Here, Sandlin locates the origin of his knowledge vaguely and outside his own experience; it is not that he knows the monument in question was for the Bigots, but it "was sayd" (in the passive voice) to be so.

Returning to the first sentence of *Repertorium*, Browne's phrase "as I remember," also cues the reader that the personal memory of the narrator will play a role in this textual reconstruction of the cathedral. At the same time, Keynes's brackets in the modern edition, which indicate that the memory of Sandlin's early days as a chorister is a revision included only in the second of the two Norwich manuscripts of

*Repertorium*, point to the subjective and unstable construction of such narratives. We experience this effect in the body of the treatise at the burial site of Bishop Walter Hart. Browne gives some brief biography and observes Hart's arms on a partition wall, as well as the depiction of "a Hart in water, as a Rebus unto his name, water Hart" (149). This act of empirical observation and interpretation, however, is supplemented with Browne's recollection of what is no longer there. "Upon the doore under the Roodloft I remember a plate of brasse with some verses on it whereof the first was this: *Hic jacet absconsus sub marmore praesul honestus*" ["Here lies, hidden beneath marble, an honest leader."] (150). From here, Browne abruptly moves on to the next monument, and the lonely first line of the quotation dangles unfinished, illustrating memory's simultaneous capacity for precision and fragmentation.

As is common in antiquarian historiography and ecclesiology, Browne gives equal weight to different types of sources, whether written or oral, verbal or visual. A close look at *Repertorium* will reveal that Browne's – and therefore the reader's – experience of the cathedral is mediated not only through conversation and community lore, but through printed and manuscript sources. Browne fluidly integrates textual sources with non-verbal forms of architectural evidence, so the documents may supplement inscriptions that only partly survive or may stand in for those that have been entirely lost. As Browne describes the monument of Bishop William Herbert, he refers to the writings of the twelfth-century monk William of Malmesbury as a way of explaining physical architectural remains:

Malmesburie sayth, that hee was *vir pecuniosus*; which his great works declare, for hee built the priorie for sixtie moncks, and the cathedrall church confirmed by charters of William Rufus, King Henry the first and Pope Paschal. Built also the Bishops palace, the church of St Leonard, whose ruines still remaine upon the browe of Mushold hill. (153)

Browne also draws freely on the works of previous early modern antiquarians, citing, for instance, Camden, who "sayth, that a great part of the nobility and Gentry of those parts were buried at Pentney Abby" (161), and referring to John Stow's account, in the *Survey of London* (1598), of the charnel house at St. Paul's Cathedral (166–167). John Foxe, as well, makes multiple appearances in *Repertorium*. Speaking of "Bishop Richard Nicks, or the blind Bishop: because he was blind many yeares before hee dyed," Browne says,

Though hee sate long in the see yet is not there much delivered of him. Fox in his Martyrologie hath sayd something of him, in the story of Thomas Bilney, who was burnt in the Lollards pitt without Bishops gate, in his time. (148)

Local manuscript sources also make an appearance in Browne's account; as Barbour says "it is ... clear that he has spent ample time trolling in the chapter archives" (2013, 450). At one point, Browne refers to "a good manuscript of the ancient Gentry of Norfolk and Suffolk" (155) and later notes having consulted "a manuscript

concerning some ancient families of Norfolk” on the question of “Where to find Heydons chappell,” which, in Browne’s day, was “obscure if not altogether unknowne” (155, 165).

Browne’s association between manuscripts and former monasteries, or between texts and topographies more generally, foregrounds strands of antiquarian historiography that link the visual and the verbal, looking and reading. Browne’s joint valuation of architectural and textual evidence, and of the church as a repository of history, stretches back at least as far back as the *Itinerary* of John Leland (c. 1503–1552), who, during the 1530s and 1540s, undertook a series of journeys around England with a twofold objective. First, Leland sought to rescue the historical manuscript treasures of the monasteries that were, at that time, being ransacked and dissolved. Second, Leland was driven by the visionary project of mapping the nation and took copious notes. In early modern antiquarian thought, England’s “monuments” were inscribed in both ink and stone: Leland and Bale frequently use the word “monument” to mean an ancient manuscript (Leland and Bale 1549) (see *OED* “monument” 3a and b), while Weever’s *Ancient Funerall Monuments* was actually about monumental structures.

For Weever (1575/6–1632), as well, however, architectural and written evidence were interdependent sources. He claims in his Dedicatory Epistle that he had been ready to give up his project after fruitless searching of many churches, until, he writes,

I came casually into the acquaintance of my deare and deceased friend, *Augustine Vincent*, Esquire, Windsor Herald, & keeper of the Records in the Tower, who perswaded me to goe forward as I had begun, and withall gave me many Church-Collections, with divers memorable Notes, and Copies of Records, gathered by himselfe and others; and by his meanes I had free access to the Heralds Office. (Weever 1631, Dedicatory Epistle, 2)

Weever’s gratitude to the Windsor herald Augustine Vincent, along with his use of that office’s resources, indicate the importance of heraldry for early modern church observers. Adorning the tombs, walls and windows of churches and cathedrals, heraldry is yet another form of architectural text, illegible as it is to many viewers now. Browne’s frequent and detailed notation of heraldic devices may be easy for modern readers to skip over in what the poet Philip Larkin (1988) called our “unarmorial age” (“An Arundel Tomb,” l.33), but it was far from meaningless to Browne and his contemporaries. Beginning in the sixteenth century, churches were subject to heraldic visitations intended to ensure that coats of arms were not being appropriated or misapplied, and the practice continued until 1689 (Friar 2003, 477–478). In Herbert’s “The Church-porch,” the didactic verser admonishes the man who would gamble away money that ought to be given to his wife, children, servants, and church, with the consequence that “Only a herald, who that way doth passe,/Findes his crackt name at length in the church-glasse” (ll.193–198). For Herbert this physically and morally unrepaired “name” tells a story of decline, and the image resonates

with Browne's observation of "a Lyon Rampant Argent in feild sable which coat is now quarterd in the armes of the Howards" which is "yet perceavable" – the temporality of the phrase implies fading or tenuousness – at "a stone cisterne in the cloyster," or of "a Lyon Rampant Gules in a feild or, not well knowne to what family it belongeth" (164).

Browne's attention to the heraldry in Norwich Cathedral is extensive. For instance, he writes that the northern wall of the cloister was once decorated by the arms of several noble families, especially those who had attended Queen Elizabeth's visit to Norwich in 1578 "where shee remained a weeke":

They [the coats of arms] made a very handsome showe ... The figures of these coates in their distinguishable and discernible colours are not beyond my remembrance, butt in the late times when the lead was faultie & the stone work decayed, the rayne falling upon the wall washed them away, butt a draught of them all I have by me. (Browne [1712] 1931, 164)

It is tempting to see Browne's attention to heraldry as a backward-looking interest, but his reassuring possession of the "draught" that might presumably outlive his own "remembrance" indicates that he himself did not see it as a dead or dying language, but as a tradition that, properly documented, would continue to tell its stories.

This glance forward to future heralds, antiquarians, and church observers indicates a view of history and historical research as continually unfolding and accruing. Today, to take an interest in architecture as a historic artifact is often assumed to include an investment in the prevention, or at least the control, of a building's material change. It is incorrect to assume that early modern antiquarians always shared this desire. Instead these scholars saw a church as a living building, not as the artifact of an earlier age. The nostalgic and elegiac strains of antiquarian historiography have been well noted, but, I have come to think, exaggerated (Archer 1995; Collinson 2001; Schwyzer 2004, 49–75). There is no doubt that with the Reformation and English Civil Wars a great deal of information, and a great many beautiful things, were lost. While their disappearance can be challenging, frustrating, or simply sad to a researcher of the past (whether working in the seventeenth century or now), works by writers such as Leland, Weever, and Browne remind us that change did not only result in loss. It also produced a kind of survival in which both human memory – individual and communal – and the antiquarians' own writing played a part. The rupture of religious traditions resulted in other sorts of information being handed down; it stimulated memory and prompted the production of records that would become parts of a history with new chapters. Altars were indeed "stripped" and "restored," but in *Repertorium* they are largely skipped and ignored. Instead we see, in the church and its community, an ongoing life. A story of change is still a story, and perhaps, after all, the one most urgently told.

I began by suggesting that Browne's ecclesiology and his antiquarianism might shift the contexts in which we have tended to read early modern literature. First, I think his treatment of Norwich Cathedral might attune us to different strains of



religious experience present in these texts. To return to the examples I gave earlier, Browne's approach might lead us to see poems such as Herbert's "The Windows" or "The Church-floore" as intermingling the strands of personal and communal experience or the social and devotional aspects of priesthood and belief, rather than as dedicated struggles between internal and external forms of worship or puritan interiority and Laudian public prayer. In Herrick's case, we need not allow his overt royalism to deaden our appreciation of his interests in storytelling, in local history, and of the relationship of a personal experience to a communally constructed past.

Second, I think that Browne's antiquarianism may lead us to a different concept of how setting works in early modern literature more generally. As Browne's title, *Repertorium*, suggests, Norwich Cathedral was, to him, as much a repository as it was an architectural space. In the treatise, the Cathedral is translated from a repository for bodies (the meaning we might expect from a treatise about tombs), to a repository for stories: architectural, biographical, personal, and communal. We begin to see how early modern literary settings gain their social and cultural significance from history and narrative, as much as from spatially or visually described qualities. Settings can immerse their readers in diachronic and historical experience, instead of providing a static visual or spatial backdrop against which other things happen. In *Repertorium*, as in many other texts of the time, setting is already historical, already itself in the process of happening, even from an early modern point of view.

### What to Read Next

Dyas (2010; 2014); Friar (2003); Lehmberg (1988; 1996); Pounds (2000).

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# The Republic of Letters and the Commonwealth of Learning

*Joanna Picciotto*

To study almost any aspect of early modern British culture is to confront the consequences of a communications revolution, from the wide dissemination of cheap print to the innovation of periodical publication that resulted in the newsbook (Watt 1991; Raymond 1996, 2003). As public discussion broadened, even long-standing communicative practices assumed novel forms. Petitions of state authorities, long steeped in traditions of social deference, became highly aggressive campaigns that made use of the press and the choreography of crowds to shape popular opinion (Zaret 2000). These new forms of communicative action enabled a social redistribution of intellectual authority on a massive scale, sustaining the unprecedented political experiments of the mid-seventeenth century, and outlasting them.

Scholars of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Britain have come to rely on Jürgen Habermas's metaphorical notion of the "public sphere" as "convenient shorthand" for these developments (Claydon 2000, 209). This for the most part is the extent of their debt. There is little for scholars of the period to use in Habermas's historical argument, which places the emergence of the public sphere too late, on the cusp of the eighteenth century. And, even if we grant that a purely inductive historiography is a mirage, there are obvious methodological objections to an over-rigorous use of any modern analytical framework to understand early modern public life (Galison 2004). Put summarily, no one in the period used the metaphor of the public sphere. They figured public life through other imagined and textually mediated spaces such as paradise, or simply by appeals to "the public good" (Slack 1999, 79; Habermas [1962] 1999; Picciotto 2010). Thinking in Habermasian terms would seem, then, anachronistic, and likely to incur the substantial risks of teleological approaches. But an attentive reading of metaphors for the public elaborated during the development of print culture substantiates the relevance of Habermas's

*normative* argument to the early modern context. Such analysis reveals the endogenous forces for change residing in the combustible materials of tradition itself (Shils 1981; Stock 1996).

John Milton's *Areopagitica* (1644), probably the most famous early modern text about print culture, demonstrates just such a revolutionary use of tradition. In this text new notions of the corporate body can be seen emerging from the old. My discussion moves between Milton's text and the cultural developments it registers and tries to push further. Following Milton's lead, we will be looking both forward and back, ahead to Habermas's own idealization of the public and back to medieval Christianity's fundamental metaphor for collective life: the *corpus mysticum*. The contemporary terms "republic of letters" (*res [publica] literaria*) and the "commonwealth of learning" will provide our initial means of entry.

### The Commonwealth of Learning

The republic of letters and the commonwealth of learning sound like synonyms, but while the humanist term *res literaria* evoked the classical republican tradition, a commonwealth could refer simply to a polity. The commonwealth of learning thus seems more fully assimilable to a "traditional" concept of the social totality. This does not mean that it was necessarily tamer in its political associations. Emerging out of "common weal" in the fifteenth century, "commonwealth" mapped onto society the concept of the common good, in keeping with basic ideals of Christian community (Knights 2011, 663; Phillips 2010). It was precisely the traditional character of this term that made it so useful for popular protest. Appeals to the common good, and the commons itself, in the uprisings of 1381, 1450, 1536–1537, and 1549 are as "traditional" as any other usage. It is no accident that Peter Lake and Steven Pincus's diachronic typology of "early modern public spheres" identifies the formative period of 1530–1630 with the emergence of the ideal of the "Commonwealthman" (Lake and Pincus 2006, 275). What Andy Wood has described as the commonswealthman's transformation of "keywords of governance" into "weapons to be used against the gentry and nobility" opportunized the volatility that characterizes all traditional metaphors of collectivity, starting with the body of Christ itself (Wood 2007, 146).

Referring at once to the consecrated elements of the host and to the body of the faithful – the body of Christ in its members – the Pauline term *corpus Christi* played a systematically ambiguous role in late medieval and early modern culture, identified at once with priestly power and popular challenges to it (Justice 1994). As Ernst Kantorowicz (1895–1963) showed long ago, Christological or sacramental kingship foundered on just this ambiguity. By the middle of the seventeenth century, the doctrine of the king's two bodies (his natural body and the mystical body of his representative office) had yielded an impeccably "traditional" rationale for the Parliamentarian innovation of taking up arms against the king, then publicly trying and executing him, in his own defense (Kantorowicz [1957] 1997). The doctrine had

long promoted “irrevocable representation,” with the king’s mystical body being understood as coextensive with the body of his subjects, but it turned out that placing intense stress on the distinction between the body and the office released a ready-made justification, so to speak, for a novel emphasis on accountability. Failure to meet the demands of office argued for a separation: “When Representatives turn into a faction and betray their trust, they loose their power as representatives” (Condren 1994, 65–66, quoting George Lawson’s *Politica* (1660)).

Even images of corporate personhood specifically constructed to prevent such reversal could generate enough cognitive dissonance to invite it. The figure of the body politic (with the monarch as the head, laboring subjects as hands, and awkwardly variable parts for other members of the polity) makes social distinction the very means of solidarity, demonstrating that one can’t be had without the other. Consider the famous beginning of Robert Herrick’s “The Hock-Cart” ([1648] 2013):

COME, sons of summer, by whose toil  
We are the lords of wine and oil:  
By whose tough labours, and rough hands,  
We rip up first, then reap our lands.

By the end of the sentence, grammatical responsibility for the labor of the “sons” has gravitated to the “lords,” who now seem literally to possess not just the lands but the “rough hands” that work it as well. And yet, as Herrick well knew, an egalitarian potential resides even in this emphatically patriarchal construction, since the image of the body politic could never have served its purpose “if it had not balanced ... hierarchy with corporal association” (Holstun 2000, 19). Here again, tradition’s tendency to produce itself in ambivalent and reversible forms describes the ongoing condition of innovation. It is Milton’s sensitivity to this condition that explains his decision, in *Areopagitica*, to rely on the most familiar and traditional tropes of incorporation available to him. In this text, drenched everywhere in Eucharistic imagery, it is the commonwealth of learning, not the republic of letters, whose rights he defends.

The republic of letters is now largely the concern of historians of scholarship. In early modern Europe, the term gave conceptual shape to the links scholars forged with patrons and with one another through epistolary networks – networks that could incorporate women, officially excluded from the universities, as well as scholars whose confessional identities made their hold on faculty positions tenuous (Pal 2012). The republic of letters sustained brilliant scholarly careers that might otherwise have been cut short or never begun. Although letters provided the primary medium of coordination in this far-flung network, correspondence subtended opportunities for face-to-face exchange in such sites as the exiled court of Frederick V, exchange that bore fruit in substantial intellectual production, some of which entered the sphere of print, usually in Latin, and from there finding its way into the vernacular, enabling humanist influence to spread beyond scholarly circles. A text like Sir Thomas More’s *Utopia* (1516), for example, proclaims its identity as a product of the republic of letters at every level, its wide appeal largely a function of its manifestly elite origins.

Milton's relations with the republic of letters were not particularly smooth. The international response to his defenses of the regicide "created the impression of a European network of scholars ranged against him" – an impression that was more or less correct (Harms, Raymond, and Leiden 2013, 5). When Milton (1608–1674) refers to "the Commonwealth of learning" in *Areopagitica*, he is clearly appealing to a broader and more flexible concept, one that embraces the intellectual contributions of people who, by the standards of the day, were unlearned (Milton [1644] 1959, 529). To be sure, most of the tract's references to "learning" are indeed to the learned, the "free and ingenuous sort" who "were born to study, and love learning for itself" (531). But the most important achievement of Milton's pamphlet is to render the category of learning unstable, to redefine its contours as unknown and necessarily unknowable. Just as he virtually extends the representative space of Parliament to include his "speech," so his argument extends the sphere of learning to those who seem to stand outside it.

It is worth examining how these two operations relate to each other. Milton leans hard on the opposition between private fancy and public reason to characterize his virtual speech: rather than "the disburdning of a particular fancie," the idiosyncratic lucubrations of a private individual, it is an address delivered on behalf of "the living labours of publick men," giving expression to a "common grievance" (539, 493, 539). A public representative of public men, the speaker claims a representative capacity at once analogous to and in excess of that claimed by the body he addresses. To use a word Milton put through its paces, he is a public person "sublimed" (*Paradise Lost* [1667] 2007, 5.483): rather than speaking for a finite set of persons, he is a representative of publicness itself. As the text suggests, it is the act of publication that turns private men into public ones; publication is presented as an almost transubstantial process, complete with (figurative) ceremonial trappings. David Norbrook, among others, has remarked on the "uncharacteristic ritualism" of Milton's language here (1999, 122); it is as if all the sacramental clichés associated with the immortal body of the sovereign now attach to the mystery of authorial presence sustained by print publication. If Parliamentarians encouraged a wholesale transfer of loyalty from persons to offices of state, Milton pushes the logic of this transfer further, to the communicative practices that sustain public life.

The commonwealth of learning whose rights he defends is similarly expansive, embracing dismissed or despised contributions by ignorant schismatics and other disturbers of the public peace. For "if it come to prohibiting, there is not ought more likely to be prohibited then truth it self; whose first appearance to our eyes blear'd and dimm'd with prejudice and custom, is more unsightly and unplaussible then many errors, ev'n as the person is of many a great man slight and contemptible to see to" (Milton [1644] 1959, 565–566). The definition of truth assumed here is tendentious, suggesting the very opposite of the already-known or generally accepted. Such a definition serves a particular understanding of the aim of public discourse: "The light which we have gain'd, was giv'n us, not to be ever staring on, but by it to discover onward things more remote from our knowledge" (550). What is being asserted here is a necessary link between progressive discovery and public life.

There is nothing obvious or irresistible about such a social vision. For one, it entails an extraordinarily capacious understanding of “learning” and its agents. Indeed, it seems to assume a national commitment to reorganizing collective life around intellectual production: the work out of which, evidently, a public is made. To “unite into one general and brotherly search after Truth” is to court “brotherly dissimilitudes” (554–555). Second, as this hopeful oxymoron announces, the social vision is paradoxical. Social cohesion is to be achieved through disagreement and conflict: “much arguing, many opinions” are to be welcomed since “opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making” (554). Even if one shares Milton’s faith that such debate moves towards consensus, it is by means of a progress that extends well beyond the life of any of its participants. Indeed, Milton explicitly informs us that the body of truth will not be made whole until the second coming. Harmony will then be experienced as union; for the duration of the *saeculum*, it must be created out of schism. Milton shifts back into ceremonial language to describe the “obsequies” of the “sad friends of Truth” mourning “the torn body of our martyr’d Saint” and awaiting its restoration by Jesus (c. 4 BCE–c. 33) (“he shall bring together every joynt and member, and shall mould them into an immortal feature of lovelines and perfection”), but he also points out that in the meantime, these friends are busy piecing it back together themselves: a literal work of reformation (549–550).

If the strongly progressive sense in which many Protestants understood the term “reformation” was something on which Milton could confidently rely, his insistence that such progress must extend to “reforming of Reformation it self” suggests a qualitative change in the concept (553). Reformation was widely understood through the metaphor of restoration – a process of stripping away centuries of popish accretions to recover the doctrine and discipline of the primitive church. It now appears that this largely negative understanding of reformation is what needs to be done away with: “It is not the unfrocking of a Priest, the unmitring of a Bishop, and the removing him from off the *Presbyterian* shoulders that will make us a happy Nation”; there are “other things as great in the Church” and in “the rule of life” generally that need to be “lookt into and reform’d” (550). All these great things go unspecified; one can imagine a contemporary reader getting nervous. It soon becomes clear that the restoration our author has in mind extends to primitive truths beyond any written record: not just historically prior but ontologically primary truths that continue to inhere in creation itself, making the work of restoration continuous with the work of discovery – and therefore invention.

Throughout the pamphlet Milton brings together apparent opposites – public persons and private ones, schism and unity, the matter of sin and the matter of virtue, temperance and promiscuity – with self-conscious audacity, but in uniting the past to the present, recovery and discovery, he was following a well-worn path. The Great Instauration proposed by Francis Bacon, Viscount St. Alban (1561–1626) was explicitly presented as the philosophical counterpart to the reformation of religion, and like much Protestant rhetoric, the paradisaical myth Bacon elaborated around experimental science was calculated to reconcile originary longings to progressive change. As it happens, every activity he describes taking place in his scientific utopia



was already being pursued in Elizabethan London, as Deborah Harkness (2007) has shown us; rather than a prophet of modern science, Bacon was a man in search of a job “heading up” all this productive activity and reducing it to (a far less democratic) order (7–8). But the myth he elaborated around the innocent Adam as the original experimental scientist was indeed an inspired piece of prophecy: assigning epistemological privilege to the corporate subject of humanity prior to its fall into social difference, Bacon conferred redemptive status on the pursuit of knowledge across social divisions, presenting it as the means to reverse the fall and restore Adam’s knowledge and power over creation. By elevating mechanical knowledge to the pinnacle of philosophical respectability, Bacon violated the fundamental logic of the body politic, attributing, as it were, a head to the hands. The egalitarian potential of Bacon’s paradisaical myth was of little interest to Bacon himself, but, as it was exploited by many of his self-appointed seventeenth-century heirs, it provides the likely context for *Areopagitica*’s scrambling of the past and future, its use of Adam as a model for the contemporary public, and even its canonization of Galileo as a martyr to the cause of “*Philosophic* freedom.” The astronomer’s intellectual fame was based on what was widely understood as an artisanal or craft “secret,” not for his mastery of ancient languages and texts traditionally associated with the learned (Biagioli 2006). The “public men” Milton puts before us as models are chosen to represent a commonwealth of learning that is “general,” common in every sense.

What has been called the Laudian counter-reformation within the English church was indebted to a very different idea of the well-functioning society, a stably hierarchical one organized by the cyclical rhythms of the ritual year. Looming large in this vision, alongside the “beauty of holiness,” were the holiday pastimes associated with “Merry England,” expressing a national solidarity experienced at the parish level through the social lubricant of “good fellowship,” an ethos Charles I (1600–1649) and William Laud (1573–1645) tried hard to resuscitate (Marcus 1989), most famously through the reissue of the Book of Sports (first published by James I in 1618). Milton satirizes this vision by briefly speaking as someone possessed by it – “there be delights, there be recreations and jolly pastimes that will fetch the day about from sun to sun, and rock the tedious year as in a delightfull dream” – before triumphantly concluding, “These are the fruits which a dull ease and cessation of our knowledge will bring forth among the people” (545). Milton had every reason to trust that readers would be horrified by an “obedient unanimity” achieved by such means (545). As far back as 1586 the Puritan “Survey of the Ministry” submitted to Parliament had complained about “the vice of goodfellowship” among the clergy (Peel 1915, 2: 165). At stake in the identification of good fellowship with sin was not a crabbed suspicion of traditional “jolly pastimes” but a fundamentally different vision of what collective life should be. Within the Elizabethan puritan movement, practices like “prophesying” were instrumental in promoting the ideal of “a unity of belief” achieved through an arduously reached consensus rather than adherence to custom or obedience to ecclesiastical authority (Collinson 1967, 175).

Already here we can detect the active ingredient of Habermasian “civic solidarity”: a collective sense that subjects “owe one another *reasons*” for the stances they take

(Habermas [2005] 2008, 135–136). In similar fashion, self-described “experimental Christians” stressed the importance of personal experience because it was a trustworthy foundation for testimonies of faith that could be shared (Harrison 2011). If an ethos of collaborative empiricism seems to underlie Milton’s concept of a functional public, then, it is one that draws strength not just from Baconian ideology but from actual communicative practices associated with the Reformation and its long aftermath. The solidarity generated by such practices is as fragile as it is precious, because it does not seek its grounding in a *securely possessed* stock of already-known truths. As Habermas observes, rather than being “an immediate source of prescriptions,” communicative reason can only unleash “learning processes” (Habermas [1992] 1996, 4; Habermas [2005] 2008, 275). And it is these “noncoercive processes of reaching understanding” that eventually come to bear “the entire burden of legitimation.” It is challenging to ground community on a constantly shifting foundation, but “communicative freedoms generate their own political dynamism,” as “bonds form and renew themselves in the medium of discourse itself” (Habermas [1992] 1996, 6, 450; Habermas [2005] 2008, 105). These are not the bonds of an ethnicity or a people (Galileo and Adam are not Englishmen); they are “general,” constructed and strengthened through a shared commitment to a process whose outcome is unknown. They are the source of what Habermas calls communicative reason’s “innerworldly transcendence”: a shared commitment to “a practice that can critically turn against its own results and thus *transcend* itself” (Habermas [1992] 1996, 4–5).

### **The Political Virtues of Communicative Reason**

In Protestant England this ethos drew strength from what we would now call nationalist sentiment. All of Milton’s writing relies on the basic antinomies of Protestant polemic: priestcraft and superstition on one hand and scriptural religion and saving knowledge on the other. Over the course of the seventeenth century, the polarizing effects of controversy between Laudians and Puritans amplified these oppositions into a disagreement over what religion *was* – a conflict that reprised the break from Rome (Thomas 1971). Of course, it was never the case that Protestants were forced to choose between religion performed as traditional ritual observance and religion discursively engaged as belief. But Laud’s uncompromising articulations of his ceremonialist vision – “a greater reverence is due to the Body, than the Word, of the Lord” – scandalized even “moderate” Protestants, long accustomed to the idea that reading scripture was the primary religious act that informed all others (Sommerville 1992, 103). It is not that ritual participation is intrinsically less “intellectual” than Bible-reading and discussion, preaching, and mutual exhortation; Laudian sacramentalism might be analyzed as precisely a means to shelter those cognitive exercises in perception and acknowledgment essential to an exercised faith. But the Laudian emphasis on the mystery at the heart of Christian devotion set a premium on the experience of rational surrender. While such an experience makes a claim on the intellect, it could not model a public sphere, only contribute to it.

The terms in which writers like Milton or the Digger leader Gerrard Winstanley (1609–1676) describe the process of cultivating knowledge are traditionally Eucharistic, but they attach to very different communicative practices (with their own “ritual” elements), and they make leveling rather than hierarchical use of Christian metaphors of incorporation. Thus handled, these metaphors fulfill long-repressed potentials of Martin Luther’s (1483–1546) ideal of a priesthood of believers. In *Areopagitica*, the distinction of body and office that once characterized a designated public person like a king or bishop now characterizes every participant in public discussion, *simply by virtue of that participation*. Just as Milton imagines “the sad friends of truth” restoring her body limb by limb, so in parallel fashion he restores the *corpus mysticum* to its actual members.

As we would expect, the rational surrender associated with sacramental mystery was for some contemporaries the only proper response to monarchy itself. As the Royalist poet George Daniel (1616–1657) insisted, “High Maiestie” was “noe Discursive thing ... but under heaven doth bring/An awe, and more; a distant Reverence,/Beyond dispute claiming obedience” ([1637] 1878, 182). The passage is crammed with every attribute associated with “the idea of the holy”: a sense of remoteness, otherness, and irresistible power inspiring both dependence and awe (Otto 1958). Of course, if the statement had been empirically true, Daniel would not have had to make it. At the time he was writing, Charles was becoming increasingly dependent on “Discursive thing[s]” to shore up his claim to authority; the resources for his decade-long propaganda campaign were now being gathered. If Daniel’s poem was “one of the first conscious statements of royalism,” this was because such statements were now required. The very terms of monarch and subject were no longer “Beyond dispute” (Wilcher 2001, 23–24).

Since the king’s authority would remain under challenge, insisting that such challenge was impossible could not serve as a long-term strategy for royalist polemicists (though a residual sense of sacrilege attaching to assaults on the dignity of Charles’s person would do much to fuel the mythology elaborated around the royal martyr). As it turned out, Royalist newsbooks did much to promote the very principle of accountability that had originally bedeviled Charles. Exposing the particulars of parliamentary proceedings that were conventionally kept from public view, they revealed details about the forming and dissolution of factions, patterns of attendance, even committee assignments (Peacey 2011, 56). In the act of taking their case to the English people in print, Royalists signed on to what Habermas calls “a deliberative form of politics,” which requires “a ‘truth-sensitive’ form of government” ([2005] 2008, 143–144). It is worth stressing that Habermas’s formulation suggests nothing about political participants being motivated by a disinterested love of the truth; he is describing a necessary sensitivity to evidence on the part of people who want to make persuasive arguments. Such a communicative practice presumes a public capable of deliberation and entitled to the knowledge required to engage in it. If royalists ended up promoting some form of “open government,” they certainly did not set out to (Peacey 2011, 57). Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon’s (1609–1674) famous description of the momentum of events in these years – “those former

passages, accidents, and actions” by which subjects and their representatives began “to grow more wicked than they intended to be” – is partial but accurate, capturing the immanent consequences of the communicative process, which, independently of any view expressed, can generate democratizing forces that could never have been predicted at the outset (Clarendon [1702–1704] 1839, 1:2). “It is strange to note,” the eminent Parliamentarian Bulstrode Whitelocke (1605–1675) reflected, “how we have insensibly slid into this beginning of a Civil War, by one unexpected Accident after another, as Waves of the Sea, which have brought us thus far: And we scarce know how, but from Paper Combates, by Declarations, Remonstrances, Protestations, Votes, Messages, Answers and Replies...” (Raymond 2003, 197). It stands to reason that Lake and Pincus’s schema identifies the 1640s with the public sphere’s second stage of development, distinguished by the volume and speed of communicative exchange – a quantitative change so large it qualifies as a qualitative one (Lake and Pincus 2006, 280).

I have called attention to the contemporary habit of distinguishing between private opinion or “imagination” and findings grounded in “experience” that might be defended as public contributions to knowledge. That the distinction between private fancy and public reason was often drawn in the service of what we would consider opinions (or, just as often, highly idiosyncratic visionary experiences) entails no contradiction. Then as now, the distinction could be made in a variety of ways: what counted was the accessibility of the content to others. Like Milton, Winstanley insisted that he published not out of “a spirit of private fancie” but for the public good, and like any experimental Christian, he marked that difference by revealing the basis of his insights in experience, including dreams that those who decided to join him came to share (Picciotto 2010, 62).

Nonetheless, to invoke Habermas’s ideal of public discussion in the context of texts so brazenly figurative and at times so personal might seem not only anachronistic but tone-deaf. The wild figuration and personal expressiveness in early modern texts purportedly addressing themselves to public business have led some scholars to conclude that the most important contributions to the early modern public sphere are all texts that Habermas would judge inadmissible to it. A common *substantive* criticism of Habermas’s ideal of public discourse – and one that threatens to undermine its relevance to early modern intellectual culture far more seriously than objections to his historical chronology – takes aim at its rigorously impersonal character. On this understanding, there is literally “no body” in the public sphere he imagines. Feminist critiques, in particular, have emphasized that Habermas’s model would seem to occlude insights hard-won through the experience of bodily difference. In the words of one critic, Habermas’s model of communicative reason “limits our ability to understand the ways in which domination and resistance have materialized in and around the bodies of women and members of other oppressed groups” (Alway 1999, 138). There is a sad irony to this, since it was his own experience of physical difference that Habermas credits for his early awareness of the individual’s dependence on (and constitution by) a larger collective, and, more importantly for our purposes, his sense of the desirability of a sphere of discourse in

which personal differences and perceived handicaps or infirmities (including being a member of the wrong gender, class, or race) might be rendered irrelevant ([2005] 2008, 11–23).

As Habermas has always insisted, the ideal impersonality of the sphere of public discourse is precisely an ideal: one that has yet to be adequately realized, and one that must be approached by every means available (Habermas [1964] 1974, 50n3). Habermas elaborates on these strategic approaches in his later work, and it is here that the supposed missing body comes into view. His discussion of the cultivation of “political virtue” stresses habituation into the practice of imaginatively adopting the perspectives of embodied subject positions alien to our own, however imperfect and provisional these efforts may be. Here the rigors of intersubjectivity permit an approach towards a consensus that can assume the authority accorded to an impersonal objective truth (were such a thing available to us). The aim is to cultivate a perspectival flexibility that permits a virtual experience of others as they experience themselves. If the ultimate goal is “impersonality,” it must be approached in the short run by highly “personal” means: through the public revelation of subjective experiences that prior articulations of the public have rendered silent, invisible, unthinkable.

Habermas is adamant that in the ongoing project of sustaining a “demanding form of communication” requiring participants to progressively “decenter their cognitive perspectives,” no possible source of meaning can be excluded (Habermas [2005] 2008, 84, 5). The public’s self-education consists in the process of “translating” sometimes-enigmatic revelations into “publicly intelligent” language, a translation that is always a work in progress (113). Articulations too idiosyncratic to be “spontaneously absorbed” into public discussion must be metabolized, not rejected (240). These are the “working minerals” out of which Milton’s reading public learns to “temper and compose effective and strong med’cins”: “the art to qualifie and prepare” them can only become generally cultivated and practiced through “free writing and free speaking” (Milton [1644] 1959, 521, 559).

And what of the “children and childish men” who lack this art? (521) It is clear from such phrases that, for Milton, political manhood referred not to a state of age but to a state of achievement (Greteman 2013). It is a belief that has led some critics to accuse Milton of being an elitist radical – a fairly glib accusation, since he was grappling with a problem that modern liberal thought has yet to solve. The liberal state ultimately depends on the exercise of cognitive faculties that it can’t legally enforce:

political integration is jeopardized if too many citizens fail to live up to the standards of the public use of reason. However, mentalities are prepolitical in origin. They change incrementally and in unpredictable ways and the political virtues communicative reason requires are nourished by “pre-political” sources... (Habermas [2005] 2008, 144)

What Habermas calls pre-political sources we might simply call culture. It requires acculturation to listen well, to respond rather than merely react, to speak freely

rather than automatically. Members of the commonwealth of learning will always be at different stages of this process, and it is not a process that any of them will complete. Education, in this sense, “is not some preparation for later heroic work; it *is* that work” (Greteman 2013, 127).

### Martin Marprelate’s Children

I want to conclude by applying the model of public reason I have delineated to what was perhaps the most consequential intervention into the early modern public sphere in its first stage of formation, an intervention that in many ways provided the model for all that followed it. The Martin Marprelate project took the form of anonymous pamphlets illegally printed on a hand press moved from town to town, and it generated the most intense – and stylistically innovative – “paper combates” England had ever seen. We know that these tracts constellated “underground study groups,” which were still going strong 50 years later (Black 2008, xxxiii). These texts were literally read to pieces, and when they were strategically reissued in the 1640s by anti-episcopal editors in order to demonstrate the lineage of their cause, they spawned offspring: Margery Mar-Prelat, Marpriest, and even the ghost of Martin Marprelate himself.

Scholars agree that what was shocking about these tracts was not their arguments, which toed the straight Presbyterian line, but the irreverent, colloquial, and ludic style in which they were presented. Admiration for this style has led Douglas Bruster (2000) to lament the “thoroughly humorless and sober” sphere of public discussion as imagined by Habermas. As Bruster argues, the Martinist scandal relied on “embodied writing” (65, 64). Indeed, Martin is such an insistent presence in the prose that it is hard to remember that there was no single body at the center of project (Black 2008, xvi). It is now clear that dozens of people were directly involved in the project and many more indirectly. The “contrast between the wealth of contemporary evidence about the Marprelate project and the mystery of pseudonymity at its center” expresses the ethos of the project: “to reduce Martin to an individual author is ... to deprive the tracts of the textual and concomitant moral authority he sought to invoke” as a representative person (Black 2008 xxiv, xlvi). To reduce Martin to a carnivalesque body, as Bruster does, is perhaps even more misleading. Martin’s demotic language was not just “low,” it was also extremely learned: it was as if, through him, every member of the body politic was speaking at once.

This is not to say that contemporaries didn’t register what Bruster calls Martin’s “personalism” (64). They were scandalized by his “glances or levels at men’s persons” – which, as Bacon stiffly observed, were “ever in these cases disallowed” (Black 2008, xxvii). It was precisely the privileges and immunities enabled by the body/office distinction at which Martin took aim. Addressing the bishops casually as “Brother,” he denied them their titles or twisted them into insulting nicknames (“Dumb John of London,” “his gracelessness of Cant.” etc.), and sometimes leaned into them with menacing intimacy: “Alas poor reverend T.C. Be not afraid. Here be none but friends man” (106). He also recounted their misdeeds in detail, going so far

as to provide the names and addresses of people harassed by John Aylmer (1520/1–1594), bishop of London (referred to for a stretch as “Mar-Elm,” when Martin describes his destruction of trees on which his neighbors depended) (29, 13, 21–22). When Bishop Thomas Cooper (c. 1517–1594) responded in prelate-like fashion to these assaults in *An Admonition to the People of England* (1589), Martin dissected his effort with relish in *Hay Any Worke for Cooper*, whose title dropped the bishop’s surname into the cooper’s traditional street-cry, “Ha’ you any work for the cooper.” When the embarrassed authorities switched tacks and enlisted authors to respond to Martin in his own style, their grasp on authority weakened even further: the orthodox content of the rebuttals issued under the moniker “Mar-Marprelate” could never make up for the fact that Martin had forced the authorities to speak his language (Griffin 1997, 365). It was not just that Martin got away with thumbing his nose at the bishops. By estranging the conventional terms of public discourse, he created new expressive possibilities for communicative practice.

Bruster observes that texts published in the aftermath of the Marprelate phenomenon “took advantage of the license it had extended,” and this is just the point (74). The ease with which one could step into Martin’s subject position had everything to do with its virtual, or if you like, representative or mystical character. We can’t slip into other people’s bodies, but we can take up their offices. Martin showed his readers how, leading by example by multiplying himself. Martin spawned Junior, son of Martin, author of the *Theses Martinianae*, who in turn received a scolding from his older brother in *The Just Censure and Reproofoe of Martin Junior* (which is of course a censure directed elsewhere). Even when speaking in his “own” voice, Martin proliferated names: “Martin Marprelate, Gentleman”; “Martin Marprelate gentleman, Primate and Metropolitan of all the Martins whatsoever” and “Doctor Martin Marprelate, Doctor in all the Faculties, Primate and Metropolitan” (Black 2008, 5, 101, 195). The clash of singular and plural obeys not just a “Martinist” but a traditionally Christian logic. In its immediate context, it also represented a practical threat, and was intended to: “I am threatened to be hanged by you. What though I were hanged, do you think your cause shall be the better? For the day that you hang Martin, assure yourselves, there will twenty Martins spring in my place” (119).

This style makes an argument, and the pamphlets themselves stand as evidence of its truth, since their publication and popularity required the collusion of many. “They are separate members; together, they constitute Martin – in precisely the same sense in which ‘the visible bodie of Christ’ is constituted by ‘al the officers of a true & lawful church governement” (Griffin 1997, 379; Black 2008, 149). By calling attention to the bodies behind the offices, Martin rendered their authority transferable. Christ’s body required all of its members to do his work.

### What to Read Next

Kantorowicz ([1957] 1997); Habermas ([1992] 1996; [1962] 1999); Phillips (2010); Webster (2002).

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# Romance

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Romance was for long one of the most disparaged terms in literary criticism. There is a residue of this in the structure of most bookstores, where “literature” as such is kept separate from romance, which belongs with mysteries, fantasy, sci-fi, horror, and other kinds of “genre” fiction, all of them historically devalued by critics. For those trained in the interpretive techniques of New Criticism (Brooks 1947; Wimsatt and Beardsley 1954), which emphasize the uniqueness of the individual work to such an extent that each becomes virtually *sui generis* – its own genre – genre is almost necessarily suspect, presumed to be prefabricated, mechanical, mass-produced. The modern understanding of romance has in part been codified for would-be writers by publishers like Harlequin and Mills and Boon; as Janice Radway (1984) has shown, readers will passionately debate the protocols established in this way: genre fiction functions as both niche market and social subculture. In the Middle Ages, on the other hand, far from designating a specific section of the fiction market, “romance” was essentially synonymous with the whole field of vernacular fiction itself (Copeland 1991): romance fictions were “romance” in the way “romance” languages are romance, that is, by their difference from Latin, the language of the vulgate Bible (c. 405) and Virgil’s *Aeneid* (19 BCE). By the Renaissance, romance was identified more specifically with fictional forms that did not seem to fit classical models of composition. Romance in this sense was a hybrid thing: in fact it has been debated whether it constitutes a single genre or is a mode realized in a plurality of forms. It blurs into epic in one direction and the novel in another. But if its boundaries are porous and its forms various, it is nevertheless possible to sketch the elements paradigmatically associated with romance in the Renaissance. Romance has a strong dimension of wish-fulfillment, of the magical or marvelous, and in this comes close to what we now call fantasy literature. Unlike much modern fantasy,

romance typically centers on erotic and amatory relations – stories of love rather than war – and it gives real space and agency to female characters. It wanders through time and space; it trades on exotic locations, strange encounters, sudden turns of events; it is fascinated by the foreign and unfamiliar; it is more interested in soliciting our wonder than our belief. Unlike epic, which addresses the fates of cities and empires, romance is strongly focused on the uncertain paths of wandering individuals. And it was often treated with hostility by critics convinced that the pleasures it offers are wayward, corrupting, or low. Perhaps the most notorious scene of romance reading appears in Dante's *Inferno* ([c.1314] 2006), when Paolo and Francesca lock eyes while reading a story about Lancelot, that archetypal romance figure of adulterous love: "that day we read no further" (5.138). To read romance is to be oneself seduced.

We are currently living with the effects of the explosion of the dichotomy between genre fiction and "real" literature, evidenced by ongoing efforts to explore the emotional affordances of everything from fairy tales to zombie fiction. In literary criticism, too, genre is now less a source of embarrassment and more a legitimate analytic tool, part of the system of signals through which readers navigate the meanings of the books they read: as Fredric Jameson argued years ago, genres are "literary institutions, or social contracts between a writer and a specific public" (1981, 106). To specify a text according to genre is not to pigeonhole it but to describe some of the vectors of its meaning; an awareness of the complex codes of genre can enrich our understanding of a text, not diminish it. To attend to genre is to draw out the affiliations between texts as well as to open up the way a particular text engages in and reimagines larger literary and social terrains. Correspondingly, the rules of genre are now less likely to be seen as limiting. It would after all miss the point to say that the rules of football limit the options of those playing the game. There would be no game without those rules. The "rules" of genre – if that is quite the right metaphor for the way genre works – are an occasion for creativity and debate, not an end to them.

One key debate over the rules of narrative fiction has been about mimetic realism, once understood to be a *sine qua non* of the novel but now more likely to seem like one possibility among others. This more catholic attitude to mimetic fiction is important for the way we understand romance because romance, as a genre associated with the marvelous or improbable, is precisely what was excluded in order to produce the idea of novelistic realism. Early English novelists often used the word romance as a term of disparagement, naming a kind of fiction with which they did not want to be associated. In Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* ([1740] 2001), for instance, the would-be rake Mr. B taunts the eponymous heroine, who is resisting his sexual advances, by sneering, "you are well read, I see, and we shall make out between us, before we have done, a pretty Story in Romance" (32). He means to discredit her ideas about sex and marriage as fantasies, and he does so by identifying romance as a vehicle for those fantasies, a literary form that communicates them to a readership composed largely of servants and women, like Pamela: "you are well read" has all the sneering dismissiveness of a gentleman toward a literary form, and a set of values, that he thinks are beneath him. But Richardson himself is playing a more

complicated game. Mr. B's dismissiveness is not Richardson's own; but nor did Richardson want to be seen as himself producing merely another "pretty Story in Romance." He wanted to claim for his book a seriousness usually denied to romance while at the same time appropriating some of the power, and many of the concerns, of romance fiction. He needed to draw on romance and yet disavow it.

For Margaret Doody, there is no real difference between romance and novel: "'Romance' is most often used in literary studies to allude to forms conveying literary pleasure the critic thinks readers would be better off without" (1996, 15). This claim seems to me to flatten some real differences between forms of long fiction, and yet Doody is at least partly right. The history of the novel is continuous with that of romance; in fact, through much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries writers sometimes used the words romance and novel interchangeably. But even if there is no firm boundary between them, the two terms can nevertheless usefully open the way to a longer history of fiction. Romance is a partner and predecessor of the novel; it is the first kind of fiction that presented itself primarily as leisured entertainment read for the pleasure of reading itself. This to some extent explains the long history of moral condemnations directed against it. Even one of its most vocal seventeenth-century defenders, the French critic Pierre-Daniel Huet, suggests something wayward about romance reading when he traces it to a natural human appetite for narrative: the "first origin" of romance lies "in the nature and spirit of man, man the inventive, lover of novelties and fictions" (Doody 1996, 17). This recalls Aristotle's claim that humans are naturally given to wonder and the pursuit of knowledge (*Poetics*, c. 350 BCE), but it also risks trivializing the kind of knowledge we seek in this way: novelty, not truth. A naturalized account of the origins of narrative might seem plausible in our own moment (Vermeule 2009; Kramnick 2011; Boyd 2010), but in the seventeenth century, it is conspicuous for what it omits: any claim to moral purpose or higher truth. Romance is fictionality without a clear relation to norms. In a recent essay Catherine Gallagher (2006) has argued that the concept of fiction, understood as a discursive mode distinct from both facts and lies, emerged with the emergence of the novel in the eighteenth century. But the earliest debates over the status and nature of fiction take place over various forms of romance.

The sixteenth century is the moment when romance was first defined and debated, perhaps most importantly in a controversy over Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1516, trans. 1591), a brilliant narrative poem in Italian that derives from medieval stories about Charlemagne and Roland. The central issue in this debate concerned the discrepancy between Ariosto's poem and the rules of epic poetry as derived from ancient models such as Aristotle's *Poetics* (Weinberg 1961; Hathaway 1963). Was romance a debased genre that displayed its authors' ignorance of the proprieties of poetic form? Was it a kind of fiction whose differences from epic properly reflected the different values of a modern Christian world from an ancient pagan one? Were the laws of poetic production fixed for all time or should they change with other changes of social world and world-view? This was the first great battle between "ancients" and "moderns," and romance was firmly enlisted on the side of the moderns.

The border between romance and epic – like that between romance and novel – is by no means clear-cut. David Quint (1993) and Colin Burrow (1993) have emphasized the way romance and epic often function as warring impulses within the same text, testifying to the complexity of a genre system in which “kinds” are never absolute and in which one work is capable of belonging to multiple “species” at once. The history of Renaissance romance from Ariosto to Spenser is in some ways the history of a rapprochement between medieval forms of chivalric fiction and classical epic. For Quint, what results is a struggle between two different narrative ideologies: on the one hand, the linearity and end-directedness of epic, which narrates the founding or destruction of empires; on the other, the wandering digressiveness of romance, which suggests by its very form a kind of deferral of and resistance to epic closure. Patricia Parker similarly describes the “errancy” of romance, which “becomes a means of revealing the fictiveness and errancy of all literary forms, including epic and even Scripture” (1990, 615). Burrow on the other hand presents the origins of romance from epic as a history of misreadings, as poets from Virgil (70–19 BCE) onwards struggled to make sense of the ethos of the *Iliad* (? 8C BCE) – with its strange combination of pity and violence, founded in a tragic recognition of human mortality – by reinterpreting it in terms of compassion and love. Romance is born through a re-reading of epic that is for Burrow also a forgetting of epic: a new kind of narrative and a new structure of feeling are born in the misreading of an older form. From either perspective, epic and romance impulses are capable of inhabiting texts whose meanings are shaped by the conflict between them.

The sixteenth century marks the peak of romance’s fortunes. The genre’s past was entwined with the world of the medieval courts, royal or baronial: romance fiction carried the values of an aristocratic and courtly society. Many of the great romances of the sixteenth century are steeped in the culture of the court: Ariosto repeatedly addresses his patrons, the d’Este rulers of Ferrara; Spenser dedicates *The Faerie Queene* ([1590, 1596] 2007) to Queen Elizabeth; and while Philip Sidney offers the *Old Arcadia* ([1580] 1985) to his sister, the book itself is steeped in English court politics. The court in many ways marks the center of romance’s imaginary geography, even when its knights spend their time wandering away from that center. But by the eighteenth century romance had become a byword for an unsophisticated form of fiction imagined as the preferred entertainment of servants and women (Copeland 1991; Newcomb 2002). That shift was beginning in the sixteenth century, as writers like Robert Greene (1558–1592), Anthony Munday (1560–1633), and George Wilkins (d. 1618) produced romances in prose for a wider, middle-class readership. The reversal of romance’s fortunes was almost stunningly rapid. In Francis Beaumont’s *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1607), a group of London citizens demands to see their apprentice Rafe star in a chivalric fiction; the play’s humor turns on the disparity between the social origins of chivalric romance and a contemporary London world – hence the incongruity of the title – but it also suggests that there is something unsophisticated about the taste for romance. That kind of mockery almost certainly did more to affect the fortunes of romance than any number of attacks from humanist educators and Protestant reformers.

There may always have been something backward-looking about Renaissance romance, at least in its chivalric forms. Arthur Ferguson (1960) refers to the late sixteenth century as the “Indian summer of English chivalry,” emphasizing the extent to which the courtly fascination with romance was out of touch with an increasingly post-feudal social world. Spenser’s literary style is the perfect emblem for this deliberate archaism. Sprinkling his sentences with long-forgotten word-forms lifted from – or merely sounding like – Chaucerian English, Spenser (1552?–1599) tried to create, in the structure of his sentences, an amalgam of past and present, turning the language of the past into a resource for renovating English poetry in the present. The effort could be seen as retrograde. According to Ben Jonson (1572–1637), “in affecting the ancients, [Spenser] writ no language” ([1640–1641] 2012): merging medieval and modern idioms, he wrote as no one had written before, producing a factitious version of the past that would never become an accepted form of the language in the present.

The most famous Renaissance satire of chivalric fiction, and a book often seen as marking the start of something new in literary history, is Miguel de Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* (1605, 1616, trans. 1612, 1620). Quixote’s obsession with romance famously causes him to misread the world, seeing windmills as giants, inns as castles, a barber’s basin as Rinaldo’s golden helmet in *Orlando Furioso*. There is also a social basis for this literary obsession: Quixote is an impoverished *hidalgo*, a decayed member of the lowest rung of the Spanish gentry. Left behind by a modern world where money has started to mean more than birth or status, his fantasies are compensation for his own felt marginality. But Cervantes also shows himself both a critic and a lover of romance. When Quixote’s friends storm his library in order to remove the source of his obsession, they do not destroy all the books they find there; some they edit, and others they wholly commend. Indeed, the structure of Cervantes’s book ends up following the quest-structure of the romances it satirizes. In romance, the quest is a journey of discovery, even self-discovery; its tropes of losing and finding one’s way give intelligible shape to a life. In some ways the pattern goes all the way back to Homer’s *Odyssey* (c. 8thC BCE), sometimes seen as the first romance: centered on the wanderings of a hero who seeks neither to conquer nor to found a city but simply to return home, the *Odyssey*’s frame is domestic and familial, its virtues strategic and flexible, its concern individual. Cervantes ironizes quest romance, but he also imports some of its ways of imagining the shape and meaning of a life. If there is a discovery to which the course of Quixote’s life leads, it is ultimately the discovery of the sustaining power of fiction itself: when Quixote’s friends finally force him to face the real world, the result is tragic: he cannot bear that encounter with the real, and dies. If this is a critique of romance, it is no less a critique of a world that seems as empty and unjust as Quixote’s fantasies are mad.

Renaissance romances belong to various subforms – epic romance, pastoral romance, romance tragicomedy – but they derive from two primary influences: medieval chivalric romance, and what is often called “Greek romance” or the “Greek novel.” *Orlando Furioso* is the key text in the former tradition, and exhibits a hypertrophied version of a narrative technique developed in medieval chivalric fiction:

interlace, by which the narrator weaves multiple plots into one larger fiction (Heffernan 1997). Ariosto uses interlace to focus playfully on the act of narration itself, as when at the end of Canto 10 the “Saracen” Ruggiero rescues Angelica from a rock at sea where she was chained waiting to be devoured by a dragon; bringing her to a nearby stretch of shore, he begins to strip off his armor, tangling himself in it in the heat of erotic urgency (10.114). With Angelica facing sexual assault by her rescuer, the narrator breaks off, saying his story has become “wearisome” (10.115). He takes it up again at the start of the next canto, but the gesture is emblematic of his thinking about narrative. The modern term for such effects, suspense, seems tame by comparison. “Suspense” projects the desire for narrative as a desire for information; Ariosto makes it an erotics: the climax of a story is a kind of consummation, and the deferral of ending can be a way of increasing enjoyment. Eugène Vinaver compares interlace to the knot-patterns of Romanesque designs: “the onlooker’s eye does not ... travel along each thread, but ... embrac[es] all the threads as they come within the field of vision” (1971, 78). The analogy is too static: in interlace, narrative threads do not just entwine but alter each other, as when Orlando enters the cave where his beloved Angelica and the soldier Medoro have made love, reads the inscriptions they left, and is driven mad by his recognition of what has happened, in the event that gives the poem its title. Interlace is a way of allowing multiple stories occurring in the same fictive space to affect each other. It is a way of pushing linear narrative into multiple causal dimensions.

In the *Faerie Queene* ([1590, 1596] 2007) Spenser tries to domesticate Ariostan fiction, turning chivalric romance into the basis of an allegory whose purpose is “to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline” (“A Letter of the Authors”). His poem offers doctrine “coloured with an historicall fiction” – that is, a fictional narrative – “the which the most part of men delight to read, rather for variety of matter, then for profite of the ensample.” Spenser defends his method by referring to “the vse of these dayes” when “all things” are “accounted by their showes,” that is, by appearances. He means that fictive “showes” *increase* the force of doctrine because teaching is more effective when carried by the vehicle of a story (737). But he also suggests an uncomfortable awareness that the delight of fiction is not so easily corralled. Might fictionality reinforce a tendency to judge all things by their appearances? That question is to some extent implicit in the central narrative trope of the wandering knight: errancy, the possibility of going astray, lies at the heart of the story; the solitary knight separated from the courts and the massed armies of epic is always potentially astray. If this allows Spenser to structure his poem according to narrative *topoi* of losing and then finding one’s way, it also invites the question of whether Spenser’s own narrative, in following the often erring paths of his knights, may not lose its way. In fact Spenser never brings his narrative home to Gloriana’s court, the place where – according to Spenser’s “Letter” – all the quests are generated and to which all the knights will someday return. If Gloriana’s court is the center of the fiction, it is an absent center. Correspondingly, the pleasures and meanings of Spenser’s text are in no way confined to clear doctrine.



Spenser explores the links between romance fiction and moral allegory in sometimes playful ways. Not everything in the *Faerie Queene* is legible as allegory, as Lauren Silberman (1987) emphasizes: the reader has to constantly negotiate the shifting relations between allegorical and narrative meaning. Perhaps the most famous case is the story of Malbecco. Malbecco enters the poem as a stock figure out of comedy, an old miser jealous of his beautiful young wife, Hellenore. Hellenore is in fact seduced away from him by Paridell, by whom she is quickly abandoned; Malbecco finds her in the company of a group of satyrs, and spends a miserable night watching in hiding as one of them makes love, nine times, to his wife. Starting with a recognizable comic frame, Spenser significantly torques its moral implications: where the comic story typically asks us to enjoy the gulling of the jealous miser by a young man presented as a much more suitable partner for the wife, here the initial seduction leads rapidly to a scene of (arguably bestial) sexual excess. Moreover, the punishment of the miser is so extreme that it pushes us into another kind of fiction altogether. Driven off by the satyrs, Malbecco throws himself off a seaside cliff; but instead of dying he drifts into a cave where, under the pressure of his own obsessively jealous thoughts, he finally ceases to be a person at all: "Hatefull both to him selfe, and euery wight," he "Is woxen so deform'd, that he has quight | Forgot he was a man, and *Gealousie* is hight" (3.10). From a character, Malbecco becomes an allegory. He forgets his humanity and loses all capacity for further change. Where Malbecco was the subject of a story, "*Gealousie*" is part of an allegorical tableau. Allegory is construed as the result of a psychological process, as Spenser probes the space between person and personification, narrative and meaning.

The other major influence on Renaissance romance, Greek romance, is structured not by the linearity of the quest but by a pattern of separation and reunion. Lovers, parents, or children are pulled apart by force of circumstance or by the violence of human depredations and find each other again after long wandering: here again Homer's *Odyssey*, with its story of *nostos*, the return home from war, is a powerful model. Shakespeare (1564–1616) adapted such stories for his late plays: *Pericles* (1608), for example, derives from the ancient prose romance *Apollonius of Tyre* (?3C), a story retold in the Middle Ages by Gower (d. 1408) and again in the Renaissance, including by George Wilkins in 1608, in a book that seems to be in part a novelization of Shakespeare's play. Perhaps the most famous Greek romance is the *Aithiopika* of Heliodorus (?3C ?4C, trans. c.1569). Sometimes known as *Theagenes and Charicleia*, it describes the wanderings of two lovers, one Greek and one who has been raised Greek though she is in fact the lost daughter of the king and queen of Ethiopia, born white to black parents and sent away as an infant by a mother who feared her husband's accusations of infidelity. The text explains her skin color by the presence of a portrait of a white Andromeda in the queen's bedroom: the sight of that portrait altered the body of her gestating child, in a story legible in the Renaissance as representing the power of the imagination, conceived as a faculty of mind that gives force to all our perceptions. The imagination is the cognitive basis of romance: essential for every act of thinking it is also potentially wayward, fueling every passionate misperception.

Made a priestess of Artemis at Delphi, Charicleia falls in love with Theagenes and runs away with him. The course of their travels is too complex to relate but it ultimately leads them to Ethiopia as prisoners of war. About to be sacrificed according to an ancient tradition, Charicleia manages to prove her real identity to her father Hydaspes: the climactic scene is a kind of legal inquest in which the king listens to Charicleia, seeks corroborating testimony, and pursues physical evidence in the form of the “tokens” Charicleia’s mother sent with her as well as a mark on Charicleia’s body itself. This is a typical romance “recognition”: analyzed as an element of tragic plots by Aristotle in the *Poetics*, the recognition flourishes in romance as a moment of forensic inquiry – judicial investigation based on the assessment of uncertain signs – and as a moment when identities are confirmed, and social and affective relationships restored (Cave 1988; Hutson 2007). Sidney’s *Old Arcadia* culminates in a similar inquiry, through which the characters are finally revealed to each other as who they are. In the *Aithiopika* the recognition scene is split in two, because Charicleia, so persuasive in proving that she is the lost princess, becomes strangely inarticulate when asked to explain her relationship to Theagenes. She is so incoherent that Hydaspes decides she has gone mad. The relationship that lies at the center of the book seems almost literally unspeakable: a mutual love that remains unconsummated remains a puzzle until the sudden arrival of Charicles, the man who raised Charicleia and saw the start of her love for Theagenes. Doody argues that the chaste love celebrated in ancient romance was something new in the history of sexuality: “what we call ‘romantic love’ is not possible . . . without an idea of chastity of a fresh and personal – not institutional – nature”; this “must apply to both sexes” and “must be *chosen*” (1996, 78). Perhaps the unspeakability of Charicleia’s love marks the appearance of a new affective and erotic ideal: long before the medieval tradition of courtly love, romance served as a laboratory for new ideals of erotic intimacy.

Written in Greek by a Phoenician author whose name – “gift of the sun” – affiliates him with the Ethiopia that provides the title of his book, the *Aithiopika* ranges through Africa, Asia, and Europe. It is significant that Delphi is its departure point: the center of Greek culture and religion is neither the origin nor the end of this story but the place the characters must leave in order to find themselves. Center becomes margin as the narrative of this “Greek” romance voyages away from Greece to discover its true source in Africa. It should perhaps not be a surprise that such stories saw a resurgence in the sixteenth-century European moment of global exploration, cross-cultural contact, and imperial conquest: romance provides a resonant narrative structure for imagining an expanding world. The geography of the Greek romances echoes through Sidney’s *Old Arcadia*, both in its central location and its wider background. When we first encounter Pyrocles and Musidorus we are told that they were shipwrecked off the coast of Lydia – in modern-day Turkey – and have spent a year traveling in Persia, “lesser Asia,” Syria, and Egypt (10). Some of their adventures are later recounted (60–64, 134–140) and the book ends reminding its readers of these events (361). Sidney reverses Heliodorus’s itinerary, bringing his princes back from Africa to Greece in order to fall in love. There will be no liaison

between Greece and Ethiopia: we see Asia and Africa in second-order narration, as places of war rather than love, or as places where perverse forms of love lead to war. The world of erotic fiction is separated from an undefined but expansive terrain that is the space of Greek heroic achievement. In a sense that terrain is the *telos* of a plot that begins with an illegitimate withdrawal from public life and ends pointing toward renewed heroic engagement with the world. The travels of the two princes are a reminder of this larger field of action, matching the diplomatic and military engagements to which Sidney himself aspired. Sidney appropriates Heliodorus's geography for a very different alignment of world-space: we are on the threshold of a division between domestic and colonial space – between Europe and everywhere else – that would be increasingly central, culturally, politically, economically, militarily.

Critics have traced the global reach of Renaissance romance, from the New World (Linton 1998) to Islam and the Middle East (Heng 2003) to “the Indies” (Raman 2001). I have elsewhere argued (2007) that Renaissance romance helped to produce a new idea of Europe as a space of cultural belonging, out of and in some ways against an older idea of “Christendom,” at a moment of expanded contact between England and the Islamic world. But if romance evokes global concerns, it often does so by means of the most intimate stories. A series of medieval romances tell the story of a “Saracen” – that is, primarily, Muslim – princess who betrays her family and her faith for love of a Christian knight; a somewhat later form of the story centers on a Christian woman wandering through a Muslim country, who secures the love of the local ruler and becomes the means to his conversion (Metlitzki 1977; Heng 2003). In both cases the encounter between Christian and Muslim takes place through a narrative of desire. A richer and more powerful Islamic world is imagined as willingly allying itself with – and subordinating itself to – an at first apparently vulnerable Christian. Traces of these stories echo through Renaissance texts, in the Asian adventures of Sidney's princes, in the story of Othello's marriage to Desdemona, or in clearly romance-inflected plays like Philip Massinger's *The Renegado* (1630). But the power of this kind of story seems to have been waning in the Renaissance: Othello's marriage ends in tragedy; fictions of exogamy seem less capable of providing satisfactory imaginary solutions to geopolitical problems. This is perhaps itself an index of the increasing cultural centrality of race, as a determinant of identity: religious differences can at least potentially be solved by narratives of conversion; racial differences are more likely to seem intractable. Medieval romances can seem almost charmingly naïve about race, from a modern perspective – as when Wolfram von Eschenbach, describing a child of Saracen and Christian parents in *Parzival* (c. 1220), imagines him polka-dotted. By the late seventeenth century the exotic associations of romance could become part of the rhetoric attacking it. Thomas Warton (1728–1790) saw the whole form as un-European. “That peculiar and arbitrary species of Fiction which we commonly call Romantic,” he wrote, “appears to have been imported into Europe by a people, whose modes of thinking, and habits of invention, are not natural to that country”; that is, “[i]t is generally supposed to have been borrowed from the Arabians” (Robinson 2007, 145). The Earl of Shaftesbury

(1671–1713) put this in more gendered terms, figuring English readers of romance as Desdemonas enthralled by an Othello: seduced by the fascination of exotic stories, they “change their natural inclination for fair, canded, and courteous knights, into a passion for a mysterious race of black enchanters” (Robinson 2007, 80).

Postcolonial approaches offer a useful way of thinking about romance from one direction; so, from another, does feminist criticism. If romance was often associated with women readers, it was also associated with a series of efforts to reimagine virtue in differently gendered terms, elaborating new affective, erotic, and social ideals. The key events of Sidney’s *Old Arcadia* are set in motion when Pyrocles sees a portrait of Philoclea and falls in love. Sidney’s account of what Pyrochles sees in that portrait is an example of the fundamental social work of drawing inferences about dispositions and states of mind from external signs, a kind of communicative approach to the mind that lies at the center of a series of Renaissance discourses, from rhetoric to physiognomy:

[A] man might judge even the nature of her countenance, full of bashfulness, love, and reverence – and all by the cast of her eye – mixed with a sweet grief to find her virtue suspected. This moved Pyrocles to fall into questions of her ... questions grew to pity; and when with pity once his heart was made tender, according to the aptness of the humour, it received straight a cruel impression of that wonderful passion which to be defined is impossible. (Sidney [1580] 1985, 11)

Pyrochles “questions” the mute painting; that is, he enters into an internalized, hypothetical dialogue with it, exactly as if he were in the presence of the woman herself. The elision of looking and questioning is crucial. Sidney figures the process of thinking about the painting as a conversation with it, and in so doing he emphasizes something about what conversation is, from a Renaissance perspective: the self-revelation of two interlocutors. “Speak, that I may see thee,” wrote Ben Jonson ([1640–1641] 2012): what becomes visible in conversation is not the body but the soul that inhabits and animates it. Correspondingly, every act of trying to understand another is a kind of conversation, even when it takes place by means of an intermediary artistic representation. In some ways that intermediary representation – painting or vivid description – is essential. All thinking, for Aristotle, depends on an image, a representation assembled in the imagination from information provided by the senses. We have to make the image of the other person in our mind before we can understand who and what that person is.

In this case the act of understanding leads to the beginning of love, because understanding itself requires a kind of sympathetic entry into the thoughts and feelings of the other person, here called “pity.” Sidney evokes this capacity through the language of tenderness, as when Musidorus is “moved to pity” by the song of the disguised Cleophila: “so lively an action doth the mind, truly touched, bring forth” (26). Cleophila’s mind has been “touched” by love; and the “lively” performance or “action” of her song transmits that touch to Musidorus, cutting through his maxims about reason and passion. Sidney balances the demands of sympathy with those of

constancy, but he is clear that a capacity for responsive feeling is a sign of virtue, not weakness. “[T]here is no sweeter taste of friendship” than the “coupling” of souls, as when the “oppressed mind” finds a companion who is “feelingly sorry for his misery” (148). That adjective “feelingly” connotes a dimension of sympathetic tenderness that reads like a feminization of the heroic ideal. Sidney’s best model of virtue is a cross-dressed man: it is Pyrocles-Cleophila who emerges over the course of the plot as the prime example of how to merge masculine heroic virtue with a capacity for delicate feeling that the *Old Arcadia* repeatedly identifies with women. Historians of the novel have pointed to “sensibility” as a defining code of the early novel, perhaps above all in the eighteenth-century cult of the “man of feeling”: in the culture of sensibility, a kind of emotional openness primarily associated with women becomes a model for male behavior as well, in a development often linked to the vogue for theories of sympathy and sentiment from Shaftesbury to Adam Smith (Mullan 1990; Van Sant 1993; Barker-Benfield 1996). What has been less often recognized is that eighteenth-century fiction was here capitalizing on a long history. Medievalists have discerned a feminization of cultural values in chivalric romance and the culture of courtly love; Doody (1996) sees something similar in Heliodorus. Romance has long been involved in efforts to reimagine the forms of affective sociability, and it has often done so by rethinking the boundaries of gender.

The act of reading romance is part of this transformation of social and affective styles, as Norbert Elias ([1939] 1978) argues. Sidney suggests this as well. Describing the passion of Basilius and his wife Gynecia for Cleophila, Sidney’s narrator worries that he has not adequately communicated its truth: “it seems to myself I use not words enough to make you see how they could in one moment be so overtaken” ([1580] 1985, 44). He wants to make this passion so real that we seem to see it, in a formula that recalls the rhetorical concept of *enargeia* as a force that brings narrated events so vividly to life that they seem to appear before our eyes (Quintilian [c. 95] 2002, 4.2.63–64, 6.2.29–34). Sidney worries that he cannot achieve this because his only tool is a linguistic copia that may not be able to capture a change that takes place “in one moment.” He turns instead to the reader’s sympathetic responsiveness: “But you, worthy ladies, that have at any time feelingly known what it means, will easily believe the possibility of it” ([1580] 1985, 44). A series of things happens at once in this sentence. Sidney assumes a female readership. He also assumes that female experience can model all passionate experience: it is because of what they have themselves felt that his readers will be able to sympathize with both Gynecia and her husband. This shared understanding grounds the believability of the fiction, in what Sidney calls a “feeling” knowledge. To know feelingly is to know that feeling is part of knowledge, that the line between reason and passion is not absolute, that rigid belief in it may even lead to violence, as it does with Musidorus. Romance reading tests our sympathies. It is a sentimental education, a literary technology through which affective response is solicited, shaped, and transmitted, a continual practice in producing – and interpreting – “lively” images of the minds of others. The real product of romance fiction, for Sidney no less than for Spenser, is the reader: both aim to shape the reader by way of her passionate engagement with a fictive world.

A wider account of Renaissance romance would need to take in a wider range of texts. It would need to trace the increasing prominence of women as romance writers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, from Mary Wroth (1587?–1651/53) to Madeleine de Scudéry (1607–1701) to Eliza Haywood (1693?–1756). It would need to trace the forms of Renaissance romance in much more detail, as well as their differing relationships to those forms of prose fiction that have been seen as the earliest incarnations of the novel. It would also need to trace the reciprocal influence of romance and drama, as Heliodorus uses the language of tragedy to structure his plot while Sidney – dividing the *Old Arcadia* according to the five acts of Terentian comedy – in turn influences the plots of dramatic romance and tragicomedy in the seventeenth century. All of this is beyond my scope here. But I hope I have done enough to show why romance should matter not only for students of Renaissance literature but also for anyone interested in the history of fiction, from antiquity to the modern world. And I hope I have shown why our own moment, with its expansive attitude toward the protocols of mimesis, is the right moment for a wider rethinking of the history of fiction.

### What to Read Next

Ariosto ([1516, 1532] 1973); Burrow (1993); Doody (1996); Quint (1993); Van Sant (1993).

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# The Court

*Lauren Shohet*

- SONG     But let your state, the while  
          Be fixed as the Isle.
- CHORUS   So all that see your *beauties* sphaere  
          May know th'*Elysian* fields are here.
- ECHO     The *Elysian* fields are here.
- ECHO     *Elysian* fields are here.  
          (Ben Jonson, *The Masque of Beauty*, ll.356–361)

The court masques that Queen Anna (1574–1619) commissioned for the Christmas seasons of 1605 and 1608, *The Masque of Blackness* and its sequel *The Masque of Beauty* (Jonson 1973), jubilantly asserted King James's principle residence of Whitehall Palace as the epicenter of the cosmos. In the first of these two masques, the queen and seven of her ladies impersonated darkly beautiful Daughters of Niger. Learning of the light-skinned "painted beauties [of] other empires" (*Blackness* 140), these nymphs resolve to travel to Britain so that the "radiance" (l.243) of King James (1566–1625) – "a sun.../Whose beams shine day and night" (ll.228–229) – might "refine" (l.242) their skin color. Three years later, *The Masque of Beauty* duly celebrated the Daughters' appearance at court upon the "assigned" day, when they "were in the waves to leave/Their blackness...true beauty to receive" (*Beauty* 47–49). The elaborate performance, with scripts by Ben Jonson (1572–1637), concluded by identifying Whitehall with the paradisiacal "Elysian Fields" of Greek mythology, in an echo song repeatedly intoning "The *Elysian* fields are here" (l.359).

Celebrations like these masques show drama's contribution to political power at English Renaissance courts. Their splendid spectacles framed monarchs in ways that distinctively articulated and augmented their authority, which has led critics to

study masque as a “highly sophisticated instrument of absolutist ideology” (Orgel and Strong 1973, 111; see also Strong 1973; Orgel 1975; Parry 1981; Goldberg 1989). But at the same time that asserting “The Elysian fields are *here*” in Whitehall Palace in 1608 casts the London court as the fulfillment of venerable Hellenic aspirations, the masque also undermines that Anglocentric gesture when it measures perfection by pointing away from the present-day court, in both place and time, to ancient Greece. The nymphs’ journey toward Britain to fully “refine” their beauty makes England pivotal; this nascent nationalism and racial privilege has greatly interested modern critics (Boose 1994; Hall 1995; Schwarz 2000). But for Renaissance audiences, the masque’s pull to England is countered by other attractions. Early modern intellectual tradition also would see the nymphs’ desire as a Neoplatonic yearning for Ideal Beauty: abstract, transcendent, and coextensive with the True and the Good. For Neoplatonism, mortals can approach Beauty by successive steps sponsored by love and by art, but the Ideal properly inhabits no material location whatsoever (Gordon 1975). Thus, the jubilant echo song that concludes *The Masque of Beauty* looks not only toward Jacobean Whitehall, but also away from it, reveling in “Elysian fields” remote from any triumphalist English present.

This doubleness of then and now, of there and here, also plays out in the stage business of *The Masque of Beauty*, and similarly complicates claims about masque figurations “realiz[ing] and embod[ying]” a “deep truth about the monarchy” (Orgel 1975, 38). When Niger’s daughters’ spectacle-boat glides across the hall and comes to rest before the king, Januarius proclaims that their “seat, which was before/ Thought straying, uncertain, floating to each shore” (*Beauty* ll.332–333), now has been spatially fixed, “made peculiar to this place alone” (l.337): congruent with the assertion that the immortal Elysian fields have materialized in seventeenth-century England, Januarius asserts that the Ideal “seat” of Beauty, formerly unfixd to any concrete location, now is manifest in London and London alone. Undermining this contention, however, the masque has just spectacularly illustrated the motility of that ostensibly stable “seat”:

This throne, as the whole island moved forward on the water, had a circular motion of its own ... the steps whereon the Cupids sat had a motion contrary ... and with these three varied motions at once, the whole scene shot itself to land. (*Beauty* ll.224–230)

This astonishing engineering feat left spectators marveling at the scenery’s *motion*: exactly what Januarius’ assertion of eternal stability denies. Moreover, Januarius’s fiction notwithstanding, spectators also know that the scene will be dismantled as soon as the evening’s festivities have concluded; the court, unlike the civic guilds and professional theaters, did not maintain stage properties after the occasion of their performance. (Jonson writes that it was “custom” for “people ... to deface [the] carcasses” – the sets – of court masques after performances [Orgel and Strong 1973, 90].) *Beauty*’s promises of immutability, then, are exuberantly fictional.

*The Masque of Beauty* proves typical of courtly art in displaying as much as concealing the fractures between aspiration and actuality, dominance and submission,

representation and reality. No doubt, monarchs could aspire to “use the arts to control and in a very real sense create the tastes, habits, beliefs and allegiances of their subjects” (Waller 1993, 15). But the complexity, subtlety, and interpretive unpredictability of artistic forms – the “multivalence if not sheer unknowability that is the chief characteristic of Renaissance courtly texts” (Bates 2007, 42) – do not make them docile servants of such hopes. Moreover, texts, courtiers, and even monarchs themselves could savor artworks’ multiple, often self-contradictory meanings. It may be true that “the creation of monarchs as an ‘image’ to draw people’s allegiance was the task of humanists, poets, writers and artists” (Strong 1973, 21), but the combination of purposefully wily ambiguity on the part of writers, the inevitably multiple meanings that language and images incorporate, and the inability of any artistic patron or producer to control how a text is received in either its initial environment or in the afterlives sponsored by print circulation or even gossip mean that court drama and poetry exercised effects beyond any single purposeful undertaking. The polyvalence of artistic effect does not diminish the significance of courtly drama and poetry. Rather, as they negotiate a “delicate balance between independence and involvement” in the “cultural bargain between writers and political leaders” (Patterson 1984, 7), court poetry and drama draw energy from gaps among incompatible claims, ideologies, and interests. As literature of the court both flatters and jibes, both submits to power and undermines it, “ambiguity becomes a creative and necessary instrument” (Patterson 1984, 11), arguably forging the aesthetic we come to value as distinctively literary. In drama, in poetry, and in the notion of the “court” itself, various kinds of authority – social, political, moral, creative – alternately exhibit and disavow their interdependence in a dance that can be complex, self-aware, playful, and rich.

### Fixed as the Isle

Competing claims of fixity and transience play out in the history of the court as well as in its fictions, and appreciating the mobility of “court” itself may qualify claims about art monumentalizing authority in the locale. Statutorily, “court” describes wherever the monarch happens to be: it “necessarily is holden always where the prince lieth” (Harrison [1587] 1968, 227). When a monarch undertook formal progresses through the realm, or went hunting, court became notably portable. During the Tudor era, bureaucratic innovation began to associate court functions more robustly with their physical settings. Hence, under Henry VIII (1491–1547), a 1536 Act of Parliament granted Whitehall Palace permanently special status, “demed reputed called and named the Kynge’s Paleys at Westminster forever” (Thurley 1993, 54). This status did not permanently fix the court, however; whereas Henry “was keen to monumentalize his authority through numerous commissions for new buildings,” his daughter Elizabeth I (1533–1603) declined to “fix monarchical splendor upon any kind of architectural setting,” and frequently departed the court on progresses, “consolidat[ing] a version of court space that had to feature her

authorizing presence” (Sillitoe 2010, 77–78; Cole 1999.) The contrary pulls of a charismatic focus on the peripatetic monarch versus a geographic emphasis on the spatially fixed palace produce one of the fruitful tensions within the notion of “the court.” This duality traces back to the court’s conceptual origins. Over the course of the fifteenth century, the monarch’s entourage evolved from the king’s “household,” attended by “household men,” to a “court” peopled by “courtiers” (Starkey 1987). When the English court came into being, “the continental literature of the court was borrowed, adapted or translated to describe it” (Starkey 1987, 3). *The Masque of Beauty’s* dialectic between “here” and “Elysium” in the Whitehall performance of paradise echoes the historical erection of the English court on alien foundations.

Another productive tension arises between the potency of exclusiveness and the capacities of dissemination. The immense print popularity of Baldassare Castiglione’s courtly-conduct manual *The Book of the Courtier* (1528), translated into English from the Italian by Sir Thomas Hoby in 1561, with further editions published in 1577, 1588, and 1603, shows outsiders’ fascination with courtly graces (Burke 1995). The fact that George Puttenham’s 1589 treatise about courtly verse, *The Arte of English Poesie* ([1589] 2007), was printed rather than circulating among court coterie in manuscript reveals wide literary interest. In literary practice, “imitation ensured that the influence of the court on literary culture extended beyond the limits of actual patronage networks” (Perry 2000, 106). Dissemination of courtly drama and poetry, through commercial manuscript duplication and even more through printing, exposed court performance to interpretation and evaluation in an emergent print public sphere (Zaret 1999; Shoet 2010). Just as with the countervailing pulls discussed above, the opposing pulls of exclusivity and inclusivity complicate the court’s position in culture. Outsiders’ emulation of court practice augments the status of courtly models, but extending court culture across the realm also “dispersed and undermined” the “cultural status” of the “actual court” (Betteridge and Riehl 2010, 14).

### Tilting at the Castle of Loyalty

*The Masque of Beauty’s* duplicities prove part of a dramatic tradition extending throughout the English Renaissance, as monarchs and their courts framed jousting tournaments and seasonal celebrations with fictions that both proclaimed and challenged the authority of the rulers who occasioned them. In 1522, courtiers of Henry VIII staged a Christmas “challenge of feactes of arms” against the King’s “Castle of Loyaltie” (Hall 1548, Fol. C. xxxiii) in a device notable for the king’s assiduously cultivating a dramatic challenge to his own power. When a party of courtiers “devise[d] all maner of engynes for the assaultying, [and] edge tole [edged tools] to breake the house and grounde,” the king’s determination to protract the staged belligerence – he “mynded to have it assaulted, and devised engins therefore” – kept carpenters busy into February (Fol. C. xxxiii). In May 1581, Elizabeth placed herself in the “Castle or Fortresse of perfect beautie,” which four of her courtiers “vowed to vanquishe & conquer by force who so should seeme to withstand it”; with apparently sanctioned

boldness, “without making any precise reuerence at all,” they “vttered ... speeches of defiaunce” (Goldring, Clarke, and Archer 2014, 75). Charles I’s French queen Henrietta Maria playfully dramatized a military challenge to her new country and its king, when – in the midst of English preparation for naval action against France – her summer progresses of 1628–1630 featured a portable mock castle in French colors, with military “Turrets,” “battlements,” and “peeeces of Ordenaunce” (Britland 2006, 64), effectively staging a “mocking invasion of the English landscape by a French conqueror” (Astington 1999, 132).

Why do monarchs tolerate, support, or indeed undertake dramatic challenges to their dominion? Some possible reasons cast play as training and display; reporting on the 1522 Christmas games King Henry so enjoyed, Edward Hall remarked that the sallies by costumed knights (including the King) advantageously displayed “the men of armes of Englande, but most of all ... the kynges strength” (1548, Fol. C. xxxiii). Or, as modern critics have suggested, staging resistance can contribute to monarchical authority when that subversion is eventually contained (Greenblatt 1988; Montrose 1995). Beyond this, the relationship between court power and theatricality draws energy precisely from the irreducible complexity – the blend of convergence and contradictions – in their claims, aims, and effects. When court masques present King James as Albion (in *The Masque of Beauty*), Queen Anna as Athena (in Daniel’s 1604 *Vision of the Twelve Goddesses*), or King Charles as Britannocles (in Davenant’s 1638 *Britannia Triumphans*), accounts of these events speed by letter and word-of-mouth throughout London, the English provinces, and the royal courts of Europe; print versions of their scripts circulate into the book trade; their songs and instrumental music become part of the repertoire performed by amateur and professional players alike for years afterwards (Shohet 2010). These representations of royal power, replicating beyond their courtly performances into public culture, indubitably contribute to the models of authority monarchs purposefully seek to promulgate, “not simply an image of [King James’s] power, but the power of himself as image” (Goldberg 1989, 33). But, whereas Goldberg maintains that “such power extended from [James’s] exemplary form to embrace the entire state” (1989, 33), the naked theatricality of such spectacles of power also obviates any pretense of naturalness or inevitability. Instead, participants themselves can cannily “read ... [the] rituals as forms of power” (Butler 2008). The importance of drama in Tudor-Stuart performances of political authority does not attest only to the monarch’s power to manipulate images, or to drama’s propagandistic capacity to dupe unwitting spectators (Sharpe 1987; Knowles 2015). It also reveals the power of drama itself, on which the self-fashioning (Greenblatt 1980) of kings and commoners alike depends.

### Kindly Service

Just as masquers and monarchs fashion selves in the banqueting halls and tilyards of princely palaces, courtly poets of the Renaissance perform identities on the page, crafting new verses in the stanzas (Italian for “rooms”) of inherited forms. Courtly verse

draws vitality from dynamic negotiations of dominance and submission, presence and absence, center and margin, then and now. Poetry is not only socially instrumental – a means for supplicants to sue for favor in “words ... [that] could be used at the same time to create a romantic fiction and to characterize the dynamics of a real client-patron relationship” (Tennenhouse 1981, 238) – but also crafts an alternative arena whose hierarchies are aesthetic rather than social. Non-aristocratic courtly poets can “form ... an alliance with a readership which will appreciate and support a new idea of poetry” in verse that “put[s] forth its own virtues as a challenge to the hereditary basis of the aristocratic hegemony” at the same time that the courtly milieu “invests the resentful poet with an undoubted appreciation of the profits of that system (Huntington 2001, 9, 14; Whigham 1984). The proportion in present-day anthologies of Renaissance poets who were active at the Tudor and Stuart courts (Wyatt (c. 1503–1542), Surrey (1516/17–1547), Spenser (1552?–1599), Sidney (1554–1586), Donne (1572–1631), Jonson (1572–1637), and Wroth (1587?–1651/53) being only the most familiar names), display poetry as a central courtly undertaking. Some strong claims for poetry’s importance at court derive, somewhat suspiciously, from poets themselves. But a vibrant symbiotic relationship between poetry and the court is at least imaginatively central in the English Renaissance. It may prove all the more telling if it is partly fictive.

Monarchs themselves wrote poetry. The Elizabethan period “was presided over by a poetry-writing queen” (Summit 2003, 68), and before ascending the English throne as James I, King James VI of Scotland published *Essays of a Prentice in the Divine Art of Poesy* (1584), *His Majesties Poetical Exercises at Vacant Hours* (1591), and included poems in his book of political theory *Basilikon Doron* (“The Book of the King,” 1599). Elizabeth I not only penned verses, but also translated portions of Horace’s treatise *Ars Poetica* (Bradner 1964). Indeed, Jennifer Summit counters expectations that Renaissance poetics are normatively masculinist with Puttenham’s claim that English poetry “finds its ultimate model in what he calls, in reference to Elizabeth, ‘the arte of a ladies penne’” (2003, 72).

Monarchs’ willingness to “apprentice” themselves to poetry, in the words of King James’s 1584 title, attest to the art’s standing at Renaissance courts. The opportunities poetry provides to these monarchs’ subjects is perhaps even more interesting. Sir Thomas Wyatt, clerk of the jewels to Henry VIII, European diplomat, and the poet who introduced the fourteen-line sonnet into English, crafted English verses that show courtiers using poetry to simultaneously defer to monarchical authority and resist it, to claim authorial privilege and blandly retreat into plausible deniability, to assert individual subjectivity and meld their voices into tradition.

Wyatt’s “Mine own John Poyntz,” for instance, excoriates courtly corruption. Explaining “the cause why that homeward I me draw,/And flee the press of courts” ([1557] 1975, ll.2–3), Wyatt’s speaker decries the stifling hypocrisy of court hierarchy, which demands that courtiers “live thrall under the awe/Of lordly looks” (ll.4–5), flatteringly “cloak the truthe for praise without desert” (ll.19–20), and “with the nearest virtue ... cloak alway the vice” (l.61). Sick of fawning, Wyatt’s speaker flees home, where he can “hunt and ... hawk/... And ... at my book ... sit” (ll.80–81). Away from the courtly surveillance that required “him .../Rather than to be,

outwardly to seem" (ll.91–92), the rusticated poet will be observed only when he chooses. Accordingly, he welcomes his reader into the study where the poet "read[s] and rhyme[s]" (l.101) and invites his intimate friend – not the courtly hierarchy – to "judge how I do spend my time" (l.103).

"Mine own John Poytz" casts flight from court as disgusted abandonment. Cagily, the poem declines to mention that the historical Wyatt's withdrawal from court was involuntary. Wyatt departed London following his release from the Tower, where King Henry had imprisoned him. The poem similarly half-occludes other contexts that compromise purported self-determination. Repulsed by the demands of courtly duplicity, Wyatt's speaker cries out with stirring intimacy, "no, no, it will not be!" (l.76). Yet the immediacy of this address is mediated by the poem's derivation: this heartfelt protest against Wyatt's local situation is also a faithful translation of an Italian poem, the tenth satire of Luigi Alamanni (1495–1556). This plaint is spoken in the words of another poet, bemoaning another – Medici – court.

This status as adaptive translation does not reduce "Mine Own John Poyntz" to mere mimicry. Instead, speaking to and with and through an earlier poem, the verses engage their moment through the rich humanist strategy of *imitatio*: the selective, interpretive, creative mining of foregoing texts that allows a new artwork to "resemble" its precursor, in Petrarch's words to Boccaccio, "without reproducing it" (Petrarch [1345–1366] 1966, 198). This "allows historical texts to serve as resources for invention" (Leff 1997, 97). As translation, "Mine Own John Poyntz" "thinks with" (Lupton 2011) its precursor, alluding to other texts and engaging inherited forms in ways characteristic of humanism (Greene 1982; Colie 1972). Immediate personal circumstance and more removed source-text constitute double centers of gravity for humanist writers, yielding poems that do not so much circle symmetrically around one origin of authority (king, patron, poet) as embark on elliptical or eccentric orbits, variably tugged by multiple gravitational fields.

Heterogeneous sources of authority animate courtly poetry with their divergent agendas: patron and poet, politics and language, church and state, the regal prerogative of violence that can censor a page or end a life and the writerly prerogative of eternizing in verse a poet's views about that violence. Rather like court pageants that challenge as well as celebrate regal potency, courtly poetry often illuminates rather than obfuscates its contradictory attraction to different potencies. If "John Poyntz" publicizes Wyatt's expulsion from court at the same time that it recasts disgrace as righteous indignation, other Wyatt poems reframe other losses and gains. "Whoso list to hunt," which invokes a powerful temporal ruler setting an erstwhile paramour out of bounds for the desiring sonneteer, may be animated by Wyatt's amorous history with Anne Boleyn before her marriage to Henry VIII:

Whoso list to hunt: I know where is an hind.

But as for me, alas I may no more:

...

There is written her fair neck round about:

"Noli me tangere," for Caesar's I am. (ll.1–2, 13–14)

This verse defers to the king's might, and the lover admits to losing the erotic competition. But he seizes a different kind of agency by penning the sonnet. This writerly authority itself proves subject to further, internal contradictions. The Latin phrase and Roman reference that conclude "Whoso List" draw in the authority of Classicism – an area where Wyatt is more expert than his prince – displaying the humanist knowledge whose mastery is one way to achieve status at the Tudor court (Starkey 1986; Herman 1994). But the poet's recuperating his erotic loss in the stylized, Italian form of the sonnet displays its own dialectic of mastery and submission when the inherited form dictates the poet's lines at the same time that the poet bends the form to his immediate expressive ends.

Wyatt's "They Flee from Me" braids even more kinds of assertion and retraction into the enticingly open "They" whose flight the poem describes:

They flee from me, that sometime did me seek  
With naked foot stalking in my chamber.  
I have seen them gentle, tame, and meek  
That now are wild, and do not remember  
That sometime they put themselves in danger  
To take bread at my hand; and now they range,  
Busily seeking with a continual change. (ll.1–7)

This description of elusive erstwhile companions, sometimes diffident and supplicating, sometimes assertive and untamed, could pertain to deer, birds, courtiers (notoriously factionalized at the volatile Henrician court), women, or indeed poems ("naked foot" evoking meter, and "tak[ing] bread" at the poet's "hand" suggesting how imagined words and pictures become manifest in the world when the writer inks them onto the page). Any definitive referent for "they" flees the interpreter as fleetly as these candidates escape the speaker. But in the next stanza, this erstwhile "they" becomes a singular object of desire, and the dialectical power relations of tiptoeing petitioner and nourishing bread-giver simplify into a dominant feminine seducer:

Thanked be fortune it hath been otherwise  
Twenty times better, but once in special,  
In thin array after a pleasant guise  
When her loose gown from her shoulders did fall,  
And she me caught in her arms long and small,  
Therewithal sweetly did me kiss,  
And softly said, 'Dear Heart, how like you this?' (ll.8–14)

Whether "she" be a generic beloved, Anne Boleyn, or the Muse who once inspired poetry from a now-blocked writer, this stanza fantasizes fulfillment in place of the previous stanza's frustration. The *déshabillée* figure seizes agency ("she me caught"), and with the homonym "heart"/"hart" (male deer), her kisses turn the captive speaker into the kind of trepidatious suitor that "with naked foot stalk[ed]" previously in his chamber.



The final stanza turns the tables once again:

It was no dream: I lay broad waking.  
 But all is turned thorough my gentleness  
 Into a strange fashion of forsaking,  
 And I have leave to go of her goodness,  
 And she also, to use newfangleness.  
 But since that I so kindly am served,  
 I would fain know what she hath deserved. (ll.14–21)

The poet asserts his own innocence (“my gentleness”) against “her” faithlessness. The poet unveils the beloved’s fickleness with savage irony (she abandons him willfully, following “strange fashion” and “newfangleness” – readings that resonate as much with the factional vicissitudes of the Henrician court, and with the changing fashions of poetry, as with the cruel-mistress tradition of poetry), mockingly cites the mistress’s supercilious euphemism (“I have leave to go, of her goodness”), and decries the inherent infidelity of women (he is served “kindly”, that is according to “kind” or “nature”). At the same time that this stanza discloses the speaker’s rejection, it enacts poetic revenge by closing with the rhetorical question of what the faithless mistress “deserved” – the unspoken answer being “this poem.”

### To Fashion a Gentleman

Central premises of *The Arte of English Poesy* – the “central handbook of the new courtly aesthetic in England” (Norbrook [1984] 2002, 70) that Elizabethan courtier George Puttenham published in 1589 – both assert the importance of poetry and court and compromise critical claims that poetry can serve as a straightforward instrument of identifiable interests. Puttenham equates poetry, courtliness, and equivocation, introducing “*allegoria*” (by which he means figurative language generally) as “the Courtier, or Figure of False Semblant” (2007, 271). For Puttenham, to be courtly is to “speak one thing and think another, [such] that our words and our meanings meet not” (270). This duplicity can prove venal or delightful. On the one hand, Puttenham’s concession that without “false semblant” men “never or very seldom ... thrive and prosper in the world” (271) concurs with Wyatt’s most court-weary speakers. On the other hand, Puttenham takes as “courtly” all non-literal – which is to say literary – language. Rhetoric depends upon figurative language, which alone can “pleasantly utter and persuade” (270), and so does poetry. All artful language – “every speech wrested from his own natural signification to another not altogether so natural” (270) is duplicitous, and hence, for Puttenham, courtly.

For Puttenham, the poet (“*poeta*” in Greek, from *poieisis* or “making”), is “both a maker and a counterfeiter” (93–94). Queen Elizabeth is Puttenham’s consummate poet, uniting three different kinds of “making.” First, Puttenham lauds Elizabeth’s actual poetry; the queen’s “learned, delicate, noble Muse easily surmounteth all the

rest that have written before her time or since" (151). Second, Elizabeth is "in our time, the most excellent poet" because she uses her regal "purse, favors, and countenance" to "mak[e] in manner what [she] list" (95): she can craft rich men from poor, learned men from the "lewd," render "the coward courageous, and vile both noble and valiant" (95). Third, the queen can fashion and refashion herself: "for imitation ... [her] person is a most cunning counterfeiter lively representing Venus in countenance, in life Diana, Pallas for government, and Juno in all honor and regal magnificence" (95). Valorizing his queen's "imitation" of the goddesses, Puttenham acclaims, rather than indicts, generative mimesis.

If the queen's ability to fashion her self celebrates the opportunities of *poesis*, the transformative possibilities of poetry for mere subjects who lack the royal prerogatives whereby the queen can remake men's fortunes are even more dramatic. Composing his allegorical epic *The Faerie Queene* ([1590, 1596] 1977), Edmund Spenser accordingly seeks not only to create an imaginative world rendering real experience "in mirrours more then one" (III.Proem.5–6), but also "to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline" (Letter to Raleigh, 737). The poem indeed fashions fit readers, who learn alongside Spenser's knights errant to parse his tale's romance landscape, becoming more shrewdly versed in "virtue" and "gentility," as Spenser envisioned, through penetrating its complex allegory. *The Faerie Queene* also fashioned Edmund Spenser himself: Elizabeth recompensed its first three books with a stipend, and Spenser advanced as an administrator in Ireland.

In addition to instruction of "noble persons" generally, *The Faerie Queene* addresses courtly behavior specifically in its final book, "The Legend of Courtesie" (the term "courtesy" being lexically rooted in "court"). This last portion of the epic, written some years after the first half, may seek to "define proper courtesie" because it was "no longer practiced or possessed" at court (Javitch 1978, 141), so that courtiers might "regain the ideal of courtesie they ha[d] lost" (145). Other critics suggest that Spenser may not have been so courtly as literary history imagines. Steven May (1991) argues that "resident in Ireland for almost a decade, Spenser necessarily lacked any firsthand understanding of Elizabeth's court as he wrote the first three books of *The Faerie Queene* [1590]," and even upon his return to England, "Spenser's vision of the diverse, complicated milieu of the court was too brief and viewed from too subordinate a position to lend much authority to ... his writings" (33–34). If the image of Spenser as a courtier-poet endures irrespective of its accuracy, this attests to how effectively he fashioned himself poetically as a courtly intimate encoding the ethos of his exalted surroundings in verse and reciting his oeuvre – "the which to heare, vouchsafe, O dearest dred a-while" (I.Proem.4–9) – directly to the queen.

Just as *The Faerie Queene* ensconces its narrative persona at court while the historical Spenser resided in Ireland, "words and meaning meet not," in Puttenham's phrase, in the Elizabethan trope of courtly love. This tradition casts the queen as an unattainable mistress, bureaucratic aspiration as erotic longing, the desire for regal access as romantic passion, and the monarch's political autonomy as devotion to chastity. Edward de Vere, the Earl of Oxford (1550–1604) whose fortunes at

Elizabeth's court waxed and waned (May 1991), writes verse that recalls Petrarch's poetic ardor for his beloved Laura while also inviting, recording, and responding to the Queen's favor:

Wing'de with desyre, I seeke to mount on hyghe;  
Clogde with myshapp yet am I kept full low;

...

I dwelt sometymes at rest yet must remove,  
With fayngned joye I hyde my secret greefe.  
I would possess yet needs must flee the place  
Where I do seek to wyn my cheefest grace  
Lo thus I lyve twyخته feare and comforte toste,  
With least abode wher best I feell contente

(“Wing'de with desyre,” ll.1–2, 15–20)

The object of this passion is conveniently undecidable. Monarchs expected to approve or disallow courtiers' liaisons, and courtiers – including Oxford – often fell out of favor by pursuing unsanctioned romances. Using the same language to profess devotion to an unauthorized beloved and to petition for readmittance to the prohibiting monarch's good graces makes for unassailable poets – and satisfyingly complex poetry.

The court's interweaving of affective passion, social desire, and political aspiration created a figurative economy that would undergird English poetry for generations to come. As John Donne struggled to rise at King James's court without taking holy orders (as the king wished him to), and also fell in love with his patron's daughter (with whom he eloped), Donne ([1633] 1971) met simultaneous vocational and romantic frustration at court with verse that vaunted its own ambiguity: “Whoever guesses, thinks, or dreams he knows/Who is my mistress, wither by this curse” (“The Curse,” ll.1–2). Donne's poems cagily intertwine complex syntax, extended metaphors, and indeterminate frames of reference:

Not that I shall repair my unthrifty waste  
Of breath and blood, upon thy sighs, and tears,  
By being to thee then what to me thou wast;  
But, so great joy, our life at once outwears,  
Then, lest thy love, by my death, frustrate be,  
If thou love me, take heed of loving me.

(“The Prohibition,” ll.3–8)

Both the convoluted argument of lines like “by being to thee then what to me thou wast” and the Latinate syntax of lines like “But, so great joy, our life at once outwears” make for texts so elusive that New Critics of the twentieth century understood the poems to be removed from their historical contexts altogether (Brooks 1947). But this density arises from the historically specific difficulties of Donne's situation. Similarly, the heterosexual erotic reciprocity so striking in Donne poems like “The

Canonization” and “The Good Morrow” can seem so out of joint with their era that mid-century critics like Brooks alleged Donne’s voice to be transhistorical. Here too, however, the poems’ anomalously mutual heterosexual erotics figure their speakers’ resistance to a historically particular phenomenon: the non-mutuality of courtly power relationships (Marotti 1986).

### All Princes, I

Renaissance courts preserved within their boundaries a rarified, uniquely powerful milieu, but their influence also radiated outward. Courtly poetry and drama contributed to royal power while also underwriting subjects’ aspiration and social mobility. “Interest in poetry and allegorical fiction among the Elizabethan elite clearly helped to stir and shape courtly ambition among a less elevated class of ambitious and literate men” (Perry 2000, 113), and the canonical centrality of court poetry, as well as the legacy of the forms court poets developed, reveal its enduring importance beyond the court’s bounds.

The impact of English Renaissance courts persists not only through literary traditions, but more broadly in the forms of subjectivity those traditions underwrite. If Donne’s lovers seem modern, that may be less because their insistence on inward autonomy, resistance to external management of their passions, and celebration of mutual, heteroerotic love are transhistorical or anachronistic than because they shaped ensuing sensibilities. Courtliness also sows emergent, non-courtly modes of thought in establishing notions of “courtesy” and “courtship” that then evolve into something quite distinct from their origins. Before the sixteenth century, the term “courtesy” was uniquely associated with the court; during the Renaissance, it became instead a marker of interpersonal decorum. The word “courtship” likewise transformed from indicating residence at court to “the modern amorous sense” (Bates 1992, 7). Courtly demands, that is, elicited modes of selfhood that subsequently were adopted more generally. And we might take the popularly circulating treatises on court behavior – “essentially handbooks for actors, practical guides for a society whose members were nearly always on stage” (Greenblatt 1980, 162) – to include not only conduct manuals like *The Book of the Courtier*, but also the love poetry instructing suitors in sublimating and transforming their desires into writing that furthers their ambitions, and into psychological structures of self-management that meet the modern world (Gil 2006).

As forms of subjectivity and forms of poetic sensibility evolve together, some poems offer opportunities for individual sovereign subjects to replace monarchs altogether. Donne’s “The Sun Rising” recounts erotic self-fulfillment eclipsing first courtiership, then kingship. The poem relegates the “busy old fool” (l.1) of the sun to governing “late school-boys,” “sour prentices,” and “court-huntsmen” (l.6, 7). The poet-lover, by contrast, enjoys majestic autonomy: “Ask for those kings whom thou saw’st yesterday,/... thou shalt hear, All here in one bed lay” (ll.19–20). “Yesterday” concluded, the beloved becomes “all states” and the speaker replaces

the monarch: “all princes, I” (l.21). The lovers do not imitate monarchs, but rather the reverse: “Princes do but play us” (l.23). Using the conventions of courtly Petrarchan love poetry developed in relation to overbearing monarchs, the non-aristocratic, self-determining subject now asserts his own sovereignty, instructing the sun “This bed thy centre is, these walls, thy sphere” (l.30). Donne’s lover here lays claim to the Stuart iconography of the monarch as sun. In place of grand masque spectacle staging the “light sciential” of the king (Jonson, *Beauty* l.228), the diminutive lyric stanza makes, in the words of “The Good Morrow,” “one little room an everywhere” (l.11).

### What to Read Next

Barroll (2000); Britland (2006); Frye (1993); Parry (1981); Starkey (2000).

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# The Household

*Mary E. Trull*

Households are social spaces, where material and social relations interact; the concept of a household encompasses culturally contingent relations of property, kinship, affection and intimacy, gender and sexuality, and authority and submission. The notion of a household also draws upon basic cognitive categories such as inside/outside, family/stranger, home/away, and private/public. Political debates over the “traditional” family, marriage, or home posit such categories as innate and fixed, as essential aspects of our identity as human beings; and yet the most cursory historical study of the early modern period reveals household features that violate modern expectations. Our task as literary scholars of the early modern period is to recognize both the ubiquity and the volatility of these concepts; such concepts cross historical periods while radically changing their meanings. “Family,” for example, identified the masters and servants in an early modern household, rather than a kinship group living under one roof (*OED* A.I.1.a). “Friends” normally included extended family, business associates, and political and social allies, not a voluntarily chosen group of intimates (*OED* A.3). The concept of “bedfellow,” a person of the same sex with whom one shares a bed, has disappeared along with the common practice of keeping beds fully occupied for warmth and companionship (*OED* 1). Early modern households offer us the challenge of remaining alert to both continuity and discontinuity.

Scholars strive to resist unduly “othering” the early modern period, or creating a caricature that assumes radical difference, but they must also attempt to acknowledge and fully explore historical change in both real and ideal households. Past scholarship on the household has been powerfully motivated by a desire to understand how modern social spaces differ from those of the past, and how and when changes in domestic life occurred. Relying on historians Lawrence Stone (1977) and Philippe Ariès and Georges Duby ([1986] 1989), Jürgen Habermas ([1962]

1989) proposed that the pre-modern family, an extended kinship network oriented toward promoting its members' worldly success, was gradually superseded by a family composed of parents and children and focused on emotional nurturing. This new family meant a new form of subjectivity, a "saturated and free interiority," conceived as a site of authenticity produced by the "emancipation ... of an inner realm, following its own laws, from extrinsic purposes of any sort" (Habermas [1962] 1989, 28, 47). According to the trajectory described by Stone and Ariès, the early modern household, on a fulcrum of historical change, teeters between its past condition of unproblematic publicity and its future as the locus of privacy and modern selfhood. For critics drawing upon Stone, Ariès, and Habermas in order to locate the beginnings of the modern family in the seventeenth century, early modern literature is a crucible for the "modern" consciousness constructed by a new sense of privacy.

Like the distance between past and present, the gap between actual and fictional or theoretical households presents a problem for scholarship on early modern studies. Treating "the early modern household" as a conceptual category creates an ideal that may conflict with actual households. Moreover, such gaps between household theory and reality may themselves become the subject of the fictive worlds of early modern drama. To illustrate this point, I will take as exemplars two plays, Ben Jonson's comedy, *Epicoene: or, The Silent Woman* ([1609–1610] 1979) and the anonymous tragedy, *Arden of Faversham* ([c. 1590] 1973). In both plays, the social roles of husband, wife, master, and servant are subjected to radical questioning, while at the same time held up as fixed ideals. Male heads of households are measured against an ideal patriarch, a dispenser of justice and model of virtue who instructs and guides a household of subordinates. This charismatic ideal fails in both plays, apparently collapsing from the weight of its own inflated pretensions in *Epicoene* and, more problematically, eclipsed by subordinates' competitive mania to gain their own authority in *Arden*. Servants and wives at first offer patriarchs a sense of fantastic omnipotence, but it is a sense quickly exposed as a delusion when they sabotage patriarchal authority. Both plays leave us wondering whether the patriarchal household could ever succeed in filling the role prescribed in household advice of the time.

Like any social space, the household is continually in tension between various forms of abstraction and experience. The household resides in the gaps: between architects' plans and inhabitants' daily lives, between social history's statistics and individual experiences, between stage households and households represented in personal letters or memoirs. No one of these representations of the household is more real or historically accurate than the others. Henri Lefebvre ([1974] 1991) contends that the "dominant space in any society (or mode of production)" is "conceptualized space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers ... all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived" (38). But Lefebvre insists that the space of the planners, however dominant, can always be appropriated through use, making it "space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the

space of ‘inhabitants’ and ‘users’” (39). For literary scholars, this difference between lived and represented households can be an opportunity in interpretation; it opens up the possibility that literature appropriates the household rather than merely reflecting it.

It is important that we recognize the households of literature and art as not merely conceptual, in the sense that a conceptual abstraction might be seen as an imitation or shadow of lived experience. The households we view in creative work are not simply distorted mirrors of the real households that social historians and archaeologists seek to uncover. In order to resist enshrining the social as a fixed, homogenous realm, Bruno Latour (2007) proposed Actor-Network Theory to capture how individual agents and the associations among them generate meaning through action. For Latour, social aggregates are self-created, emergent, and dynamic rather than fixed and stable. “Groups are not silent things,” he writes, “but rather the provisional product of a constant uproar made by the millions of contradictory voices about what is a group and who pertains to what” (31). Others have emphasized the creative power of literature, performance, and art to resist containment by social structures. For example, Michael Warner (2002) calls this power “poetic world-making” (114). Warner describes how a public is self-organized through discourse; such a public may “seek to transform fundamental styles of embodiment, identity, and social relations – including their unconscious manifestations, the vision of the good life embedded in them, and the habitus by which people continue to understand their selves or bodies as public or private” (51). In the same way that Habermas’s “public sphere” has been superseded by “publics,” “counterpublics,” or, in Lauren Berlant’s work (2008), “intimate publics,” the notion of “the private sphere” is also giving way to the study of privacy as a social space generated through performance. Current studies in literature and the early modern household are moving away from measuring past households against fixed models of modern and pre-modern social structures. Informed by critical theory and feminism, household studies are attending to how social spaces emerge through action in dynamic networks of association (Korda 2002; McKeon 2005; Trull 2013).

In the following analysis of *Epicoene* and *Arden of Faversham*, household spaces emerge through conflict. It is the struggle to maintain and defend household authority that generates comedy and tragedy, respectively, in these plays. These conflicts over authority are framed by contested notions of privacy, gender, and ownership. In these plays’ rendering of social and material relations, the household’s private status is as important as the householder’s authority. Fetishized privacy and its opposite, a lack of distinction between private and public space, seem equally bankrupt, and lead to comic or tragic punishment, respectively, of both the patriarch and his misbehaving subordinates. Both plays conflate the household’s privacy and the privacy of women’s bodies; a wife’s possession by her husband assures proper boundaries around the household, while a too-public household instantly draws into question the chastity of its women. When a contest for authority occurs, male struggles for dominance take place through control of the bodies of women, whether wives or servants.

### ***Epicoene*: Privacy and Authority**

*Epicoene*, a city comedy, is justly famous for its evocation of chaotic urban life, but Jonson is just as concerned with the urban households rife in the play; viewed by Jonson's satirical eye, each offers a differently askew domestic ideal (Bradbrook 1955, 44). The home of the play's scapegoat, Morose, is an obsessively controlled empire that he defends against the outer world of London's public life by attempting to silence all noise. The inept gallant LaFoole and Captain and Mistress Otter provide foils for Morose by striving to turn their households into public thoroughfares. Morose's fixation on patriarchal control meets its inverse in the College, a household of pretentious women who reside without men in order to fully indulge in sexual freedom. Only the leisured young gentlemen, Dauphine and Clerimont, who make no explicit claim to patriarchal authority, possess households of freedom and pleasure.

Morose experiences other voices as intrusions on an absolute privacy he can only defend through perfected mastery of his house and household. He revels in the thought of domestic space entirely shaped and controlled by the male householder, an ideal he expresses through a delight in the sound of his own voice and an impassioned desire to silence every other noise. In Morose's first scene, he requires his servant to bow, or "make a leg," repeatedly in response to his anxious inquiries after the security of his house and his voluble self-congratulations on his own method of mastership (2.1). His servants' silence suggests to Morose a delirious omnipotence, a wonderful sovereignty achieved through correct method and doctrine. His repeated demand, "Answer me not but with your leg," communicates his wish for a household of voiceless objects in which he is the sole agent: "All discourses but mine own afflict me, they seem harsh, impertinent, and irksome" (1.2.17, 3–5). Morose needs a wife and servants to mirror his authority, to "fit" "the true height of [his] blood" and portray him to himself as a potentate; but in order to preserve this mirroring function he must deny their existence as persons and agents (2.5.19–20).

Jonson links Morose's pathology closely to the house itself. Morose has "chosen a street to lie in so narrow at both ends that it will receive no coaches nor carts nor any of these common noises" and there he has devised "a room with double walls and treble ceilings, the windows close shut and caulked, and there he lives by candle-light" (1.1.161–163, 178–180). Abroad, he defends himself by wearing "a huge turban of nightcaps on his head, buckled over his ears" (1.1.139–140). Jonson depicts Morose's excessive concern with mastery as the generator of ridiculous transformations: "Fishes, Pythagoreans all!" Truewit cries upon encountering the mute staff (2.2.3). Morose's ideal is "the Turk," who "in this divine discipline is admirable, exceeding all the potentates of the earth; still waited on by mutes, and all his commands so executed ... an exquisite art!" (1.2.28–33). The spectacle of Morose at home displays a ludicrously excessive image of household mastery by contrasting the servants' exaggerated gestures of subservience with Morose's ecstatic pleasure in the Turkish potentate's "exquisite art." The play ends with the metaphorical destruction of Morose's house: "They have rent my roof, walls, and all my windows asunder," he cries, oppressed by the noise of his wedding (4.2.116–117).

Morose's desire for silence has long appeared to critics of *Epicoene* to be a symptom of social or psychological pathology, rather than a mere foible serving to drive Jonson's "comedy of affliction" (2.6.35–36; Lanier 1994; Newman 1989; Slights 1994). However, we should also recognize that Jonson is diagnosing a broader societal condition, one that expresses itself in household conduct books of the period. In Morose's "exquisite art," Jonson mocks this popular genre, written by English divines and ultimately deriving from Heinrich Bullinger's *The Christian State of Matrimony*, translated by Miles Coverdale in 1541. For example, Morose's interrogation of Epicoene, his bride to be, in 2.5 parodies recommendations on investigating the chastity and modesty of one's intended in works such as Henry Smith's *A Preparative to Marriage* (1591). John Dod and Robert Cleaver copied this particular section of Smith's book largely verbatim in *A Godlie Forme of Householde Gouvernment*, published in six editions between 1598 and 1630. In Morose's style of governance, Jonson mocks the household "doctrine and impulsion" envisioned by authors of domestic advice manuals such as Smith, Dod, and Cleaver (2.1.27–28). With his usual contempt for promoters of godly discipline, like Tribulation and Ananias in *The Alchemist* (1610) and Zeal-of-the-land Busy in *Bartholomew Fair* (1614), Jonson implies that such drives for mastery are underwritten by self-regard and licentiousness rather than high-mindedness. The desire for order reflects a solipsistic concern to banish other minds from a domestic space imagined as the bounds of the household's sovereign selfhood. Morose's markedly ungodly form of household government, pursued with the greatest solemnity and singleness of purpose, brings him a saturnalian punishment in Jonson's play: Morose finally relinquishes domestic authority, offering to become his heir's ward (5.4.161).

The notion that rules of good conduct might help correct the play's household disorders itself becomes a target of satire. Characters gladly take up the role of moral advisor, but their advice is clearly delusional and only generates further chaos. Morose congratulates himself on his imitation of the "divine discipline" of the "Turk," and in similar fashion, Mistress Otter strives to "reign in my own house" as "princess" by her own heterodox principles of "good morality" (2.1.28–29, 3.1.30, 53). Truewit descends upon each household in turn with a moral harangue highlighting its perversions (Barish 1960; Slights 1994, 85–86). By assuming one absurd admonitory persona after another, he undercuts the authority of conventional domestic wisdom. Truewit's form of parodic advice joins a maelstrom of faulty "morality," "discipline," and "counsel." Conventional moral authorities are jumbled together randomly: allusions to Seneca (4 BCE–65 CE) and Plutarch (c. 45–c. 120) bolster foolish philosophizing, but the authors are repeatedly confused with one another (1.1.59, 2.3.40–41). Truewit's discourse is a mockery of moral advice; Clerimont calls it a preacher-like "stoicity," cobbled together from "Plutarch's *Morals* ... or some such tedious fellow" (1.1.59). Sir John Daw proposes Seneca and Plutarch to cure Morose's distraction, though others prefer "an excellent book of moral philosophy ... of Reynard the Fox and all the beasts," or *The Sick Man's Salve* (1558), or *Greene's Goat's-worth of Wit* (1592) (1.1.59, 2.3.40–41, 4.4.76–99, 4.4.114–115). Such books – or a good sermon, Mistress Trusty promises – cure efficaciously by putting

one to sleep (4.4.114–115). The Collegians, a household of women, offer Epicoene their own “good and mature counsel” on how to manage husbands, a program for “taming her wild male” (4.3.12–26).

Jonson sets Morose’s frantically defended and mastered household against the Otters’, which opens itself to the public that Morose excludes; the Otters promiscuously violate the divisions of public and private that are wildly exaggerated by Morose. While Morose desperately tries to exclude from his household all voices but his own, the Otters seek with equal desperation to bring the city over their threshold. They immerse themselves in London’s public life, what Truewit describes as going “abroad where the matter is frequent, to court, to tiltings, public shows and feasts, to plays, and church sometimes . . . to see and be seen” (4.1.53–56). Earlier, Jonson mocked citizen householders intent on bringing the court to their home in *Poetaster* (1601), and here he suggests that the Otters’ home has become a public thoroughfare. Public and private distinctions have gone awry; as Ian Donaldson (1970, 33–34) notes, *Epicoene* is full of doors shut and open, windows leaned out of, and entrances invited and barred. La Foole describes Mistress Otter, with inadvertent double-entendre, as “the rich china-woman that the courtiers visited so often, that gave the rare entertainment” (1.4.25–26). In this description the Otters’ house resembles either a china shop or a brothel. For a citizen’s wife to be visited by courtiers suggests, for Jonson, a confusion of private and public space equivalent to making her body a public thoroughfare. The space of the household becomes embodied in the wife, whose chastity cannot be guaranteed unless she is immured in privacy.

The Otters’ deviance lies in their reversed marital roles as well as their violation of distinctions between city and court, and public and private. Jonson satirizes the courtliness Mistress Otter aspires to attain, as well as her husband’s predilection for drinking games and bear-baiting. Mistress Otter accuses her husband of behaving like an apprentice in front of her courtly guests: “Never a time that the courtiers or collegiates come to the house, but you make it a Shrove Tuesday! I would have you get your Whitsuntide velvet cap and your staff i’ your hand to entertain ’em; yes, in troth, do” (3.1.5–8). Domestic authority has been inverted in the Otter household; Truewit remarks that Captain Otter “is his wife’s subject; he calls her princess, and at such times as these follows her up and down the house like a page, with his hat off, partly for heat, partly for reverence” (2.6.51–53). The captain’s fondness for bear-baiting embarrasses his wife and confounds her pretensions to court society, and she threatens to banish him: “I’ll send you over to the Bankside, I’ll commit you to the master of the Garden, if I hear but a syllable more. Must my house, or my roof, be polluted with the scent of bears and bulls, when it is perfumed for great ladies?” (3.1.25–29). The Captain’s inveterate inclination toward citizen pastimes and his wife’s frantic pursuit of court society bring two spheres under one roof, making the Otters, who are ironically unlike their amphibian namesakes, unfit for either court or city. Similarly, the captain’s subjection to his wife makes the Otters monsters, like their namesake, the “*animal amphibium*” (1.4.24). Like Mistress Quickly in Shakespeare’s *Henriad*, they are “neither fish nor flesh,” neither proper wife, nor husband.

An open and permeable household seems to coincide with failures in mastery: La Foole, like Captain Otter, willingly adopts the role of servant. Utterly confusing the roles of householder and servant, La Foole tries to claim a host's privileges, at Dauphine's instigation, by clapping a towel around himself and marching bare-headed before the dishes at the banquet "like a sewer" (3.3.64–70). In contrast with the antics of the Otters, La Foole, and John Daw, Morose actually gains a certain dignity by recognizing household disorders, as the others do not. Twice he enters to restore order, once upon finding "naked weapons" abandoned by La Foole and Daw, and once to stop Mistress Otter's abuse of her husband, stating, "I'll have no such examples in my house, Lady Otter" (4.7.1, 4.2.108). Though Morose's concern with policing the boundaries of private space is wildly exaggerated, he acts as a foil to expose others' indecorous transgression of those boundaries.

The first scene of *Epicoene* depicts a household unit of man and boy whose self-sufficient and unpretentious harmony is deliberately contrasted with women's absurd self-commodification. Clerimont enters "making himself ready," a particularly courtly ritual in Jonson's other plays. In *Cynthia's Revels* (1600–1601), the court fops make themselves ready with much officious aid: "Enter Tailor, Barber, Perfumer, Milliner, Jeweller, and Feather-Maker" (5.2). Clerimont, in contrast, needs only his boy, who sings "Still to be Neat" to mock Lady Haughty, the "president" of the Collegians. According to the song, "it is to be presumed" that her overly artful cosmetic preparations disguise a body in which "All is not sweet, all is not sound" (1.1.90–92). Lady Haughty's "oiled face," perukes, and gowns both attract and repel boy and man. Satirizing Clerimont as "sir gallant," Truewit exclaims, "Why, here's the man that can melt away his time ... What between his mistress abroad and his ingle at home, high fare, soft lodging, fine clothes, and his fiddle, he thinks the hours ha' no wings or the day no post-horse" (1.1.22–24). This male household combines the apparently masculine virtues of poetic skill, simplicity, and social criticism with the delights of music, intimacy, and sexual banter.

In striking contrast with Clerimont's harmonious all-male household, the College, an all-female household, is bereft of good judgment, and its inhabitants approach eroticism with savage directness rather than the witty allusiveness of the gallants. Truewit blames their lack of male guidance:

Why, all their actions are governed by crude opinion,  
without reason or cause; they know not why they do  
anything; but as they are informed, believe, judge, praise,  
condemn, love, hate, and in emulation one of another, do  
all these things alike. Only, they have a natural inclination  
sways 'em generally to the worst, when they are left to  
themselves. (4.6.57–63)

It seems that without a male head of household, the Collegiates cannot create a truly private space; instead, they replicate crowd psychology, blown by the wind of every rumor or "crude opinion," like the London audiences in Jonson's "Ode. To Himself"

(1631). However, the College is not a thoroughly public space; though their household imitates street life, the Collegiates also possess a dangerous privacy by living without male supervision. The song, “Still to be Neat,” with its horror of “art’s hid causes” that enable a woman to appear what she is not, reflects this fear of female secrecy. The freedom of the Collegiates’ privacy allows them to invite men to their chambers in the middle of the night, but also makes them infamous. In the College, Jonson presents domestic space that lacks a male as a saturnalian social space of both corrupted privacy and transgressive publicity.

In *Epicoene*, the depravity of public life and of lovers of “exposure” seems to imply a converse ideal of withdrawal and household seclusion like that proposed by advice tracts for godly householders. But in seeking to defend his household, Morose’s “doctrine and impulsion” stumbles on the necessity of accommodating a woman within the household. Morose is justly punished for seeking a silent and obedient woman when Epicoene joins the Collegiates and pulls down the barriers of the private household, demanding, “Shall I have a barricado made against my friends, to be barred of any pleasure they can bring in to me with honourable visitation?” (3.5.36–38). The collapse of household order is marked throughout the play by women’s sexual availability (including Epicoene’s), showing that women’s bodies are metonymically related to the household. Women are not merely one part of the household, but embody the logic of the whole. If the household is permeable and available to the public, so are their bodies as well, and the consequence for a male householder is public humiliation. Only the male households in which young gentlemen while away their time in the company of pageboys seem immune to these household pathologies.

### ***Arden of Faversham: Possession and Authority***

Like broadsheet ballads, domestic tragedies made recent crimes into pedagogical drama, warning ordinary folk of the cataclysms that could follow inversions of social order. However, *Arden of Faversham* resists translation into a straightforward moral tale. Its depiction of domestic authority, like *Epicoene*’s, is complicated by service relations and marriage, while the play also puts into question the ultimate source of domestic authority. As the play begins, we learn that the Duke of Somerset has just granted Arden “All the lands of the Abbey of Faversham,” a windfall he fails to savor because his wife, Alice, is carrying on an affair with Mosby, who is the steward of Arden’s enemy, Lord Clifford (1.5). The play immediately establishes its stratum as the middle of the social hierarchy, where a small landowner, Arden, his close friend Franklin, who is the “Lord Protector’s man,” and the steward Mosby seek preference and promotion on a playing board laid out by the aristocracy, the ultimate source of property and prestige. Reliant on noble landowners, the play’s characters are all some greater man’s “man,” and yet they view servitude as a demeaning state. Service relations provide an alternate source of authority ambiguously related to the property-based prerogatives of patriarchs and rulers. The institution of service in *Arden*



confuses distinctions between “man” and “gentleman,” domestic ruler and domestic subject, and market-based and paternalistic social functions of property.

Like *Epicoene*, the play foregrounds the failure of patriarchal theories to fully account for household authority. According to such theories, the structure of the household privileges one social role: that of the master, whose ownership defines and orders both social space (the relative status of household members) and the physical space of his property. The patriarchal model presupposes that authority flows evenly from the master in a rational descent from greater to lesser household member, so that all status is implicitly justified by relative proximity to the household master, and, thus, to ownership. However, this pyramidal model of social space quickly fails when applied to specific social roles. How does the mistress’s status compare to that of the patriarch’s chief advisor? What about the children, who are to inherit the property? The master’s favorite pageboy, his constant companion? How do those who directly serve the master’s pleasures compare to those of higher rank who govern other servants? What is the source of a lady of the household’s authority – especially when, as was often the case, she is at odds with her husband? Within the household economy there is an excess of authority unaccounted for by the pyramidal model. Authority may emanate from the patriarch, but it also lodges in odd places and unforeseen forms. Early modern representations of the household constantly confront the inadequacy of the patriarchal model and the resulting necessity of adjudicating rival status claims.

The patriarchal model places enormous weight on the link between property-holding and domestic authority. If the role of property owner justifies the patriarch’s rule, then a master’s wrongful use of property would place in doubt not only his financial stability, but also his ethical claim to mastership. *Arden*’s epilogue suggests that Thomas Arden’s murder providentially punished his use of “force and violence” to gain land unjustly (Epilogue, 11). By this logic, the man who has abused property rights cannot wield just power at home; lacking true governance, his dependents inevitably became vicious and rebel. Arden’s land grant has dispossessed two other middling men, the sailor Dick Reede and Richard Greene, “one of Sir Anthony Aucher’s men” (1.295). As Frances Dolan (1992) and Lena Cowen Orlin have argued, his dependents’ “petty treason” suggests Arden’s own culpability in his murder and foregrounds his failures, drawing a parallel between his poor treatment of Greene and Reede and his passive abdication of his place in the household to Mosby (Orlin 1994, 98–99). The state’s role in granting both property and patriarchal rights in the home ratifies this parallel. The king and Lord Protector have transferred land, and with it, authority; Arden’s right to keep both depends on proper usage.

The play’s revolt is a general one against masters, husbands, fathers, elder brothers, and landlords by those who see in Arden’s land a transferable source of patriarchal authority (Neill 2000; Whigham 1996). As Alice’s plot to kill her husband expands, it seems that every non-patriarch in the play harbors homicidal intentions. She recruits the painter Clarke, her servant Michael, the displaced landowner Greene, and the ruffians Black Will and George Shakebag, as well as her lover Mosby. Arden stands in for fathers and elder brothers who enjoy their wealth while others – the

young, the second-born, and the dispossessed – go without, as Greene says: “young gentlemen do beg” (1.476). Each male conspirator imagines how Arden’s death will enable his own ascension to the role of patriarch. Mosby’s complex fantasy casts himself as a landlord whose tenant, Greene, kills Arden for his sake: “For Greene doth ear the land and weed [Arden] up/To make my harvest nothing but pure corn” (8.24–25). Without having heard a word of the murder plot, Black Will declares himself willing to assist a parricide: “if thou’lt have thy own father slain that thou may’st inherit his land we’ll kill him” (2.88–89). As recompense, he envisions himself waited upon by Mosby and Alice: “Say thou seest Mosby kneeling at my knees,/ Off’ring me service for my high attempt” (3.85–86). Michael and Clarke participate in murder in order to gain “title” to Mosby’s sister Susan, and Michael imagines this murder as the first in a series of ambitious acts: “For I will rid my elder brother away,/And then the farm of Bolton is mine own” (1.172–173).

In *Arden*, the ideal of autonomous patriarchy conflicts with service, an alternative source of masculine prestige and a state of elevated dependency which the play depicts as both demeaning and seductive. The play’s first scene sets Arden’s status against that of the steward, Mosby. Mosby, who “bravely jets it in his silken gown,” offers the greatest challenge to patriarchal mastery, setting in motion a series of scenes that unsettle the relation between property-holding and domestic authority (1.30). Arden claims that his horror over his wife’s infidelity derives largely from Mosby’s status, since “to dote on such a one as he/Is monstrous, Franklin, and intolerable” (1.22–23). He avers that Mosby began his career as a tailor, who

by base brokage getting some small stock,  
Crept into service of a nobleman,  
And by his servile flattery and fawning  
Is now become the steward of his house,  
And bravely jets it in his silken gown [...]  
I am by birth a gentleman of blood ... (1.26–36).

Arden’s assertion of superiority depends on his membership in the class of masters and the rigidity of the distinction between servants and masters. While Mosby has attained prestige through the arts of dependence, Arden’s claim to gentle birth allows a stance of swashbuckling autonomy – he threatens to hew Mosby limb from limb “on the bed which he thinks to defile” (1.40) and mocks him for wearing a sword and thus violating the statute prohibiting artisans from bearing arms (1.310–312). But Mosby *can* claim the right to wear a sword, and to gentility, as a chief officer in a great household (“R. B.” 1821, 6–10; Friedman 1989, 43–44). Arden resists distinguishing between Mosby’s artisan origins and his present status as a chief officer; when Mosby asks to be measured by “what I am, not what I was,” Arden responds: “Why, what art thou now but a velvet drudge,/A cheating steward, and base-minded peasant?” (1.321–323). Arden conflates Mosby’s artisan origins, social climbing, and household role, and in doing so reveals a constitutive conundrum of service: it confers authority in exchange for submission.

The figure of the nobleman's "man," flaunting his "bravery" and privileged by wealth and high living, haunts *Arden of Faversham*, especially in the persona of Jack Fitten. Though he is irrelevant to the plot and never appears onstage, this figure receives a long and detailed description. The goldsmith Bradshaw asks Black Will to identify a man who sold him stolen plate, a hungry-looking "knave" with long, curled hair and a similarly extravagant mustache. Black Will easily recognizes the description; the man must be Jack Fitten, who wears

A watchet satin doublet all to-torn  
 (The inner side did bear the greater show),  
 A pair of threadbare velvet hose, seam rent,  
 A worsted stocking rent above the shoe,  
 A livery cloak, but all the lace was off ... (2.53–58).

Despite Fitten's dirt and poverty, his luxurious hairstyle and livery cloak reveal his origins as a servant in a great household. The figure of the fallen servant was familiar in early modern culture, while the commonplace, "service is no heritage," suggests that such a fate was considered endemic to service. The threat of "masterless men" such as Jack Fitten – men bred, Thomas More (1478–1535) argued, to violence and self-indulgence, then evicted from their household positions to prey upon society – constituted a recurrent social phobia in Tudor England (Beier 1985; More [1516] 1964, 20–28; Woodbridge 2001). Like Black Will and Shakebag, who are also ex-dependents preying on the propertied, the apparition of Fitten represents social alienation and lawlessness, while also underscoring Arden's scorn for Mosby, another sword-carrying, satin-clad servant.

At once a dependent and an esteemed advisor, a steward like Mosby occupied the apex of the noble household: contemporary ordinances directed him to identify and punish lapses in household discipline, and his special province was the status distinctions governing each member's privileges and responsibilities (Burnett 1997; Hainsworth 1992, 21–47; "R. B." 1821, 6–10). Thus, in *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (Philip Massinger, c. 1633), the steward's name is "Order." In drama, the steward often fulfills his supervisory function by detecting social disruption: in Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well* (c. 1605) the steward reveals the waiting gentlewoman Helena's socially transgressive desire for her mistress's son, and in *Twelfth Night* (c. 1601) Malvolio vainly attempts to control the excesses of his mistress's relations and hangers-on. Estate stewards bore the responsibility of accounting for manorial income, and might well know their masters' financial position much better than the heads of the family themselves. The stage steward distills the social essence of such functions. Often appearing as a regulatory agent, he represents the threat or promise of an eventual accounting for the moment's disorders.

While the steward's social and theatrical task is to enforce status distinctions, he also represents a challenge to fixed hierarchies that was especially provocative in relation to another dependent, the mistress. Alliances between stewards and mistresses drove comic plots, as in *Twelfth Night*, and tragic ones, as in *The Duchess*

of *Malfi* (John Webster, 1613–1614). In drama, the steward is the prop of his mistress's authority as well as her potential lord and master. *Arden of Faversham*, these plays' precursor, fully exploits the latent sexual threat that a steward's position implies. In their moments of mutual hatred and regret, both Alice Arden and Mosby return compulsively to the problem of Mosby's status; Alice brags that she is "matched already with a gentleman/Whose servant thou may'st be" (1.203–204). The round of accusations comes full circle when Mosby tells Alice "Go, get thee gone, a copesmate for thy hinds!/I am too good to be thy favourite" (8.104–105). Even though he is not *her* servant, Mosby imagines their union as a match between a bestially lustful superior and a servile and sexually exploited "favourite." In this complex wordplay, Alice is a "copesmate" for her "hinds," a partner or paramour for her servants. Since "copesmate" was drawn from the yoke joining oxen drawing together and "hind" could also mean a deer, Mosby gives the metaphor an animalistic taint (*OED* s.v. "copesmate" 2, "cope" 4, "hind" 1). He rejects the role of "copesmate" while also, paradoxically, grouping himself with Alice's "hinds" in order to vilify her sexual availability. Alice reflects on Mosby's status with equal ambiguity; attempting to assert that his worth overcomes his artisan origins, she declares: "Sweet Mosby is as gentle as a king,/And I too blind to judge him otherwise" (8.140–141). This perfectly ambivalent final phrase could mean (if "I too blind" means "I *am* too blind") that Alice knows love may be blinding her to his baseness, or (if "I *was* too blind") that she was wrong to think him base. Mosby's status remains unresolved in the spate of executions that concludes *Arden of Faversham*.

In *Epicoene* women's bodies replicated the openness of undefended households; similarly, in *Arden* they are the pressure point at which the household is vulnerable. While money and revenge motivate several of the conspirators, the promise of Alice's and her servant Susan's bodies as reward is ever-present. For Alice and Susan, the murder plot offers only a chance to change the holder of each woman's "title," in Alice's term (1.102). In language recalling Arden's land patents from the Duke of Somerset, Susan admits that her marriage "resteth in [Mosby's] grant" (1.601). Alice promises both Clarke and Michael that Susan will marry them, and in the end Susan, dominated by her brother and her mistress, is executed for a crime that she knew nothing about. In both *Epicoene* and *Arden*, women's bodies mirror the crucial elements of household order: its privacy, in *Epicoene*, and its possession, in *Arden*. The possession of real property, whether gained by grant, theft, or cheating, appears to be the basis of household authority in *Arden*; but the possession of women's bodies is the unacknowledged token of success for which the play's many would-be patriarchs strive.

### What to Read Next

Ariès and Duby ([1986] 1989); McKeon (2005). Then, for more focused analyses of key issues, see Orlin (1994), Dowd (2009), and Trull (2013).

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Part III  
Practices and Theories

## Rhetorics of Similitude

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Both allegory and analogy are special forms of metaphor, twinned, as it were, in rhetorical origin and brothers in rhetorical blood. Their story therefore begins with metaphor, their basis, which is known in the rhetorics of the English Renaissance both by this name and by *translation*: English *metaphor* derives from Greek *meta*, “beside, between, after, beyond” and *pherein*, “to carry”; English *translation* derives from Latin *trans*, “across, over, beyond” and *ferre* (*latus*), “to carry.” History inheres in language, which is generally, at bottom, metaphorical. Both the names *metaphor* and *translation* indicate the carrying of something, anything – an object, a word, a piece of property, a person – from one place to another and thus a form of displacement, replacement, transposition, transference, transportation, transfiguration (an exemplary, not exhaustive list). Whether in ancient discussions of language, rhetoric, and poetics or in modern ones, *metaphor* also carries a broader sense, roughly equivalent to *trope* (“turn,” and by extension, “twist”) and to figurative language in general. For Cicero (106–43 BCE) and Quintilian (35–c. 100), major sources for Renaissance rhetorics, *translatio* (“translation”) is both the umbrella term for all the tropes and for the specific trope metaphor, which we might therefore designate the arch-trope. Although this overlapping terminology looks at first like terminological looseness or carelessness, it is highly appropriate to rhetorical reality. It reflects the fact that tropes have a tendency to blend and bleed into one another. Their edges are fuzzy, not hard, and they all share the nature and function of carrying something from one place to another: that is, translation or metaphoricity. They are inherently dynamic, perceptual, and unfixated (not to say normatively unfixated). They are constructive, and the arch-metaphor, the prime trope, the specific trope metaphor itself is so to the fullest extent and therefore definitively creative. Accordingly, metaphor has come to be identified with the difference between logical and poetic language.



As Graham Allen (2000) has observed in a discussion of Kristevan intertextuality (the reflection of precedent texts in another, subsequent text), traditional logic derives from “Aristotle’s assertion that something is either ‘A’ or ‘not-A,’” but poetic language, like metaphoric and intertextual language, is double, or “both ‘A’ and ‘not-A’”: my love is a rose; my love is not a rose (44). (See also Orr 2003; Anderson 2008, 1–5, 321–323.)

Whereas logical language implies ordered rationality, poetic language, which occurs in prose as well as in verse, implies creativity: the very word *poetry* derives from the Greek verb *poiein*, “to make, produce,” and thence to create. In Cicero’s *De oratore*, Crassus, one of two leading spokesmen, emphasizes that taxonomies of rhetorical terms are intended to assist beginners in rhetoric, who are often young students, rather than to hobble the flights of accomplished speakers. Distinctions among rhetorical terms also provide a useful instrument for the analytical toolbox and an effective technique for strengthening logical clarity, emotive persuasion, or both. In Classical antiquity, the history of rhetoric, known also as the art of persuasion, not surprisingly coincides with that of legal argument.

Over time and through socio-cultural forces, the inherent dynamism of tropes can also be frozen, fixed, or pathologized. Metaphors can die into literal language (thus the term “dead metaphor”), a development evident in etymologies – for example, in the word *investment*, whose etymological root is in clothing (Latin *vestire*, *vestis*), or in the very words *metaphor* and *translation* themselves. Metaphorical transference, while most familiar in art forms, exists on a continuum with everyday life, conceptually intersecting with it. During the English Renaissance, for example, the word-concept *translation* could mean not only the trope “metaphor” and a rendering of one language into another, but also the transfer of an official from one ecclesiastical jurisdiction to another, the transmigration of a soul to heaven, the refashioning of apparel, the transfer of money or property from one person to another or the movement of a tradesman from one company to another (e.g., baker to draper). Metonymies, to instance another major trope, readily become accepted codes and ideological place holders: the word *metonymy* itself means a “change in name” (Greek *meta*, as in *metaphor*, and *onuma*, “name”); an explanatory shorthand for “metonymy” is “substitute.” Among modern examples of metonymy, consider the White House, the Vatican, and the Kremlin; among Renaissance ones, Rome, Geneva, and Wittenberg. Over time, differences between the tropes can turn into restrictive, tightly pigeon-holed, patrolled taxonomies – lists and definitions unframed by a larger and looser awareness of usage. In short, rhetorical language, like any other kind of language, responds to history, both shaping and being shaped by it. Such historical processes usually mark broad shifts in values. In Western Europe, the introduction of the numeric sign 0 – otherwise designated the meta-number zero – which profoundly affected the numeric system, a language of numbers, affords an extensive example of this process (Rotman 1987, 7–8). The precise and extensive taxonomies of rhetoric in and soon after the Enlightenment offer a more restrictive one.

Metaphor, as I have described it, is creative, constructive, and potentially code-breaking. Some might be surprised to learn that modern definitions of metaphor generally exclude explicit comparison from it. For example, the definitions of the philosopher Paul Ricoeur and the psycho-linguist Jean Aitchison are based on unconventionality. Ricoeur's can be encapsulated as "a deviant predication," ([1975] 1977, 17–20, 125–133) and Aitchison's is expressed as "the use of a word with one or more of the 'typicality conditions' attached to it broken" (1994, 148). The linguist George Lakoff and the philosopher Mark Johnson, who study the process of human knowing, and the literary critic M.H. Abrams base their definitions of metaphor on transference: for the former, metaphor is "a way of conceiving of one thing in terms of another ... [whose] primary function is understanding" (1980, 36); for the latter, a metaphor is "a word or expression which in literal usage denotes one kind of thing or action is applied to a distinctly different kind of thing or action, without asserting a comparison" (1988, 65). Still another twentieth-century definition to be found in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* focuses on the positive value of enhancement: metaphor is "A condensed verbal relation in which an idea, image, or symbol may, by the presence of one or more other ideas, images, or symbols, be enhanced in vividness, complexity, or breadth of implication" (Whalley 1974, 490).<sup>1</sup> Two definitions, Ricoeur's and Aitchison's, and perhaps the third, Lakoff and Johnson's, at least gesture toward the structural doubleness of metaphor, which simultaneously signals the claim that something is and that it is not: my love is a rose; my love is not a rose ( $A = B$ ;  $A \neq B$ ). Metaphor, in addition, both reveals and conceals (my love is sweet and beautiful; my love is thorny and short-lived). Metaphor always involves difference as well as similarity, distance as well as proximity. It is never identity or sameness. It is hypothetical, counter-factual, speculative, fictive (< Latin *ingere*, "to form, shape, make"; > *fictio*, "a making"). Its twin descendants, allegory and analogy, are so as well.

Definitions of metaphor in the rhetorical handbooks of the Elizabethan period likewise gesture toward difference, as well as similarity. For example, George Puttenham (1529–1590/1591) highlights the imaginative affect of metaphor and its power to alter the mind. He emphasizes its forcefulness as "a kinde of *wresting* of a single word from his owne right signification, to another not so naturall, but yet of some affinitie or conueniencie with it, as to say, *I cannot digest your vnkinde* [i.e., 'unnatural'] *words* (my emphasis on "wresting") ([1589] 1988, 189). When Puttenham translates Greek *metaphora* as "the Figure of transporte," readers attuned to the courtly and politic dimensions of his rhetoric might recognize not only the etymology of the Greek name but also the meaning "figure of ambition" and more exactly of "carriage from one 'place' to another" – this time "place" might be heard as a reference to Donne's meaning in "The Canonization" ([1633] 2010, 147–155) when he scoffs, "get you a place," namely, a position in the court or in an aristocratic household. The rhetorical skill Puttenham recommends to his readers had considerable socio-economic value in the Renaissance (Whigham 1984; Mack 2002).<sup>2</sup>

Like Puttenham, John Hoskins (1566–1638), another Renaissance author of an English rhetoric, aligns metaphor with affinity and impropriety but also offers a more expansive definition of it, reaching beyond these:

*A Metaphor, or Translation, is the friendly and neighborly borrowing of one word to express a thing with more light and better note, though not so directly and properly as the natural name of the thing would signify . . . The rule of a metaphor is that it be not too bold nor too far-fetched. And though all metaphors go beyond the signification of things, yet are they requisite to match the compassing sweetness of men's minds, that are not content to fix themselves upon one thing but they must wander into the confines [borderlands]; like the eye, that cannot chose but view the whole knot when it beholds but one flower in a garden of purpose; or like an archer that, knowing his bow will overcast or carry too short, takes an aim on this side or beyond his mark. ([?1599] 1935, 8)*

Aside from memories of Classical rhetorics in this passage (Anderson 2005, 163), there is something special in Hoskins' description of metaphor: its "go[ing] beyond," or exceeding, the proper and natural "signification of things." The excess that Hoskins requires to match the comprehension of the mind recalls Philip Sidney's or Shakespeare's celebrated characterization of the poetic imagination (Sidney [1595] 1973, 100–101; Shakespeare [1595–1596] 1997, 5.1.12–17). Hoskins' concluding analogies – or, if you will, similes (in the modern sense) – are wonderfully suggestive: the hungry, associative eye or the archer who shoots fictively to get at a truth. Hoskins subsequently adds that "a metaphor . . . enricheth our knowledge" simultaneously in two ways, "with the truth and with similitude" (8). This doubling has cognitive content, for it "enricheth," adds to, "our knowledge." As modern theorists will argue more systematically, metaphor cannot and does not simply restate or embellish what it applies to; it reconceives, supplements, reconstructs, recreates it – again, exemplary possibilities, all involving some degree of change.

A difference between Renaissance and modern conceptions of metaphor, as the citations of Puttenham and Hoskins suggest, is that Renaissance conceptions are word-based, not sentence-based, as modern definitions tend to be, albeit with the qualified exception of Derridean deconstruction. Derrida insists that his reliance on the metaphorical etymology of single words responds to systemic patterning and thereby exposes the archetypes of Western thought (Derrida [1971] 1975, e.g., 54–57). In England, Renaissance grammar itself is also word-based, as well as centered in Latin, and Renaissance rhetorics treat tropes and schemes, or figures of speech and thought. Thus the rhetorics, too, prioritize word and figure rather than grammatical sentence, with significant effects on representation. Not surprisingly, grammar and rhetoric, like language itself, also interact with other kinds of history.

## I

As initially noted, allegory is a form of the specific trope metaphor, a direct descendant, so to speak. More exactly, it is a form of continued, or moving, metaphor, as Classical and early modern rhetoricians alike describe it. Cicero's Crassus considers allegory an extension of metaphor, which is typically based in a single word, and he

further explains that allegory occurs in “a chain of words linked together: *ex pluribus [verbis] continuatis connectitur*” and therefore, in modern terms, in the contiguous relationship that characterizes narrative ([55 BCE] 1942, 2: III.xli.166). Such narrative can occur in a space as brief as a lyric, as dramatic as a play, or as expansive as an epic. Crassus’ recognition of the simultaneous tie of allegory to metaphor and to movement is basic to an understanding of this form. What characterizes metaphor, particularly fictive construction, applies to allegory as well, and allegory, like metaphor, involves difference, not merely sameness. The best allegories, in fact, are alive to the differences between the characteristic binaries of allegory, such as abstraction and embodiment, emblem and narrative, mind and matter, and develop and explore the tensions and other relationships between them. A developing narrative and therefore time are also defining characteristics of this form.

Allegory also differs from what is known as *allegoresis*, which is a hermeneutic technique that, in theory, need not be dogmatic but in practice, from antique to present times, has proved so. *Allegoresis* itself is not a literary form (unless in the totalizing, literal sense that it employs letters) and not a narrative form. It is most often radically metonymic, substitutive, and conspicuously, if sincerely, ideological. St. Augustine’s *allegoresis/exegesis* of a passage in the Song of Songs (?3C BCE), in which he takes as a given that the “beautiful woman” in the text is “the Church,” affords an example. The biblical passage reads, “Thy teeth are as flocks of sheep, that are shorn, which come up from the washing, all with twins, and there is none barren among them” (King James, 4:2; Vulgate 6.5). Augustine (354–430) enthuses,

I contemplate the saints more pleasantly when I envisage them as the teeth of the Church cutting off men from their errors and transferring them to her body after their hardness has been softened as if by being bitten and chewed. I recognize them most pleasantly as shorn sheep having put aside the burdens of the world like so much fleece, and as ascending from the washing, which is baptism, all to create twins, which are the two precepts of love [and so on]. ([397–426] 1958, 37–38)

Augustine thinks the sole purpose of the extended metaphor he interprets is pleasurable embellishment, not new knowledge. Through a process of metonymic substitution, he imposes an ill-fitting religious code on the words of the text.

Two modern theories of allegory, one by Carolyn Van Dyke and the other by Stephen A. Barney, conceptualize this literary form in enlightening ways (Van Dyke 1985, Barney 1979). Van Dyke describes allegory semiotically as a “synthesis of deictic and nondeictic generic codes” (40). In a linguistic context, *deictic* indicates a word that particularizes and points, such as the pronouns *this* and *that*. It implies demonstration, a pointing out or a showing. Van Dyke uses *deictic* and *nondeictic* as counters for any number of binaries, like particular and universal, concrete and abstract, material and moral, natural and emblematic, real and Real. By *genre*, she intends both “a set of conventions based on an inferable semiotic code” and “the texts that realize that code – or realize it to a significant degree” (20–21). In other words, she conceives of genre itself both as an identifiable form and as one that varies with use and changes over time. Narrative figures in the generic codes essential

to allegory, or, as she puts it, “the syntactic codes of narrative, or, less elegantly but more accurately, of the plot” are “fundamental” to allegory (37; cf. Frye 1974, 12).

Barney, summarizing his discussion of allegory, describes it as “allusive, distracting, discontinuous, realistic, and critical,” or self-reflexive (1979, 21). Although he later refers to the Platonically Real, here he means realistic in the quotidian sense, as opposed to fantastic dream sequences, for example. Like Northop Frye before him and Van Dyke after him, he also considers allegory a narrative form – a fiction with a beginning, a middle, and an end (29). But the conception I find most helpful in Barney’s discussion is the allegorical “boundary case”:

The boundary case would be a description of a static scene, laden with personification, like an emblem or triumph. If we call such a description an allegory, I propose that we conceive of the scene as a stilled moment in a moving narrative. (29)<sup>3</sup>

Barney in fact proposes that we deny the term *allegory* to the static boundary case, and instead use only the adjective *allegorical* for it. In this way, we simultaneously preserve its relation to allegory *and* recognize its difference from the temporal, narrative movement of allegory, properly speaking. The narrative, moving, unfolding character of allegory is something I want to stress again, very much in opposition to a number of otherwise admirable modern theorists who write of allegory as if it were the same as abstraction per se and therefore other to narrative, rather than recognizing narrative as a defining feature of this literary form (for examples, see Anderson 2008, 21–22). Generally, such theorists also fail to recognize that metaphor is fundamental to allegory, a recognition that coincides with, and even necessitates, the further recognition that a formative, developing movement over time is fundamental to allegory as well.

In the English Renaissance, the most comprehensive theory (Greek *theoria*, “awareness”) of allegory is to be found in Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*. This allegorical romance epic is also the major exploration and demonstration of the potency of allegory in the period. It therefore serves to summarize, exemplify, and extend the characteristics of Renaissance literary allegory. No other passage in Spenser’s massive poem takes precedence over the poet’s own introduction to it, which, in effect, shows readers how to proceed – how, in short, to interpret its allegory. A brief example, which will only be a start, can at least highlight the unfolding process and the metaphoricity of this outset:

A gentle Knight was pricking on the plaine,  
Ycladd in mightie armes and siluer shielde,  
Wherein olds dints of deepe woundes did remaine,  
The cruell markes of many’ a bloody field;  
Yet armes till that time did he neuer wield:  
His angry steede did chide his foming bitt,  
As much disdayning to the curbe to yield:  
Full iolly knight he seemd, and faire did sitt,  
As one for knightly giusts and fierce encounters fitt.

(Spenser [1590, 1596] 2007, I.i.1)

The first generic signal we pick up is that we are entering a romance, and perhaps more specifically a story about King Arthur's knights. The knight is "gentle," whatever that means – "noble" as our editor suggests, or more likely just "chivalrous," if we limit ourselves to this stanza, as we should for the moment, respecting the narrator's careful, incremental construction of this knight. We might notice in passing that we are eliminating "kindly," "soft," and "docile" as possible meanings of "gentle," but might also wonder why the poet has given us an adjective that entails choice in the first line. The knight is riding fast, "pricking," which might seem another odd choice of words for the first line about a knight in a book of holiness, insofar as it has an established (and allusive) sexual association. The middle line of the stanza – the fifth line of the Spenserian stanza often carries an extra punch – stands out because it is so clearly incongruous with the well-worn, dented armor the knight wears.<sup>4</sup> At this point, however, the condition of the armor remains a puzzle, since the evidence to solve it has not yet been forthcoming. We are learning to read Spenserian allegory and a hasty jump to a conclusion (or to a premature footnote) is a practice to be resisted: after all, when the villainous Archimago suits up in identical armor in the very next canto, he will look exactly like this knight and be described so: "Full iolly knight he seemed, and wel address ..." (I.ii.11). But invoking this irony, I am getting (not to say galloping) ahead of the text's own carefully unfolding process.

The next two lines of the opening stanza add that the knight's horse is angry – is "anger" an equine emotion? – about something and is fighting the "foming bitt"; the knight, who is already moving at a gallop, has evidently not given his steed the reins, and in fact the pricking, or galloping, could be despite the knight's best efforts. Nonetheless, the knight seems jolly, a richly suggestive adjective with meanings ranging from cheerful, to pleasure-loving, to brave, to lustful, and the narrator, who gives the impression that he is trying to size up the approaching knight, assures us that the knight looks ready for knightly battles. Ending the stanza, we might notice that the knight is still nameless and that he has pricked across a plain devoid of scenery – moving against a blank slate, a situation that soon will change. Even at this point it is clear that we have entered a story whose meaning is and is not on the surface, in short a metaphorical narrative. Every descriptive detail in the stanza has conveyed one message, an insistence on our reading the image closely and gradually (and unevenly), making what sense of it we can as we follow the narrative. Of course subsequent clues will help us to solve the puzzles we have encountered, even as they introduce further ones.

The next three stanzas of canto i will indicate that this narrative is not only metaphorical but more explicitly allegorical. The second stanza adds a specifically Christian dimension to the romance image of the first, since it mentions the bloody cross on the knight's shield. The second stanza also includes a biblically allusive line whose syntax is unbiblically ambiguous ("And dead as liuing euer him ador'd") and another puzzling line to describe the "iolly knight" ("But of his cheere did seeme too solemne sad"), nonetheless assuring us that "nothing did he dread, but euer was ydrad." As we continue with the narrator to build the image of the knight, the third stanza adds a specifically personal dimension to his quest, since he is "To proue his

puissance in battell braue/Vpon his foe, and his new force to learne,/Vpon his foe, a Dragon horrible and stearne." The knight is not only to confront his dragon (or dragons) and by experience to learn the force of his foe, but also to learn the nature and source of his own force, which includes his having been chosen to wear the Christian armor of Ephesians 6:11, identified by the bloody cross in stanza 2: the crucial phrase from Spenser's third alexandrine, "his new force to learne," reads both these ways. When stanza 4 adds the veiled Una on a "palfrey slow," with her "milke-white lambe" on a leash, not to mention the pedestrian dwarf in stanza 6, we know for sure that we are in the land of allegory, not least because the galloping knight, the lady on a slow palfrey with a lamb on a leash, and the lagging dwarf, are not moving realistically together. Even so, we do not as yet have labels within the text to tempt us wrongly to reduce (or to etherealize) the allegory – that is, the extended, narrativized metaphor – into idealized abstractions, static Ideas. In short, the opening of the poem utterly refuses the kinds of binary oppositions foreign to literary allegory, such as abstraction and narrative, concept and embodiment, real and Real.

## II

Analogy is another, direct descendant of metaphor, and perhaps for this reason, it has attracted a good deal of attention of late, from philosophy to literature, to religion, to science. Since antiquity, analogy, which is humanly crafted, has had a productive but worrisome role in these, and it still does. One area of contention concerns the history of analogy: whether or how the conception of analogy and the nature and practices of analogical thinking in the new science of the Renaissance/early modern period differ from the conception, nature, and practices of analogy and analogical thinking in earlier times. Beyond this question, lies another concerning the relation between scientific analogy and analogy in the disciplines of social science and the humanities (as we now distinguish them). The connection I see among all these disciplines is based in the structure, rather than in the specific content, of analogy. Simply as a connection, it is highly significant, while it does not deny the significance of differences as to content and method among various disciplinary cultures. Yet this structural connection also differs markedly from the representative view instanced by a modern essay titled "The Shift from Metaphor to Analogy in Western Science" (Gentner and Jeziorski 1993, 447–480), which in one fell swoop would rid Western science of one of its deepest roots and, correlatively, of a basis it shares with non-scientific disciplines. In short, such a shift, if true, would confirm the validity of C.P. Snow's notorious gap between scientific and non-scientific disciplines. The same shift would also enforce the still-salient view among historians that the thinking of pre-Newtonian scientists, including Descartes, had somehow discarded Aristotle's philosophy and methods tout court. Not even Francis Bacon, for all his criticism of the old Organon (Aristotle's logical treatises), managed to do so. Bacon's psychology, for a telling example, remained Aristotelian (Park 1984, 290–302; Anderson 1984, 124–125, 157–169).<sup>5</sup>

The theorized roots of analogy in the early modern period, like its psychological basis in the imagination, are Aristotelian, and Aristotle (384–322 BCE) considers analogy a specific kind of metaphor, not something opposed to, or set apart from, it. Aristotle treats analogy most conspicuously in his *Poetics*, his treatise on shaping, making, or, indeed, creating (Aristotle 1984a, 2:1457b16–30; cf. 1984b, 2:1400b30–1407a17). There he describes it as proportional metaphor, which has a technical relation to, and a further basis in, mathematics. He describes a type of metaphor of the A:B::C:D variety that is proportional, or analogical. The Greek word *analogia* combines *ana*, “according to,” with *logos*: here “ratio,” or more broadly, “order” – an order that is rational and typically systemic; its Latin translation is *proportio*, “proportion.”<sup>6</sup> Accordingly, the proportional metaphor Aristotle describes is relational, and certain of its terms might even be substituted for one another: for example, B and D can be exchanged. As Aristotle explains, transference – that is, metaphor, or translation – is possible through analogy

whenever there are four terms so related that the second is to the first, as the fourth to the third, for one may then put the fourth in place of the second, and the second in place of the fourth ... Thus a cup is in relation to Dionysus what a shield is to Ares. The cup accordingly will be described as the “shield of Dionysus” and the shield as the “cup of Ares” [2:1457b16–22].

Again, A:B::C:D is the basic, structural formula, and as Aristotle’s explanation of analogy continues, its association with poetic metaphor becomes still more specific:

To take another instance [of analogy]: As old age is to life, so is evening to day. One will accordingly describe evening as the “old age of the day” ... and old age as the “evening” or “sunset of life.” It may be that some of the terms thus related have no special name of their own, but ... they will be described in just the same way. Thus to cast forth seed-corn is called “sowing”; but to cast forth its flame, as said of the sun, has no special name. This nameless *act*, however, stands in just the same *relation* to its object, sunlight, as sowing to seed-corn. Hence the expression in the poet, “sowing around a god-created flame” [2:1457b22–30: my emphasis].

The final example is a particularly clear instance in which Aristotle relates what we recognize as acts, or operations, to one another.

Aristotle’s view of analogy as a distinct form of metaphor that is structurally proportional (A:B::C:D) was operative from antiquity through the Middle Ages and into and through the early modern period. Among the ancient and late antique Romans – roughly, Varro through Boethius – it occurs saliently in the discussions of language, grammar, and mathematics that influence later centuries. The philosophers and theologians of the Middle Ages and early modern period, like virtually all other educated thinkers – natural philosophers/new scientists included – were schooled, indeed drilled, in Latin itself and in the Latin tradition. While they invented – that is, both imagined and discovered – new content, the most basic structures with which and in which they thought, such as sign systems, grammar, and



rhetoric had strong roots in the past. Whether in Roger Bacon, John Pecham, Thomas Aquinas, or Thomas de Vio Cajetan, in Galileo Galilei, Johannes Kepler, John Calvin, John Donne, or John Milton and therefore whether scientist, mathematician, theologian, philosopher, or poet, analogous metaphor continued to be the instrument through which to explore the unknown, uncertain, invisible, infinite, or divine.

Examples from Donne's religious prose and Kepler's geometric *Optics* can suggest the power of analogy for exploration and, indeed, for speculation. In the fourth *Devotion*, Donne (1572–1631), beginning to meditate on the traditional relation of the human microcosm to the universal macrocosm, declares that Man is much more than a little world because he has more pieces and parts:

If all the *Veines* in our bodies, were extented to *Rivers*, and all the *Sinewes* to vaines of *Mines*, and all the *Muscles*, that lye upon one another, to *Hilles*, and all the *Bones* to *Quarries* of stones, and all the other pieces, to the proportion of those which correspond to them in the *world*, the *aire* would be too litle for this Orbe of Man to move in, the firmament would bee but enough for this *star*; for, as the whole world hath nothing, to which something in man doth not answer, so hath man many pieces, of which the whol world hath no representation. ([1624] 1987, 19)

The metaphoricity of Donne's analogy is openly displayed not only by the counterfactual "If" and subjunctive verb with which he begins, but also by his reflexive pause before continuing to observe the limit of his own figuration – "so hath man many pieces, of which the whol world hath no representation." Metaphorical analogy is always partial, partially true and partially not so, or at most hypothetically rather than surely so.

Donne's analogy between his body and the universe occurs in a meditation whose setting is an actual sickbed. Occasioned by a severe illness, it is made to reflect the enlarged awareness of the body and its functions that accompanies the disease. Donne thus personalizes the micro/macrocosm analogy in a striking and original way, and the traditional analogy comes to life. When the analogy continues, Donne further exceeds its traditional bounds, aligning the creatures the world produces with the thoughts produced by the human mind – thoughts "that reach from *East* to *West*, from *earth* to *Heaven*," spanning "the *Sunn* and *Firmament* at once" – before he sinks back to his sick bed (20). He next analogizes the many malignant and venomous creatures the world produces to the diseases we produce within ourselves, and he asks at the end of his speculative meditation what has become of the "extent & proportion ... of [Man's] soaring.. [and] compassing thoughts" when he thinks of himself as "a handfull of dust" (21). In Donne's hands, analogy becomes a vehicle of discovery about the human condition and more specifically and immediately about his own. In short, it delivers knowledge.

An example of analogy from Kepler's scientific writing will come to much the same conclusion. Famously, Kepler (1571–1630), who not only discovered three laws of astronomy but also the retinal function of the eye, declared in his *Optics*, "I love analogies most of all: they are my most faithful teachers, aware of all the

hidden secrets of nature. In geometry in particular they are to be taken up" ([1604] 2000, 109). A representative instance of Kepler's methodical use of analogy occurs in his "Demonstration of those things that have been said about the crystalline [humor of the eye] in regard to the means of vision" (191). The demonstration starts empirically, with what can be derived from "common experiences," here a crystalline globe filled with water and placed before a window and a piece of paper on the other side of the globe, distant from it by the radius of the globe. When these arrangements are in place, "the glazed window with the channels overlaid with wood and lead, enclosing the edges of the windows, are depicted with perfect clarity upon the paper, but in an inverted position." Additional demonstration follows with the room darker and the aperture smaller (effectually a pinhole camera), which produces a distinct picture on the paper of what is outside the room. But when the eye is applied at the same distance from the crystalline globe as was the paper, there appears a "confusion of the objects represented through the glass." If the eye moves nearer or farther from the globe, the objects become either larger or else smaller, distinct, and inverted on the nearest surface of the globe. Similarly placed, the sheet of paper depicts nothing. Kepler explains that

All these things happen with regard to an aqueous globe, because of the refractions and the shape, as a result of there being some convexity in the shape. And since the crystalline [humor of the eye] is made of convex surfaces, and it is also denser than the surrounding humors, just as water in the glass [globe] is denser than air, therefore, whatever we shall have demonstrated concerning the aqueous globe in this way, and using these media, have also been proved concerning the crystalline, with privileges reserved to it because of the particular convexity of shape, inconsistent with the convexity of the globe. (191–192)

What follows is a geometrical demonstration. Empiricism gives way to geometry, the higher form, which rationalizes and intellectualizes the observations based on sense. Before it does so, however, a revealing analogy has been established between the aqueous globe and the crystalline humor, as well as between the passage of light-rays through each of these to the paper and retina as screens, and, finally, between experimental observation and ocular functioning. The analogy is convincing but nonetheless still hypothetical, and it remains so even when abstracted, theorized, and to this extent "confirmed," in Kepler's lexicon, by geometry.

Relevantly, Olivier Darrigol enumerates "at least three reasons" why Kepler's analogy is "imperfect": "the incoming beams are narrowed by the pupil of the eye, the crystalline humor does not have a spherical shape, and a first refraction occurs at the cornea" (2012, 29). The Keplerian analogy between an aqueous globe and an ocular humor thus includes difference, not only with respect to "the privileges reserved" to the crystalline humor "inconsistent with the convexity of the globe," as Kepler himself has acknowledged, but also because any analogy, if it really is an analogy, would be "imperfect." Perfection would be identity, sameness: the aqueous globe "literally" (as we like to say) in the eye. Once again, inventive, analogous metaphor has respected difference and avoided the false assertion of identity.

The working of the crystalline humor has been imaginatively conceived, demonstrated, and confirmed. The content and method of Kepler's analogies certainly differ greatly from Donne's, yet the structure of their analogous, translative process of thinking, which in both instances starts with "common experience" (the sickbed, the globe), is comparable and, indeed, much the same: A:B::C:D.

### What to Read Next

Aitchison (1994); Allen (2000); Anderson (2005); Aristotle (1984a); Lakoff and Johnson (1980); Ricoeur (1979).

### Notes

- 1 This paragraph and what follows in this section and the next draw on Anderson (1996; 2005; 2008; 2010, 174–190).
- 2 Classic discussions of rhetoric include Baldwin (1944) and Howell (1956). Ong ([1958] 1983) remains valuable on Renaissance logic and rhetoric. Ong's provocative, alternative subtitle is "From the Art of Discourse to the Art of Reason."
- 3 Even if an emblem or a painting of a pageant implies movement, it is itself stilled and not in itself a narrative with a beginning, a middle, and an end. On the meaning of *emblem* and *emblematic*, see Goeglein (2010, esp. 21–24): in this essay, Goeglein speaks of an emblem as being embedded within a narrative, comparable to the embedding of an ekphrasis (33); see also Bath (2002).
- 4 The punch in Spenser's fifth line here involves content, to which tone, including rhythm, more broadly pertains. On the rhythm of the Spenserian stanza, see Empson (1955, 40–41); also, more broadly, Alpers (1967, 36–40).
- 5 The following section of the present essay derives from my current (2017) book, *Light and Death: Figuration in Spenser, Kepler, Donne, Milton*; Anderson (2013) also derives from this book.
- 6 Like Greek *metaphora*, Greek *analogia* exists in transliterated form in Latin, where its use overlaps with the word *proportio*. In late antiquity, Boethius introduced yet another word, *proportionalitas*, in an effort to rationalize and stabilize the terminology of logic and mathematics. Instead, further complications ensued: see Hochschild (2010, 7–9).

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# Publication

*Joshua Eckhardt*

Although many discussions of early modern publication focus exclusively on authors, printers, and stationers, these literary agents could accomplish only some of the work of publication on their own. In order to publish, they needed a public: an audience public enough to encompass some diversity. Too homogeneous an audience would have effectively restricted a text to private circulation. Yet the public audiences of early modern texts did not always need the people who are usually considered publishers. As Harold Love made clear, publication did not always require printers or even multiple copies. Several early modern authors engaged in “scribal publication,” sometimes through the circulation of a single copy; scribes undertook “entrepreneurial publication”; and the collectors of manuscript texts participated in “user publication,” often without the knowledge of the authors involved (Love 1993, 70–83). Publication did not even require an alphabetic or material text: preachers, players, singers, and others could publish orally. But if such performers wanted to publish more widely than their voices could carry, they needed to resort to text and to matter. They then needed to circulate their material text among an audience diverse enough to count as public. While it might require little or nothing from authors or members of the Stationers’ Company of London, publication could occur only with the active involvement of a relatively heterogeneous network of readers, copyists, or collectors.

Love’s deservedly influential study, *Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England*, obligates any full account of early modern publication to include widely circulated manuscript texts in addition to printed books. Although this short chapter cannot offer a full account of early modern publication in all its forms, it does feature an example of publication in both manuscript and print. It traces the early distribution of a politically engaged, religious sonnet by the Catholic convert Henry

Constable (1562–1613) which got caught up in the publication of John Donne's poems. First in manuscript collections, and then in printed books, the publishers of Donne's poems mistakenly accepted this sonnet as his; and they kept doing so until the last years of the nineteenth century. This one little poem made Donne's religious politics look quite a bit different, and even more complicated, than they have looked since editors removed it from Donne's works over a hundred years ago.

Constable's sonnet helps to demonstrate some key points about early modern publication. For one, it shows the limitations that publication could place on early modern authors' authority over their own works: neither Constable nor Donne (1572–1631) would have wanted Constable's militantly Catholic sonnet misattributed to the protestant divine (and former Catholic). Nevertheless, collectors of Donne's manuscript poems seem to have found it easy to believe that he had written the poem. They circulated it alongside Donne's poems without Constable's name, distributing it among a wide enough network to make it public. They therefore shaped a public notion of Donne that could accommodate this Catholic sonnet. In public, Donne became the author of Constable's poem; Constable could remain its author only in the private papers that modern scholars would recover much later.

In this way, Constable's sonnet not only points up the influence of the collectors who added it to Donne's works; it also shows their method. People made texts public by circulating and collecting them, usually along with other texts. Whether the agents of publication were scribes or stationers, amateurs or professionals, publication happened *via* the collection of material texts – both hand-written and printed. Even the members of the Stationers' Company who were most responsible for printing books had to collect manuscripts, at least in order to print texts for the first time. They regularly combined manuscript texts as well, to compile prefaces, collections, and miscellanies. The first stationers to prepare Donne's poems for the press had to borrow manuscript collections that other collectors had already compiled; they then rearranged the texts that those manuscripts contained and added others, from other manuscripts. These print publishers therefore had to participate in scribal publication, and engage in all the same activities that manuscript verse collectors did, before they could continue publishing Donne's already-collected verse in print. Stationers not only sent books out into the public, then; in cases of scribal publication like Donne's, they also joined with the public in collecting, combining, and reproducing manuscript texts.

Using the example of Constable's misattributed sonnet, this chapter proposes that publication in early modern England amounted to the public circulation, collection, and combination of material texts. In order to do so, it surveys the collectors of the sonnet, most of whom were trying to collect Donne, concluding with the first stationers to design collections of Donne's poems for print. In other words, the chapter approaches the first print publishers of Donne's poems as just a few among many collectors and arrangers of his manuscript texts – indeed, as members of the diverse scribal public that collectively published Donne in manuscript. After a brief account of the scribal publication and reattribution of Constable's sonnet, the chapter focuses on the effect that the poem had on particular arrangements of texts in three

important collections of Donne's poems that were either completed or acquired shortly after his death: a manuscript that Frances Egerton, Countess of Bridgewater (1583–1636) owned by April 1632; a manuscript designed as a model for a printed edition, which was completed in October 1632; and the second printed edition of Donne's poems, produced in 1635.

This chapter thus participates in both manuscript and print studies, attending to both media together, just as the producers and early owners of these sources did. Yet I draw encouragement to deal interchangeably with both sorts of books not only from their early makers and collectors. Modern editors of Donne have also had good reason to work with both hand-written and printed copies of his poems, evaluating them for the quality of their texts rather than for any character attributed to their media. Their work has made mine (and many others') possible. Recent studies by David McKitterick and Jeffrey Todd Knight also inform this chapter's approach. Criticizing the modern separation of printed books from manuscripts, McKitterick has argued for their "joint and independent existence" (2003, 22). McKitterick also called for more work on the "contemporary relationships between the two media" (52). Knight answered this call with a study of *Sammelbände* – volumes of multiple books bound together, many of them featuring hand-written, as well as printed, text (2013). McKitterick's and Knight's work shows that, if it makes any sense at all to speak of print culture and manuscript culture, these constituted not separate, but overlapping and mutually dependent, cultures. This chapter aims to show the same, albeit from the vantage point of a single, misattributed, and overlooked sonnet.

## I

Henry Constable surely composed the sonnet "To our blessed Lady" (or "To our Ladye"). It appears, under the longer heading, in a Harley manuscript of religious texts as one of 17 "Spirituell Sonnettes To the honour of God: and hys Sayntes. by H: C." (British Library, Harley MS 7553, 34r; Beal 2013). It recurs, with the abbreviated heading, in another manuscript that expands the author's initials: a separate quire, produced by Henry Stanford (c. 1552–1616), a household tutor to the "staunchly Catholic" Paget and powerful Carey families (May 2008; see also May 1988, 2011b). Stanford's small Constable gathering features:

Certain Spirituell Sonnetts to the honner of God and his Sainctes: With Nynne other directed by particuler deuotion to :3 blessed Maryes: By Hen. Conestable Esquire. (Berkeley Castle MS Select Books 85; Beal 2013)

The attributions in these two manuscripts establish Constable's authorship beyond any doubt. Or, rather, they do now. Although the Harley manuscript's Constable poems were printed in 1815, one of them kept getting misattributed to Donne for another 80 years (Park 1815; Main 1881, 259n1; Chambers 1896, 302, 304). And while the Berkeley Castle manuscript did receive a brief entry in a



late-nineteenth-century catalogue, it attracted little or no additional notice until it showed up in the online *Catalogue of English Literary Manuscripts* (Eaves 1892, 319; Beal 2013).

No other complete set of Constable's spiritual sonnets seems to survive from the early modern period. These two manuscripts probably do not constitute evidence of fully fledged scribal publication. Again, Love explained that early modern authors could publish a single copy of a manuscript, and had especially good reason to do so if it featured controversial texts, like Constable's defiantly Catholic sonnets. Nevertheless, these two manuscripts do not clearly indicate that an entire set of Constable's spiritual sonnets reached an audience broad enough to count as public.

While a full set of Constable's spiritual sonnets did not undergo scribal publication, one poem from the group certainly did. By the 1620s and 1630s, collectors of manuscript verse had started publishing one of the poems, on one of the "3 blessed Maryes," on its own, apart from the rest of Constable's spiritual sonnets and without the author's name. The poem begins addressing the Blessed Virgin Mary as the "Queene of Queenes":

In that (O Queene of queens) thy byrth was free  
from guylt, which others do of grace bereave  
when in theyr mothers wombe they lyfe receive:  
God, as his sole-borne daughter loved thee.

(Grundy 1960, 185; British Library,  
Harley MS 7553, 34r)

God loved you as his only begotten daughter, O queen of queens. He loved you "[i]n that" your "byrth was free/from guylt, which others do of grace bereave." Your birth was free of the guilt that bereaves others of grace "in their mother's womb." In Constable's description of original sin, guilt takes grace from others in the womb. The Blessed Virgin Mary, however, was full of grace and, therefore, uniquely free of such guilt at, and even before, her birth. Mary was therefore not only born, but also conceived, without sin. So the sonnet opens with a concise endorsement of the controversial concept of the immaculate conception: a belief that a Catholic convert such as Constable would have had occasion to embrace, and that a protestant convert such as Donne would have had an incentive to abandon, or at least deemphasize.

The first quatrain concludes by calling Mary the daughter of God the Father. This leads to the next element of the conceit: Mary as the spouse of God the Spirit.

To matche thee lyke thy byrthes nobillitye,  
he thee hys spyryt for thy spouse dyd leave:  
of whome thou dydd'st his onely sonne conceive,  
and so was lynkd to all the trinitye.

(Grundy 1960, 185; British Library,  
Harley MS 7553, 34r)

Having begotten you as his only daughter, the Father left his “spyryt for thy spouse.” He arranged for a marriage to the Holy Ghost, by whom Mary then became mother to “his onely sonne”; “and so” she “was lynk’d to all the trinitye.” As the octave concludes, so too does the demonstration of Mary’s three unique relationships to the three persons of the Trinity, as daughter to the Father, spouse to the Spirit, and mother to the Son.

The volta turns abruptly to address earthly queens, recalling the first line’s invocation of Mary as queen of all such queens:

Cease then, O Queenes that earthly crownes do weare  
to glory in the pompe of worldly thynges:  
If men such hyghe respect vnto you beare  
Which daughters, wyves, & mothers ar of kynges;  
What honour should vnto that Queene be donne  
Who had your God, for father, spowse, & sonne.  
(Grundy 1960, 185; British Library,  
Harley MS 7553, 34r)

Stop glorying in worldly things, you earthly queens. If men show such respect to you when you are the daughters, wives, and mothers of mere mortal kings, what proportionate honor can be done to her who had your own God “for father, spowse, & sonne?” Insofar as God deserves more glory than his creature, his queen deserves more honor than any other. Other queens should therefore accept so little honor and glory that their great queen in heaven can receive her just desert.

Constable’s rhetorical question effectively rebuked a protestant queen regnant who represented herself as a virgin queen, occasionally with Marian motifs. Elizabeth I and her subjects could have discerned in the poem the suggestion that she did not even qualify as the wife or mother of a king, much less as a woman who understood her place in regards to the Blessed Virgin. In its original contexts – in Elizabethan England, in Constable’s sequence of spiritual sonnets, and in authoritative manuscripts – the sonnet signaled Roman Catholic resistance to the protestant English queen and her national church.

But manuscript verse collectors soon removed the sonnet from its original contexts. Some of them copied it into manuscript verse miscellanies. “Margrett Bellasys,” or whoever produced the miscellany that she inscribed, headed the poem “Vpon the virgin Mary” and placed it among verse by Richard Corbett (1582–1635), William Strode (1601?–1645), Thomas Carew (1594/5–1640), Donne, and others (British Library, Add. MS 10309, 152v-53r; Beal 2013, CoH 101). Strode’s distant cousin, Daniel Leare, did much the same in his miscellany, dubbing the poem “A Sonnet on the virgin” (British Library, Add. MS 30982, 8r; Beal 2013, CoH 102). Each of these two verse collectors was gathering together, and helping to publish, poems by multiple contemporary authors. They were also surrounding Constable’s endorsement of the immaculate conception with poems by Church of England clergymen.

Other collectors immersed Constable's sonnet in miscellaneous collections that featured an even greater proportion of Donne poems. William Parkhurst (Sir Henry Wotton's secretary in Venice and later Master of the Mint) copied and gathered it among a great many important Donne texts, in addition to those of Ben Jonson (1572–1637), Strode, and others, before Parkhurst's papers were bound together (The Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland MS DG7/Lit.2, 286r). The anonymous compiler of a fine verse miscellany full of Donne poems placed the Constable sonnet right before Donne's "A Letanie" and "On the Crosse" (British Library, Stowe MS 962, 114r–119v). These collectors situated Constable's unattributed sonnet right next to Donne poems in miscellanies that feature the works of several poets. Their miscellanies could have suggested that Donne had composed the embattled encomium to the Blessed Virgin.

Other collectors strengthened this suggestion by surrounding the sonnet with Donne texts in manuscript books largely devoted to his works. These Donne collectors each gave it a heading that includes the phrase, "On the blessed Virgin Mary." The anonymous compiler of a fine "1620" manuscript of Donne's verse followed a fantastic series of his religious poems with the sonnet, before turning to his love poems (Houghton MS Eng. 966.6, 148r/295). An oblong octavo of Donne's works at the Beinecke, whose compiler also remains anonymous, featured the poem in between Donne's "La Corona" and "A Litany" (Beinecke MS Osborn b114, 161). By including it in manuscripts full of Donne's poems, these collectors made the poem look like Donne's. The hand responsible for another Houghton Donne manuscript drew the obvious conclusion when he added Donne's initials to his or her copy of the poem – "On the blessed/Virgin Mary. I. D." (Houghton MS Eng. 966.7, 25v). Scribally published without attribution among Donne's religious poems, Constable's sonnet finally became one of them.

These manuscript collectors were participating in a large-scale effort to publish Donne's poems in manuscript. Altogether, collectors produced thousands of copies of Donne's individual poems across scores of manuscript books. Some of them were publishing Constable's unattributed or misattributed sonnet along with them and, in so doing, altering the apparent character of Donne's religious poetry. In order to demonstrate how this one poem could affect the collected works of Donne, this chapter now turns to the texts that surround it in three volumes of Donne's poems.

Frances Stanley Egerton, Countess of Bridgewater, claimed her manuscript of Donne poems with her gilt initials, "F B", on its front cover (Huntington MS EL 6893). She seems also to have claimed it in another manuscript, "A Catalogue of my Ladies/Bookes at London; Taken/October. 27th 1627". In between amendments dated "26 Aprill/1631" and "17<sup>o</sup> Aprill 1632", the countess' cataloguer listed eight "*Paper Bookes of diverse volumes*," including "The Lamentacions of Ieremy in verse by Dr Donne, 8<sup>o</sup>" (Huntington MS EL 6495). As Heidi Brayman has quite rightly pointed out, the "*Lamentations* is just one late section" in the Bridgewater manuscript of Donne's poems – and, furthermore, "it is clearly a quarto, not the octavo described in the catalogue" (Hackel 2005, 250n171, 279). Nevertheless, most

interested scholars continue to identify the countess's "paper book" of Donne's *Lamentations* with the Huntington manuscript book that includes this translation, partly because the countess' cataloguer made several mistakes, and partly because her copy of *Lamentations* could have been amended or rearranged after it had been catalogued.

The primary hand responsible for the Bridgewater manuscript's text copied the Constable sonnet right beneath the last lines of Donne's poem "Vppon the Annuntiation & Passion/falling Vpon one day Anno Dm/1608" (Huntington MS EL 6893, 130r–131r). Churches rarely commemorate Gabriel's annunciation of Mary on the same day as Good Friday. But the Church of England did in 1608, and Donne entertained the paradox. The speaker describes the Biblical events that his soul sees on this fast/feast day; and these events necessarily include "the Virgin Mother":

She sees at once the Virgin Mother stay  
Reclus'd at home, publique at Golgoltha  
Reioic'd & sadd shees seene at once, & seene  
at almost fiftie, & at scarce fiteene.  
(Huntington MS EL 6893, 130r)

The speaker's soul sees Mary aged both 15 and nearly 50, both rejoicing and sad, both in private and in public at the crucifixion:

A Sonne at once is promis'd her, & gone,  
Gabiell giues Christ to her, hee her to John;  
Not fullie a mother, shees in Orbitie,  
At once receaver, & the legacie.  
(Huntington MS EL 6893, 130r)

Gabriel promises a son who is already "gone," The angel gives her Christ and Christ, in turn, gives her to John. She suffers the loss of a child – "Orbitie" – before even becoming "fullie a mother."

The poem's representation of Mary contains nothing necessarily objectionable to Catholics or protestants – that is, nothing that necessarily disagrees with Constable's representation of Mary in the next poem in the Bridgewater manuscript. Knowledgeable modern readers can now distinguish Donne's and Constable's representations of the Virgin Mary. But the Countess of Bridgewater, and early readers of her manuscript, had no reason to suspect that Donne had not written both of them. They would have seen Donne addressing the Virgin Mary's widely accepted roles in the annunciation and crucifixion in one poem and then her contested conception in another – and then rebuking the protestant Queen Elizabeth.

Readers of the Bridgewater manuscript would also have drawn comparisons to Donne's representation of Mary in the poem that follows these two: "A Letanie." Donne began "A Letanie" with stanzas on "The Father," "The Sonne," "The Holy Ghost," and "The Trinity." He devoted the next stanza to "The Virgin Mary."

For that faire Blessed Mother Maid |\_The virgin  
 Whose flesh redeemd, in that shee Cherubin  
 Which Vnlockt Paradice & made  
 our clayme for Innocence, & diseasd Synne [folio break]  
 whose wombe was a strange heaven for<sup>ther</sup><sub>^</sub>  
 God cloathd himself & grew  
 Our zealous thanks wee power (Huntington MS EL  
 6893, f. 132r-v)

We pour out our thanks for that “faire Blessed Mother Maid/Whose flesh redeemd.” A protestant could explain that Mary provided Christ’s flesh which only then, in the incarnate God, could have “redeemd” anyone. But, following right after Constable’s embrace of Mary’s own immaculate conception, these lines could also seem to come from an early, or perhaps persistently, Catholic strain in Donne’s writing. So could the next lines. The poem calls Mary a “shee Cherubin.” It claims that she “Vnlockt Paradice” and – what’s more – that she “made/our clayme for Innocence, & diseasd Synne.” Mary made our claim for innocence? She was responsible for disseising, or dispossessing, sin? While not necessarily Catholic, such claims could get tricky for a protestant to explain away.

The stanza concludes by affirming Mary’s roles as an intercessor and mediatrix – roles that most early modern protestants were either ignoring or denying.

as her deeds<sub>were</sub>

\* her      our helps, so are \* our prayers; nor can shee sue  
 In vaine, who hath such titles unto you. (Huntington MS EL 6893, f. 132v)

According to the original scribe, her deeds helped us, just like “our prayers” do now. But a third hand has corrected this to affirm that “her” prayers “are” also our helps, in the present tense. Whether intentionally or not, the anonymous corrector of these lines changed the poem’s meaning here, by adding one of the revised text’s most controversial words. Mary’s contested intercessory role hangs on that pronoun. Are *her* prayers, or *our* prayers, our helps? Is she still praying, now, long after her deeds have come to an end? In the earlier part of the stanza, Mary seems to have played a mediating role even in redemption. At the end of the stanza, Mary cannot “sue/In vaine,” because of the “titles” that she has “unto” God. So she can apparently still offer suits and prayers to God, in order to help those living on earth. The revised stanza, as a whole, therefore reaffirms the mediating and intercessory roles that Roman Catholics had continued to assign the Virgin Mary, despite the denials of protestants. For this reason, the poem must have seemed pretty Catholic, especially to readers who thought that it had been written by the same poet who composed Constable’s sonnet on the immaculate conception.

In the following poem in the Bridgewater manuscript, “Good Fryday,” Mary appears even more briefly, but still controversially. The speaker suggests that he

keeps riding westward, and not facing east toward Jerusalem as he should on that day, because he dares not turn to view “That Spectacle of too much waite for mee.”

*these* If on th-se things I durst not look, durst I  
 vpon his miserable mother cast my eye ;  
 whoe was Gods partner here, & furnisht thus  
 half of that Sacrifice w<sup>ch</sup> ransomd vs; (Huntington MS EL 6893, f. 137v)

Christ’s mother was “Gods partner”: she provided the human “half” of the “Sacrifice” that “ransomd vs.” Protestants may not have had any reason to disagree with this, on its own. But, following a politicized endorsement of the immaculate conception, it could make them suspect that they were reading the work of a Catholic inclined to elevate Mary’s role in salvation, or at least of a protestant convert who had written the poem before relinquishing his Catholicism.

Each of these four consecutive poems features the Virgin Mary. Whether by accident or design, they combine to present Donne as affirming not only her intercessory role but also her immaculate conception. They show him endorsing not only her post-reformation, but also her counter-reformation, roles. And they show him reproaching the protestant Virgin Queen for daring to occlude the Blessed Virgin.

The Countess of Bridgewater and any other Egerton family readers could have easily entertained the possibility that Donne had written Catholic verses early in life. After all, Donne had lost his job with the Countess’ father-in-law, Sir Thomas Egerton (1540–1617), partly because of his Catholic background. Donne eloped with Egerton’s niece, Anne More, so his new father-in-law, Sir George More (1553–1632), convinced Egerton to fire him and jail him. Sir George must have refused to support the match, at least partly, because of Donne’s “social and economic status.” As Steven May has pointed out, “the husbands of Anne’s four sisters were (or became) knights” (May 2011a, 458). But More’s refusal also had to do with religion. Donne began the process of informing More of the wedding by sending a letter *via* Henry Percy (1564–1632), ninth Earl of Northumberland. The earl, of course, did not want for “social and economic status.” Yet, in Dennis Flynn’s words, Northumberland “was a scion of executed Catholic traitors (as such regarded with suspicion by all who, like More, were fervent supporters of Tudor government and the established religion)” (Flynn 2011, 473). Northumberland thus emphasized Donne’s Catholic connections; right when he did, Donne lost his professional connection to the protestant Egerton family. So the Egertons could have remembered Donne as a Catholic, and perhaps even an audacious one. They therefore could have found it easy to imagine how this protestant divine could have once written a sonnet that endorses a Catholic belief and reproaches a protestant monarch.

The compiler of the largest surviving manuscript of Donne’s poetry included the Constable sonnet as well. Unlike other Donne manuscripts, though, this book looks like it was made for use at a printing press. The O’Flahertie manuscript (named for its nineteenth-century owner, Rev. T.R. O’Flahertie) begins with a table of contents, divided by genre and headed, “The Poems of D. I. Donne/not yet imprinted” and

“finishd this 12 of October 1632” (Houghton MS 966.5, [i]). This volume qualifies, paradoxically, as both a pre-publication manuscript and a product of scribal publication.

As Erin McCarthy has suggested, the maker of this manuscript book opened it with *Doctor Donne’s* “Diuine Poems” in order to emphasize his public role as preacher, divine, and Dean of St Paul’s Cathedral (McCarthy 2014). The volume starts with “A Litanie” and proceeds to “Goodfriday, 1613. Riding Westward” and “Of the Crosse.” Then, following the misattributed sonnet “On the blessed Virgin Mary,” it has “The Resurrection, Imperfect” and “Vpon the Annunciation and Passion falling on one day. An. Do: 168.” (Houghton MS Eng. 966.5, 1–18). So this manuscript features the Constable sonnet in the midst of the same poems that surround it in the Bridgewater manuscript, in a unified section of “Diuine Poems” at the beginning of the book. But here the sonnet falls right in between two other poems, which do not mention the Virgin Mary. This could have the effect of distancing the representations of Mary from one another, slightly delaying or diminishing their resonance.

Gary Stringer and the other editors of *The Variorum Edition of the Poetry of John Donne* have shown, in impressive textual detail, that the stationer John Marriot used this manuscript, initially in modifying the first printed edition of Donne’s poems and finally in amending and rearranging its texts for the second edition. Marriot must have already proceeded too far in the production of the 1633 quarto to make more than a few small textual changes to it when he acquired this manuscript (Stringer 2000, 430–431; Stringer 2009). To the 1635 octavo, though, Marriot had time to add entire texts and generic categories from the O’Flahertie manuscript.

McCarthy has proposed that Marriot separated examples of the same genre in the 1633 quarto in order to make it resemble a manuscript miscellany – and, again, that the compiler of the O’Flahertie manuscript opened it with a full set of Donne’s “Diuine Poems” in order to emphasize the doctor’s public role in the Church of England (McCarthy 2014). Paradoxically then, the first printed edition of Donne’s poems functions more like a manuscript miscellany than does the manuscript; and the manuscript operates more like the published complete poems of a celebrated author than does the first printed edition. McCarthy has also argued that Marriot adopted but reordered the O’Flahertie manuscript’s generic sections in order to suggest a biography and even a conversion narrative (McCarthy 2013). So Marriot moved the “Diuine Poems” to the end of the second edition and put in their spot, in the front of the octavo, what he now called I.D.’s “SONGS AND SONETS” – modifying the O’Flahertie scribe’s wording “Sonnets and Songs” and possibly recalling Tottel’s *Songes and sonets* (Wyatt 1574). With this reordering, Marriot relegated Donne’s love poems to his wayward youth and his “Diuine Poems” to his mature years in the Church.

Thus, when Marriot printed Constable’s sonnet as Donne’s, he hinted that its politicized embrace of the immaculate conception belonged not to Donne’s Catholic youth but – surprisingly, for modern readers – to his final years in the

Church of England. To be sure, Marriot's arrangement of poems merely suggested a biography, which his readers could easily overlook or doubt. But even readers unconcerned with biography would have seen Constable's sonnet as an addendum to Donne's "HOLY SONNETS." Marriot placed under this heading the sequence of seven sonnets titled "*La Corona*" and, thereafter, an expanded group of 16 numbered "*Holy Sonnets*" (Donne 1635, 327-342). He then placed, under the same sort of rule (or line) that divides the "*Holy Sonnets*," the poem "*On the blessed Virgin Mary*." The poem's verse form, rhyme scheme, and placement make it look like another religious sonnet by Donne – and perhaps even a conclusion to his "*Holy Sonnets*." At the same time, though, both its individual heading and its stanza breaks distinguish this sonnet from the others. Marriot presented each of Donne's actual sonnets as a single block of text, with each line left justified. By contrast, he divided the Virgin Mary sonnet into three stanzas, with a couple of lines indented in each.

The subject matter of the Constable sonnet imposed a new, perplexing conclusion on Marriot's collection of Donne's religious sonnets. In his first Donne edition of 1633, Marriot had printed the sonnet sequence "*La Corona*" and then 12 numbered "*Holy Sonnets*" – without Constable's poem. In this earlier, 1633 arrangement, the Virgin Mary emerges in "*La Corona*," specifically in a sonnet on the "ANNVNCIATION." She first appears, in other words, at Christ's sinless conception – and not her own. Addressing the "faithfull Virgin," the speaker explains that Christ

yeelds himselfe to lye  
 In prison, in thy wombe; and though he there  
 Can take no sinne, nor thou give, yet he'will weare  
 Taken from thence, flesh, which deaths force may trie.  
 (Donne 1633, 28)

"Loe, faithfull Virgin," Christ yields himself to the prison of your womb, where he can take on no sin from you, but where he will take on flesh. Neither can Christ take on sin, "nor" can "thou," Mary, "give" him sin. A protestant could have questioned this claim that Mary could give no sin. Was Donne telling Mary that she could not give sin because he believed her to be sinless? But the question should not have troubled anyone for long. Virtually all Christians have regarded Christ as sinless. It necessarily follows that his mother could not give him sin. It does not necessarily follow that she had no sin – at least not in the 1633 quarto of Donne's poems. In this first edition, Mary passes from view after Christ's "NATIVITIE" (Donne 1633, 29). Her womb and Christ's conception figure in the book, but her own conception never comes up.

In the second printed edition of Donne's poems, though, Mary reemerges at the end of Marriot's expanded collection of Donne's religious sonnets. Constable's sonnet brings the Virgin Mary back up, this time focusing on her conception rather than her son's, and on her mother's womb rather than her own. Any reader who



suspected early or residual Catholicism in “*La Corona*” would have found such suspicions confirmed in the conclusion of Marriot’s expanded collection of Donne’s religious sonnets.

And they would have continued to do so for the next 260 years, as subsequent editors continued to print Constable’s sonnet as Donne’s. Although David Main had refuted Donne’s authorship and correctly reassigned the sonnet to Constable in 1881, Charles Eliot Norton included it as Donne’s in the 1895 Grolier Club edition of Donne’s poems, which James Russell Lowell had prepared (Main 1881, 259n1; Norton 1895, 2:157). Not until the next year did E.K. Chambers, citing Main, print an edition of Donne’s poems that identified the sonnet as one of several “spurious poems ... so clearly not his that it does not seem worth while to print them in full” (Chambers 1896, 2:302, 304). In 1912 Herbert Grierson followed suit, printing the entire sonnet in an appendix of “poems which have been attributed to John Donne in the old editions and the principal MS. collections, arranged according to their probable authors.” Above the poem he correctly judged that it was “Probably by Henry Constable.” In his introduction to the canon, he reported that the sonnet appears not only in important Donne manuscripts and printed books, but also in the Harley manuscript of Constable’s spiritual sonnets (Grierson 1912, 1:420).

This correction has set subsequent criticism apart from earlier understandings of Donne. Much of the critical discourse on Donne over the last century has concerned his relationship to the Roman and English churches. A sonnet that so fervently embraces an exclusively Catholic belief would surely have influenced the discourse. Scholars, such as Louis Martz (1954), who focused on the influence of Catholic traditions on Donne, would have found incredibly strong support in this sonnet. Others, like Barbara Lewalski, who analyzed distinctly protestant elements in his writing, would have had some explaining to do. Indeed, Lewalski began the case studies in her magisterial book on *Protestant Poetics* with Donne’s least distinctly protestant poems. And she ended the monograph calling for scholarship on an opposing Catholic tradition, citing none other than Henry Constable as an exemplar (Lewalski 1979, 253–282, 427). Had Constable’s sonnet still been in the Donne canon, she may have had to begin her chapter on a master of “protestant poetics” by explaining away an instance of the literary style’s polar opposite in his works.

The nineteenth-century scholars who correctly reattributed the poem to Constable were effectively printing information from a manuscript collection – specifically from the complete copy of Constable’s spiritual sonnets introduced at the beginning of this chapter (British Library, Harley MS 7553). While they were correcting a long-standing misattribution, they were doing so by the same means that their predecessors had made the mistake in the first place: they were copying and publishing texts and information from an early modern manuscript and, therefore, relying on its producers for their knowledge. From the seventeenth century to the present, readers’ knowledge of Donne, Constable, and many others has depended upon the collectors and compilers who first circulated their works broadly enough to make them public,

whether in manuscript, print, or both. Together these scribes, stationers, customers, and others constituted the public that circulated and, so, published early modern English literature.

### What to Read Next

Virtually everyone who researches the manuscripts of early modern England owes a debt to the monographs that effectively reintroduced them to the public: Hobbs (1992); Love (1993); Marotti (1995); Woudhuysen (1996); Beal (1998).

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# Authorship

*Jane Griffiths*

Until recently, Skelton (c. 1463–1529) was the odd man out in sixteenth-century literary history: the one whose idiosyncratic verse forms, cryptic allusiveness, and obsessive self-interest made him at once impossible to ignore and impossible to assimilate into a straightforward account of the English literary canon. In the last few years, his position has been substantially reassessed through a number of studies that set his writing in the context of the vernacular poetics of the previous century, showing how his adoption of the title “laureate” builds on previous attempts to establish a role for the poet in society (Griffiths 2006; Meyer-Lee 2007). What has not been considered in detail, however, is how his work is assimilated by later authors. Although some attention has been given to his posthumous appropriation as a forerunner of the Reformation (Carlson 2008; Griffiths 2006), and Dan Breen argued recently that his definition of laureateship was central to the English poetic tradition of the 1560s (Breen 2010), Skelton nonetheless remains on the margins of literary history. This chapter will suggest one possible way of redressing the balance, arguing that Spenser’s assimilation of Skelton in his *Shepheardes Calendar* (1579) shows how his poetics and his experimentation with the material form of the text both parallel and influence those of the later sixteenth century.

It is barely an exaggeration to say that Skelton is a one-man melting-pot for every available theory of authorship in the period (Hasler 2011; Minnis 1988; Lerer 1993).<sup>1</sup> By adopting the title “poet laureate,” he lays claim to a number of different roles simultaneously, including advisor to princes, poet of nation, propagandist, prophet, and satirist (Breen 2010; Brownlow 2008; Griffiths 2006, 18–37). These are by no means as mutually contradictory as they sound; documents relating to the fourteenth-century laureations of the Italian poets Petrarch and Mussato show how the laureate poet has a responsibility to the state as well as to his own vocation – or rather, that

his vocation is largely conceived in relation to the state (Trapp 1958; Gillespie 1981). Thus, although the title “laureate” allows for the striking of a positive Venn-diagram of attitudes, the majority of them posit the poet as an essentially civic figure; as Robert Meyer-Lee argues, “the laureate is always *someone’s* laureate” (Meyer-Lee 2007, 17). For Skelton, such service is linked to an English tradition of poetry derived from Chaucer (1340–1400) via Lydgate (c. 1370–1449/50?) (Tonry 2008). As he asserts in *A Replycacion* (1529), however, the education that fitted a poet to serve his prince also fitted him to receive the word of God (Griffiths 2006, 25–37). It was in consequence of this association that a laureate poet might use the title of *vates* (“prophet”), yet it might also lead to seriously conflicting loyalties.

In Skelton’s work, this conflict appears most clearly from his poems of the 1520s. Thus, in *Speke Parrot* (1521) the protagonist simultaneously insists on his semi-divine authority and assures Henry VIII (1491–1547) of his absolute loyalty, while offering his attacks on Henry’s chief minister, Cardinal Wolsey (1470/1471–1530), as proof of both (Walker 1988). In *Collyn Clout* (1521–1522) by contrast, Skelton’s protagonist is a conspicuously humble one, professing no poetic skill and claiming to be only the voice of the people – yet one of the poem’s Latin envoys reveals that its humility is a mask for a poet who believes his writing to be divinely inspired; the implication is that, as poet, Skelton possesses greater spiritual authority than the clergy. In *Collyn Clout*, this paradox is visible only to readers with knowledge of Latin – but in *A Replycacion* Skelton makes it more explicit, exploring it not in a Latin envoy, but in English in the body of the text. He asserts both that divine inspiration grants him the ability to fulfil the commission given to him by Wolsey – namely, to ridicule the two convicted heretics Thomas Bilney (c. 1495–1531) and Thomas Arthur (d.1532/1533) – and that it gives him the authority to assert his independence of Wolsey, as he converts the poem from an attack on enemies of the Catholic church into a defense of poetry as God-given and therefore independent of the state. Moreover, the terms of that defense introduce a further, still more radical view of the poet and his productions; revealing inspiration and improvisation to be inextricably linked, they suggest that Skelton ultimately locates the poet’s authority not in God nor any source external to himself, but in the action of his own mind in the process of writing (Griffiths 2006, 129–157). While each of these poems shows Skelton juggling the different possible loyalties of the laureate, *A Replycacion* goes further, revealing how Skelton seeks to define the poet as wholly self-authorizing: not only inspired, but himself God-like.<sup>2</sup>

Although (as we shall see) Skelton’s bold claim of inspiration is paralleled in Spenser’s *Shepherd’s Calendar*, the guise in which he first appears in that poem is a humble one. E.K.’s gloss to the January eclogue – “Colin Cloute is a name not greatly used, and yet have I sene a Poesie of M. Skeltons under that title” ([1579] 1989, 32) – identifies Skelton not as laureate poet, but as author of popular complaint. Yet the allusion is trickier than it initially seems. By the time when Spenser (1552?–1599) was writing, numerous cheap printed editions of Skelton’s poem had established “Collyn Clout” in the popular imagination as a proto-Protestant, analogous to the numerous “Piers” figures who appeared in radical social and religious

literature of the mid-sixteenth century (Griffiths 2006, 160–169); indeed, a number of recent critics have argued that this tradition, derived from Langland's *Piers Plowman* (c. 1370–c. 1388), was also a direct influence on Skelton's writing, strongly informing his understanding of the poet's role as social and religious reformer (Bose 2011; Carlson 2008; Steinberg 2004).<sup>3</sup> On this level, then, Spenser's reference to Collyn signals that he positions himself in an established Reformist tradition. Yet Skelton's protagonist expresses his criticism of the church only reluctantly. The way in which he prefaces each of his charges with "they say" or "men say" stresses that they are hearsay rather than his own considered opinion, and he insists that he brings them to the clergy's attention in full confidence that they will prove their abusers wrong. In invoking Skelton's Collyn, then, Spenser claims an ancestor who anticipates both his urgent sense of need to correct the clerical abuses he perceives and his ambivalence towards religious reform (McLane 1973; Norbrook 2002). In addition, however, the reference to Collyn invokes his author as well; Spenser's allusions to Skelton in the *Shepherd's Calendar* serve as ways of considering those questions about the laureate poet's conflicting loyalties and responsibilities that Skelton himself also addressed. To examine Skelton's role in the *Shepherd's Calendar* therefore demonstrates how such questions become part of a cumulative tradition of vernacular writing, in which "authorship" is defined through engagement with previous poetic practice.

It has long been recognized that Spenser's project, in the *Shepherd's Calendar*, is both to claim a status for his vernacular writing equivalent to that of classical literature and to link his work with that of his English medieval predecessors, most notably Chaucer. Not only does his language self-consciously invoke Middle English, while his use of pastoral recalls Virgil's *Eclogues* (42–37 BCE), but the layout of the *Shepherd's Calendar* seems intended to recall earlier sixteenth-century editions of both Chaucer's and Virgil's works, and the old and wise shepherd Tityrus is said to represent both poets (Spenser 1989, 33, 50).<sup>4</sup> But although this might suggest that Spenser views his vernacular inheritance through a purely Chaucerian lens, and that Skelton's influence on the *Calendar* goes no further than the name of its protagonist, closer examination proves it to be far more extensive (Segall 2007). Spenser's Colin represents laureate service in its purest form – the attempt to serve the monarch – but his failure in this attempt, depicted in the January eclogue, results in his absence from the greater part of the *Calendar*, and Skelton's influence is refracted through figures who are not explicitly linked with him. One of the most significant of these is Diggon in the September eclogue. In conversation with Hobbinol, Diggon at first speaks guardedly of the abuse he has suffered at the hands of Catholics, but when Hobbinol rebukes him for speaking "so dirke," Diggon responds in terms that clearly echo *Collyn Clout*:

Then playnely to speake of shepheards most what,  
Badde is the best (this english is flatt.)  
Their ill haviour garres *men missay*,

Both of their doctrine, and of their faye.  
*They sayne* the world is much war then it wont,  
 All for her shepheards bene beastly and blont.  
*Other sayne*, but how truely I note,  
 All for they holden shame of theyr cote.  
*Some sticke not to say*, (whote cole on her tongue)  
 That sicke mischiefe graseth hem emong,  
 All for they casten too much of worlds care,  
 To deck her Dame, and enrich her heyre.

(ll. 104-115, italics mine)

Despite Diggon's claim that the world is "much war" than it was, part of the strength of his charges lies in the fact that it has changed so little since Skelton's time; not only does the general tenor of Diggon's charges recall Collyn's, but his reference to priests who enrich themselves at their parishioners' expense as "bigge Bulles of Basan" ("September", l. 124) directly echoes *Speke Parrot*, the satire Skelton wrote immediately before *Collyn Clout*, where Wolsey is referred to as "that fat hog of Basan" (l. 122). Indeed, the dialogue of the September eclogue, in which Hobbinol first encourages Diggon to speak out, and then criticizes him for doing so, clearly recalls the way in which Skelton's protagonist Parrot is treated by his audience; by widening his frame of reference to include more than a single of Skelton's satires, and by emphasizing the repeated silencing of the poet-figure, Spenser stresses the difficulty, for the laureate poet, in establishing an effective role for himself.

The persistence of this predicament is re-emphasized by a further echo of *Collyn Clout* at the end of the September eclogue. Having been confined to the Fleet prison merely for warning the clergy of the criticism it was attracting, Skelton's Collyn concludes that there is no future in speaking out:

The forecastell of my shypp  
 Shall glyde and smothely slyppe  
 Out of the wawes wodde  
 Of the stormy flodde,  
 Shote anker, and lye at rode,  
 And sayle nat farre abrode,  
 ...  
 My shyp nowe wyll I stere  
 Towarde the porte salue  
 Of our Savyoure Jesu.

(ll. 1251-1256; 1259-1261)

Spenser's eclogue ends on an almost identical note, as Hobbinol advises Diggon:

I lament  
 The haplesse mischief, that has thee hent,  
 Nethelless thou seest *my lowly saile*,  
 That froward fortune doth ever availe.

(ll. 248-251, italics mine)



At the very least, Spenser and Skelton are drawing on the same stock image of fortune, in which the unfortunate man is pictured as adrift in a small boat on a hostile ocean. Frequently used by Petrarch, the image finds its way into English writing in the works of a number of authors with whom both were familiar, for example in the first “Canticus Troilii” in Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde* (1400–420). But for Spenser, the trope is not a purely Petrarchan one; Skelton’s use of it also contributes to its meaning; it confirms that one of the reasons for Diggon’s despair is precisely that the situation he has described is not just current, but is a perpetual one.

Yet Spenser’s allusions to Skelton also provide some indication of how he understood the laureate role he hopes to assume. Having named Skelton as a possible source for Spenser’s Colin, E.K. hastily reconsiders: “But indeede the word Colin is Frenche, and used of the French poet Marot” (Spenser 1989, 32–33). As Annabel Patterson has demonstrated, Spenser knew Marot (1496–1544) both as a Virgilian poet and a writer whose career was damaged by his radical Reformist tendencies: one who not only grasped “pastoral as the language of exile,” but “added to it a personal gloss on the inevitable predicament of the intellectual, the problem of mediation between the self ‘teut seul’ and the community, particularly the community at risk” (Patterson 1988, 118). It is thus Marot’s life as much as his work that is important to Spenser. The same is true of Skelton, whose struggle to define the remit of a laureate appears in both his conflict with Wolsey and his failure to find an audience for his anti-Wolseian satires (Walker 1988). It is this that is figured in the story that Diggon tells Hobbinol. Its protagonist – the virtuous shepherd Roffynn – has traditionally been identified as John Young, Bishop of Rochester (c. 1532–1605), a supporter of the moderate Archbishop Grindal (*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*). But although this identification is strongly supported by the fact that “Roffiniensis” is the Latin form of “of Rochester,” to identify Roffynn *exclusively* as Young takes no account of Spenser’s habitual use of a single figure to represent more than one person, nor of what E.K. tells us: that the name Roffynn is taken from Marot (Spenser 1989, 163). Since this gloss relates to the line in which Hobbinol tells us that that “Colin clout I wene be [Roffynn’s] selfe boy” (l. 176), text and gloss combined echo the earlier gloss in which Colin’s name is linked to both Skelton and Marot, in a way that suggests that Spenser is here reaffirming his literary as well as his political allegiances. This is confirmed by the events of Diggon’s tale, in which Roffynn’s dog Lowther pursues a wolf that is savaging his sheep, but is temporarily called off when Roffynn is deceived into believing the wolf’s intentions to be good. The frequent pun on Wolsey’s name as “wolf of the sea” (for example in *Speke Parrot*, l. 434) allows this to be read as a figure of Skelton’s pursuit of Wolsey through his satires, temporarily interrupted by Skelton’s brief reconciliation with Wolsey (Griffiths 2004; Walker 1988). Representing Skelton as a virtuous shepherd, Spenser inscribes him within his work as a form of moral exemplar.

In the October eclogue, too, Skelton figures in such a way as to serve as a potential locus of authority for his successors, as Spenser invites comparison of Cuddie’s views with those expressed by Skelton in *A Replycacion*. Cuddie, like Colin, is claimed in a gloss as a figure of the author (Spenser 1989, 177). But whereas Spenser’s Colin

positions himself as lover of Rosalind, and thus – in an elaborately extended use of the trope whereby love of a mistress figures service to Elizabeth (1533–1603) – as a poet whose ability to write both derives from and benefits his Queen and country, Cuddie explicitly rejects this kind of writing. He attempts instead to lay claim to a greater authority: that of the kind of automatic writing which the poet himself does not fully control, and which can thus be said to be inspired.<sup>5</sup> Unlike Skelton, however, he links this kind of instinctively improvised composition to drunkenness rather than divinity – and even then, is forced to concede that it is unsustainable:

And when with Wine the braine begins to sweate,  
The numbers flowe as fast as spring doth ryse.

Thou kenst not *Percie* howe the ryme should rage.  
O if my temples were distaind with wine,  
And girt in girlonds of wild Yuie twine,  
How I could reare the Muse on stately stage.

...

But ah my corage cooles ere it be warme,  
For thy, content us in thys humble shade:  
Where no such troublous tydes han us assayde,  
Here we our slender pipes may safely charme. (ll. 107–113; 115–118)

Cuddie here seems to posit the act of writing as, in two ways, a want of responsibility: first, he speaks of inspiration in disconcertingly sensual terms; second, he retreats even from this debased kind of inspiration to a kind of poetry that is safely parochial and non-contentious. Rejecting both courtly and divine poetry, Cuddie gives the impression that there is no way in which the poet can find a meaningful source of authority, and that his claim of inspiration should not be taken seriously.

The paratext (Genette [1987] 1997; Smith and Wilson 2011), however, tells a different story. The “Argument” of the eclogue makes the claim that “In Cuddie is set out the perfecte paterne of a Poete,” and asserts that his views on inspiration are also those of the poem’s anonymous “Author,” thus giving them more weight than Cuddie himself does (Spenser 1989, 170). Moreover, Cuddie’s emblem, a curtailed quotation from the *Fasti* (2–17 CE) – “Agitante calescimus illo, &c.” – refers us to Ovid’s laconic yet bold assertion of divine inspiration: “There is a god within us. It is when he stirs us that our bosom warms; it is his impulse that sows the seeds of inspiration. I have a peculiar right to see the faces of the gods, whether because I am a bard, or because I sing of sacred things” (Ovid 1967, vi. 5–8). It is also the quotation used by Skelton as a marginal gloss to his own, unqualified description of divine inspiration in *A Replycion*<sup>6</sup>:

By [God’s] inflammacion  
Of spyrituall instygacion  
And divyne inspyracion  
We are kyndled in suche facyon  
With hete of the Holy Gost,

Which is God of myghtes most,  
 That he our penne dothe lede,  
 And maketh in us suche spede  
 That forthwith we must nede  
 With penne and ynke procede. (ll. 379–388)

Classical and vernacular sources thus come together to make the claim that Cuddie is not able to make for himself. Even as Cuddie allows his radical view of the poet to be subsumed in something entirely conventional, the echo of Skelton allows Spenser to resist such defeatism. Even though Skelton's troubled attempts to establish a role for himself as laureate anticipate Spenser's own difficulties, he is nonetheless the poet who *was* able assertively to claim explicitly to be possessed by God. Spenser thus not only faces the same problems *as* Skelton in defining the role of the poet in an indifferent, or even hostile, society; he faces them in part *through* Skelton. In doing so, he demonstrates the working of an English vernacular tradition of authorship in practice; his claim to have written "a calendar for every year" proves to refer not only to the endurance of his work in the future, but also to reach backwards to encompass his poetic predecessors.

In this respect, the *Shepherd's Calendar* recalls one of Skelton's own most radical poetic experiments: his *Garlande of Laurell*, first written in the 1490s, but revised and printed in 1523 (Brownlow 1990). This dream vision has long been recognized as a practical poetics: one in which Skelton explicitly explores his poetic heritage, placing himself in a long line of vernacular and classical writers whose work is linked with service to the state (Gillespie 1981), while at the same time fictionalizing the more private relationship of patronage that he enjoyed with Elizabeth Howard, Countess of Surrey (Boffey 1999; Brownlow 1990; Tarnoff 2008). Unlike the predecessor to which it owes the most conspicuous debt, Chaucer's *House of Fame* (1378–1380), Skelton's poem ends triumphantly, with its protagonist – the eponymous "poeta Skelton" – privately garlanded by Elizabeth and her ladies-in-waiting and publicly acclaimed by the assembled poets and orators, the English Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate prominent among them. His victory precedes the Queen of Fame's formal verdict on whether or not he should be granted a place at her court; indeed, since the noise of the cheers wakes the narrator from his dream, Fame is never allowed to speak at all. This is the culmination of a series of wry reflections on the values of her court which also serve as satire on the historical courts of Henry VII (1457–1509) and Henry VIII; even as the poem consistently engages with the idea of writing as civic service, it also asserts its independence of such external guarantors of authority. "Poeta Skelton" consistently implies what is stated outright by the narrator of Chaucer's *House of Fame*: "I wot myself best how y stonde" (l. 1878).

*A Garlande of Laurell* anticipates the *Shepherd's Calendar* not only by the way it claims a place for its author in a vernacular poetic tradition, but also in the way the 1523 edition gives the text a material form that has a direct bearing on its content. As F.W. Brownlow has argued, the first version of the poem can be dated, on astrological grounds, to the time of Skelton's thirty-third birthday (Brownlow 1990,

33–34, 53–55). This is reflected in the second of the two woodcuts that appear on recto and verso of the first leaf of the print, which shows a youthful figure wearing a crown of laurel (Skelton 1523; Brownlow 1990, 57, 59); adapted from the 1499 edition of the French *Compost et Kalendrier de Bergieres*, the woodcut indicates that Skelton's poem, like the *Kalendrier*, links the seasons of man's life with the seasons of the year (Brownlow 1990, 54–61). This is most explicit at the end of the poem, when the narrator looks to the heavens to see Janus, god of endings and new beginnings "Makyng his almanak for the new yere" (l. 1516), and counsels himself accordingly (ll. 1519–1520):

*Mens tibi sit consulta, petis? Sic consule menti;  
Emula sit Jani, retro speculetur et ante.*

[Do you wish your mind to be skillful? In that case, pay attention to your mind; let it be like that of Janus which looks back and forward.]

In the 1490s version of the poem, the meaning of this self-renewal was essentially political, celebrating the resurgent fortunes of Skelton's patrons, the Howards (Brownlow 1990, 61, 68–69). In the version of the poem published in 1523, its significance changes: by encompassing the forward-and-backward looking of his younger self, Skelton enacts the very kind of circumspection he describes – and this is emblemized by the title-page, which shows an old man at a desk, engaged in writing a book that may be *A Garlande* itself (Erler 1986–1987; Gillespie 2004). Because the image of the old man appears before that of the young one, the woodcuts materially demonstrate how the old poet encompasses his former self. In the same way, the revised form of the text of *A Garlande*, which includes an updated list of Skelton's works and envoys that refer specifically to Skelton's circumstances in 1523, encompasses the previous version of the poem. The physical book thus becomes a kind of symbol of, or even a substitute for, the poet himself.<sup>7</sup>

Skelton's consciousness of the book as material artefact and his experimentation with form as a way of shaping meaning are further developed in the marginal glosses to *A Garlande*. As S.K. Heninger has argued, glosses are one of a variety of possible textual frames that serve both to set apart the text from actuality and to mediate between it and the reader (Heninger 1992, 5), and in late medieval and early modern vernacular texts, they are frequently seen as an authorizing device: one that, by visually aligning such new writings with heavily glossed classical works, claims for them an equivalent status. The glosses to *A Garlande* initially appear to function in exactly that way: the majority are source glosses, adducing the Bible and the works of classical authors such as Virgil (70–19 BCE), Horace (65–8 BCE), Cicero (106–43 BCE) and Ovid (43 BCE–17/18 CE), who are thus implicitly made to underwrite Skelton's own. On closer inspection, however, they prove to be less straightforwardly authorizing than at first they appear. Most are attached to the bibliography of Skelton's works that appears towards the end of the poem, and they prove frequently to exist in wry dialogue with the titles, or to call into question the values professed

by the court of Fame to which Skelton's narrator seeks admittance (Griffiths 2006, 117–128). Their effect is to replicate, in textual form, the play between sources of authority external to the poet and the poet's responsibility to his own vocation which is also found in Skelton's appropriation of the title "laureate."<sup>8</sup> In addition, however, ostentatiously playful glosses such as the one attached to a notoriously indecipherable bit of Latin, which states simply "Cacosyntheton ex industria" ("something badly put together on purpose") draw the reader directly into engagement with the text, serving less as a means of authorizing it than as a way of inviting collaboration. Whereas the woodcuts reflect Skelton's concern with his own authority directly, there is a tension between the glosses' authoritative appearance and the way in which they playfully complicate rather than seriously underwrite the text. Despite being circulated as part of the printed text, the glossing of *A Garlande* recalls the conditions of manuscript circulation, in which the readers are the poet's intimates, and authorship need not always be synonymous with authority.<sup>9</sup>

Such experiments with the form of the text reveal a practical as well as a theoretical connection between Skelton's work and Spenser's. Unlike Skelton's, the paratexts to the *Shepherd's Calendar* have consistently attracted critical attention (Geller 1999; Kearney 2011) – not only because they constitute such a large part of the text that it is impossible to overlook them, but also because the complex relationships between eclogues, woodcuts, and glosses provided by the mysterious "E.K." are the exact correlative of the complex relationships between fiction and reality within the world of the eclogues; just as no single figure, for example, fully represents the author, nor can any one element of text or paratext be read in isolation. Like the paratexts of *A Garlande*, then, those to the *Calendar* send out conflicting messages. Purely in visual terms, they clearly recall earlier sixteenth-century editions of Virgil and Chaucer, and thus serve to claim an equivalent status for Spenser's new work (Galbraith 2008; McCanles 1982; Luborsky 1980). The complex relationships between them, however, and still more the notorious inconsistency of E.K.'s glosses, create a significantly destabilizing effect. At times, such inconsistency is, in fact, the most helpful guide to Spenser's method; thus, it is E.K. who identifies Tityrus as two separate figures, and who proposes both Colin and Cuddie as figures of a single person. At other times, however, it is ostentatiously *unhelpful*, as he veers off into highly personal disquisitions that divert spectacularly from the supposed matter at hand (McCabe, 2000); for example, his assertion that Hobbinol "is a fained country name" leads him first to speculation ("whereby, it being so commune and usuall, seemeth to be hidden the person of some freend, whom he entirely and extraordinarily beloued, as peradventure shall be more declared hereafter") and then into a circular argument in which he raises the possibility of a homosexual relationship between Colin and Hobbinol, before vehemently denying that this is the case, or that he himself is defending "forbidden and unlawful fleshlinesse" (Spenser 1989, 33–34).

Although E.K.'s conspicuous unreliability has tended to be discussed as if it were unique, it may be linked to an emergent tradition of destabilizing glossing in English printed texts: one that responds in part to the increasingly frequent use, in print, of glosses that reflect fears about the unbounded dissemination and unlicensed

interpretation of printed texts by stressing their usefulness (Griffiths 2014). Faced with what William Slights has aptly called the “edifying margins of English Renaissance books,” the authors of destabilizing glosses seek to create a very different kind of relationship between text and readers than the passive one fostered by overt instruction (Slights 2001). For some authors, such as William Baldwin (d. in or before 1563), encouragement of active, engaged reading is directly linked to their Reformist interests, and in particular concerns around the printing of the Bible; for others, however, it constitutes an almost purely literary, parodic response to the emergence, over the course of the sixteenth century, of overtly directive print conventions (Griffiths 2014; Tribble 1993). Both Skelton’s and E.K.’s glosses exemplify the latter tendency. Far from providing a transparent guide to the text, E.K.’s commentary is a personal one, whose inconsistencies, self-corrections, and positively chatty tone invite readers to imagine themselves as part of an extended coterie, gossiping in the margins. Like Skelton, he emphasizes the immediate, collaborative nature of communication as much as the status of the author as origin of the text; like Skelton, he does so by manifesting a strongly developed awareness of the materiality of the book. Their glossing is one of a number of strategies that evolved over the course of the sixteenth century towards the establishment, in print, of an apparently personal relationship with each reader individually; it forms one element of what Cathy Shrank has called a “rhetoric of presence” common among writers of the period as a means of “engineering the acceptance of a book by its patron . . . [and] furthering their own prestige and status as authors” (2004, 296, 302), yet at the same time posits authorship as one side in a process of collaboration. Skelton and Spenser prove to share not only a theoretical poetics, but also an interest in the way in which this poetics may be expressed, and even shaped, through practical textual experiment.

To read Spenser through the lens of Skelton thus shows how canonical critical readings of the period from Puttenham’s onwards, in which Spenser and Sidney are next in line to Wyatt and Surrey, linked by their shared continental inheritance, fail to take account of how authors read one another. The very visible mediation of both Skelton’s ideas and the *idea of Skelton* in the *Shepheardes Calendar* reveals the operation, in practice, of a vernacular tradition of authorship, in which authorial experiment builds on previous authorial experiment. Demonstrating how laureate ideals are complicated by the pressure of the individual laureate’s historical situation, Spenser uses Skelton to explore whether the laureate poet’s primary responsibility is to his own vocation, derived from God and informed by literary tradition, or whether it is to use that vocation to press for present reform. His reading of Skelton thus serves as a paradigm for the way in which thinking about authorship developed, not only during the sixteenth century, but also beyond; comparable processes of reading and assimilation are in evidence, for example, not only in the specifically Spenserian allusions in the work of poets including Brooke (c. 1570–1628), Drayton (1563–1631), Wither (1588–1667), and Herrick (1591–1674), but in Jonson’s experiments with form (O’Callaghan 2000; Tribble 1993). Like Skelton and Spenser, these writers continue to think about authorship and poetic authority through the lens of previous practice, taking their place in a cumulative tradition in which conflicts

between status and responsibility, literary tradition and reform, and form and content are played out through reference to the personal, rather than canonical readings of the literary past, and are made manifest in the material form of the text.

### What to Read Next

Dobranski (2005); Greene (1982); Helgerson (1983); Hirschfield (2001); Wall (1993).

### Notes

- 1 The dialectic between these theories created by Skelton's self-fashioning anticipates that in the works of authors of the later sixteenth century. See for examples Helgerson (1983) and Miller (1986).
- 2 It thus anticipates the conflict between inspiration and the poet's own wit which is explored with striking *sprezzatura* by Sir Philip Sidney in his *Defence of Poetry* (c. 1581–1582; first published 1595), and which haunts other poetic treatises of the later sixteenth century, including George Puttenham's *Arte of English Poesie* (1560s; first published 1589; see Puttenham 1999) and William Scott's *Model of Poesy* (1599; first published 2013).
- 3 For the radical tradition in print, see Green (2000) and (for a more discursive approach) Jones (2011); King (1982). For background, see Collinson, Hunt, and Walsham (2002, 27–66).
- 4 For a theoretical discussion of the phenomenon, see Allen (2000). For the use, and the uses of, intertextuality in the period see Greene, 1982; Quint 1983.
- 5 For the play between inspiration and improvisation, two different yet intimately connected causes of loss of poetic control, see Cave (1979, 125–157).
- 6 For the marginal gloss, a prominent paratext in printed texts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Slights (2001). Tribble (1993), and Griffiths (2014).
- 7 Skelton is not alone in experimenting with visual aspects of the text in this way. See further Bell (2002, 632–662); Brown (1995); Gillespie (2006). For a comprehensive survey of typographical practices and their connotations, see Bland (1998).
- 8 For a delightfully practical illustration as well as illuminating discussion of this kind of play, see Lipking (1977).
- 9 Attempts to create an impression of intimacy between authors and readers is a recurrent feature of printed texts of the period. See Marotti (1995, 212–227) and Love (2002). For the way in which physical features of the book might be deployed to this end, see Griffiths (2014, 149–204) and Rhodes (2009).

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# Reading

*Mary Ann Lund*

*I thought not that any man might well and properly be called a Reader, till he were come to the end of the Booke.*

(Donne 1610, sig. ¶1<sup>r</sup>)

John Donne (1572–1631) defines the reader of his polemical work *Pseudo-Martyr* (1610) by experience. In the “Advertisement to the Reader” prefacing the text, he claims that he had originally planned “not to speake any thing to the Reader, otherwise then by way of Epilogue in the end of the Booke.” By this time, the reader would become the Reader, qualified as such. Donne changed his mind because “both he, and I, may suffer some disadvantages, if he should not be fore-possessed, and warned in some things” (1610, sig. ¶1<sup>r</sup>). Instead Donne pursued the more conventional course of prologue, not epilogue. Donne’s address pictures a collaborative and reciprocal relationship between author and reader: if his imagined reader is well prepared for the text, then he will have an enhanced experience of reading it – by understanding its purpose and design more clearly – and this will reflect favorably on the author. A better reader makes for a better-read text:

For his owne good therefore (in which I am also interested) I must first intreat him, that he will be pleased, before hee reade, to amend with his pen, some of the most important errors, which are hereafter noted to have passed in the printing. Because in the Reading, he will not perchance suspect nor spy them, and so he may runne a danger, of being either deceived, or scandalized. (Donne 1610, sig. ¶1<sup>r</sup>)

Of the many rhetorical stances that Renaissance authors adopt towards their readers, this one of Donne’s is distinctive both for its acknowledgement of the mutual

benefits to be accrued through careful perusal of the text, and for the link it forges between, on the one hand, the reader's "good," and on the other the practice of careful, active reading. It is fairly common for writers to ask for *errata* to be corrected in the main text, and there is some evidence of book owners who routinely made amendments. Yet Donne is further interested in the consequences of this process, and his list of *errata* shows all the signs of vigilant intervention in the printing process. There is a long list of corrections to words, but he leaves "literall and punctuall Errors" to the "discretion and favour of the Reader," and even notes that there are "faults which are in the Margin by placing the Citations higher or lower" (Donne 1610, sig. ¶2<sup>v</sup>).

Donne's "Advertisement" brings to the fore some of the major issues that have preoccupied historians and theorists of reading in the English Renaissance over the last half-century. Who is "the reader," and how is he or she defined and treated? How do paratexts shape the meaning of a text? How did Renaissance readers participate in making meaning from the text, what material evidence did they leave, and how can we interpret it? And how can reading be seen as a social experience, not merely a solitary one? In recent years, attention to the historical properties of reading and material culture has been the defining feature of scholarship on Renaissance reading, an indication of the wider influence of the history of the book discipline. Among the major preoccupations of scholarship on the English Renaissance, particular interest has been given to the practices of individual readers (Jardine and Grafton 1990; Sherman 1995; Sharpe 2000; Schurink 2008); the role of paratexts such as prefatory epistles and printed marginalia (Genette [1987] 1997; Slight 2001; Anderson 2002; Smith and Wilson 2011); reading, gender, and the recovery of evidence of female readership (Hackel 2005; Hackel and Kelly 2009); reading as a physiological and emotional process (Johns 1998; Craik 2007; Smith 2010); reading, authorship, and composition (Cave 1982; Chartier 1994; Dobranski 2005; Ettenhuber 2011); the book as gift (Davis 1983; Scott-Warren 2001).

This chapter examines a few of the major approaches to reading in English Renaissance studies through the lens of one particular reader and writer: Robert Burton (1577–1640). A second son of minor gentry stock, Burton was born and raised in Leicestershire and studied first at Brasenose College, then Christ Church, Oxford. He proceeded MA in 1605 and BD in 1614; he remained a Student (that is, a college fellow) of Christ Church for the rest of his life. A clergyman, he was vicar of St Thomas's, Oxford and held two external appointments, as well as administrative posts within the college and the city of Oxford (Bamborough 2004). He amassed a library of over 1700 books, most of which have been identified and catalogued, and which have been described as "one of the largest undispersed collections in England dating from the pre-civil war period" (Kiessling 1988, xxvii; 1991; 1996). In his will he left most of his books to the Bodleian and Christ Church libraries, and Bodley's librarian John Rous made a note of the 872 books they took in 1640; Burton's habit of signing his name in books he owned further aids their identification (Kiessling 1988, vii–xxvi). We have, then, a remarkably detailed record of one lifetime's reading, evidence enough perhaps to make him an

interesting subject for study. What we also have, however, is *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, the major output of his adult life, first published in 1621 and expanded to nearly twice its length through five further editions. Burton's library and this text exist in relationship with one another. The library gives important clues to the composition of the text, for which no manuscripts survive, and enriches our understanding of that most readerly of books: Burton's *Anatomy* draws on a lifetime among books to categorize and probe the disease of melancholy from cause to cure. His identities as reader and author, in other words, are closely interlinked. My discussion of some material traces of Burton's reading, and of the social relations inscribed in his library volumes and his own book, takes further my study of historicized reading in the *Anatomy* (Lund 2010).

### From Implied Reading to Material Reading

Modern scholarship on reading draws from a number of disciplines and conceptual models – bibliography and textual criticism, social and political history, material culture, the history of the book – but has tended to define itself against the reader-response theory that, to a certain extent, spawned it. Robert Darnton accused literary commentators of assuming “that seventeenth-century English men read Milton and Bunyan as if they were twentieth-century college professors” (1990, 181), critiquing a prevailing formalist trend during the 1960s and 1970s. The two figures squarely within his sights are Wolfgang Iser and Stanley Fish, both of whom used Renaissance literature to elucidate their ideas on reader response, Iser (1974) writing on John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, and Fish first on Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1967) and later on Francis Bacon, John Donne, George Herbert, Burton, Bunyan, and Thomas Browne (1972; see also 1980). Their approaches place emphasis above all on the reader's experience of a text as the central business of critics. Iser considers the role and function of the implied reader within the text, while Fish proposes the more radical thesis that the writers he discusses “seek to *change* the minds of their readers; they have designs on us; they are out to do us good; and they require our participation in what is, more often than not, the painful and exhausting process of self-examination and self-criticism” (1972, 371).

Fish's work has been particularly influential on criticism of *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (see, e.g., Heusser 1987). Whatever the perceived shortcomings of Fish's approach – its insistence on a disparate set of texts' common purpose to “do us good,” its treatment of the reader as an undifferentiated figure, as someone largely acted on, and its failure to recognize the historically contingent nature of reading and the religious and political differences even within a given period – its lasting legacy has been to make us take seriously the attention that Renaissance writers pay to readers. The formalist model of the implied or ideal reader may have been abandoned, but it has brought to prominence the rhetorically dynamic nature of Renaissance texts, and focused concentration on previously underexamined aspects of texts such as prefatory epistles. The long preface to Burton's *Anatomy*,

for example, begins by placing the relationship between author and reader under close scrutiny:

Gentle Reader, I presume thou wilt be very inquisitive to know what Anticke or Personate Actor this is, that so insolently intrudes upon this common Theater, to the worlds view, arrogating another mans name, whence hee is, why he doth it, and what he hath to say? [...] Seeke not after that which is hid, if the contents please thee, *and be for thy use, suppose the Man in the Moone, or whom thou wilt to be the Author*; I would not willingly be knowne. (Burton [1621–1651] 1989–2000, 1:1)

Although the “gentle reader” is a common opening gambit among early modern writers, Burton’s distinctive touch is not merely to imagine the reader, but to imagine the reader imagining him. He ends this first paragraph with the startlingly direct statement “Thou thy self art the subject of my Discourse” (1). Burton the writer comes to his task as a highly sophisticated reader, in an age when “the activities of reading and writing became virtually identified” through imitation (Cave 1979, 35). He thus implicates himself in his own enterprise. An unwilling-to-be-known author addresses an unknown reader, both trying to color in one another’s features, and this relationship between them becomes his subject as much as the disease of melancholy.

While Fish and Iser were alert to the fundamentally rhetorical dimension of Renaissance writing, later critics have sought to contextualize that rhetoric and recognize, as Darnton influentially argued, that “Reading has a history. It was not always and everywhere the same” (1990, 187). Inspired by Carlo Ginzburg’s study (1980) of the reading of a sixteenth-century miller and heretic in the Venetian republic, critics have reconstructed the lives and reading habits of several named individuals, among them Gabriel Harvey (1552/3–1631) (Jardine and Grafton 1990), John Dee (1527–1609) (Sherman 1995), and Sir William Drake (Sharpe 2000). This emphasis on book use has increasingly refocused attention onto the means of knowledge production: the material evidence such as marginalia and readers’ marks, the way content was selected and appropriated, even the technology that facilitated reading such as the book wheel (Jardine and Grafton 1990, Sharpe 2000). It has, moreover, drawn attention to the significance of marks written in books that do not seem to bear relation to the printed text, but which show the role of the book in the social life of the owner (Sherman 2008, xiii; Richards and Schurink 2010, 345).

How can Burton be approached as a book user, and – despite “not willingly [being] known” – what material traces of his reading did he leave behind? Thanks to the efforts of his cataloguer, information on his personal library is easily accessible. As one would expect from an Oxford scholar in holy orders, Burton’s library consists of a large number of titles in theology, philosophy, and rhetoric, but the scope of his reading was far broader than was typical of English academics’ libraries in the period, with holdings in history and literature, travel, science, mathematics, medicine, agriculture, demonology, and marvels (Kiessling 1988, xxxi, 371–377). When he bought a book, he typically entered his signature or initials on the frontispiece, and a personal cipher made up of three “r”s in a triangular formation. Sometimes he

also entered the date of purchase and the price, information that both gives a useful insight into the cost of books at specific points in the early seventeenth century, and shows a steady increase in Burton's spending power: most of the more expensive folios were bought after the *Anatomy* was first published in 1621 (Kiessling 1988, xviii, xxx, 361–370). We know that he purchased books secondhand: one of his volumes (K99) lists at the back 46 titles bought as a job lot from the Oxford stationer John Crosley at the bargain price of 10 shillings, from the collection of a college fellow who had recently died (Kiessling 1988, xxix, Plates IV–VI, Appendix II).<sup>1</sup> And a rare surviving letter, written in August 1605 to his brother William Burton, asked him to look out for second-hand copies of the philosopher Seneca's works, and let him know the price of the cheapest (Nochimson 1970, 327).

Although Burton did sometimes annotate his books, he was not an inveterate scribbler in the margins, confining most of his remarks to a single word and more commonly marking a significant passage with a line in the margin, or underlining the words themselves. He was certainly a “user” of books of the type described by Sherman (2008) and Cormack and Mazzio (2005). We find him supplying his own contents page to a collection of 11 books on diverse subjects that he had bound together in 1606 (Kiessling 1988, xxi, Plate 3), evidence that has allowed the discovery of titles that had been removed in subsequent rebinding. Like the cropping of marginal annotations or the once-fashionable practice of removing readers' notes in order to produce a “clean” (and more sellable) book, this instance reminds us that early modern readers' traces do not come down to us unfiltered. In another volume, Johannes Garcaeus' *Astrologiae Methodus* (Basel, 1576; K642), Burton used the front flyleaf to draw an astrological chart of the Duke of Brunswick, and also compiled a long list of what were in his opinion the best books and authors on judicial astrology (“Libri vel authores optimi de Astrologia iudiciaria quos om[n]es vidi etc,” K642, Kiessling 1988, Plate VII). The content of the book thus prompted a kind of extended use, related to Burton's reading of the text but in an oblique fashion.

One fascinating instance of this practice can be seen in his copy of Thomas Dekker's *The Belman of London* (1608; K441), where a blank leaf inserted after the title page contains a long handwritten list of “Pedlers Frenche w[hi]ch is halfe Englishe or ye Cantinge tong[u]e of Beggars taken out of Harman's booke.” His dictionary of beggars' cant and their English equivalents is written out in columns, with words such as “bouse” for “drincke” and “benship” for “verie good.” Some of these are taken from the volume itself, but they also derive from other volumes about the urban underworld such as Thomas Harman and Thomas Dekker's *O Per Se O* (1612; K447), which Burton owned. We can picture Burton, then, in his study with several books open at once, compiling a personal word-list. It is tempting to think that this interest in slang and cant was a hobby (he owned ten works by Dekker in all); one probably apocryphal story has it that Burton alleviated his melancholy by going to the bridge near Christ Church and listening to “the Barge-men scold and storm and swear at one another, at which he would set his Hands to his Sides, and laugh most profusely” (Kennett 1728, 321). His interest, certainly, fed into the *Anatomy*, where in writing on poverty and want as causes of melancholy he has occasion to mention

“counterfeit Crancks, and every villages almost will yeeld abundant testimonies amongst us, wee have Dummerers, *Abraham* men, &c.” (Burton [1621–1651] 1989–2000, 1:353). A “dummerer” is a cant name for a beggar who pretends to be dumb and an “Abraham man” is one who feigns madness (OED Online); Burton would have found accounts of either in his copies of Dekker, or in the writings of Harman.

The notion of “book use” is one that thus clearly applies to Burton, and indeed his cataloguer has noted that Burton’s intent was “to form a working and reading library, and the condition of the book did not seem to matter” (Kiessling 1988, xxviii). Yet the emphasis in histories of Renaissance reading (e.g., Jardine and Grafton 1990, Sharpe 2000, Cormack and Mazzio 2005) on pragmatic readers – who mine their texts for useful material to be appropriated for their own purposes – and on reading in parts is not one that can be comfortably applied to Burton. Evidence from his marginal annotations does show how marked passages from his books make their way into the *Anatomy*: his copy of the Danish Lutheran Niels Hemmingsen’s *Antidotum Adversus Pestem Desperationis* (Rostock, 1599), for example, is heavily marked at passages which are quoted in the final section on the *Anatomy*, on religious despair (Lund 2010, 62–64; see also 82, 115). Yet it would be dangerous to conclude that his reading of any given text was “goal-oriented.” He bought the copy of Hemmingsen’s *Antidotum* in 1601, 20 years before the first edition of the *Anatomy*, and his lines and annotations in this consolatory work may not have been made with composition in mind. More to the point, his own writing on a primarily medical subject, melancholy, treats reading as an activity with multiple and overlapping qualities and effects: he sees it as educational, reflective, therapeutic, entertaining, and at times disconcerting and even damaging (Lund 2010, 1–9). The active reader need not necessarily be engaged in the world of *negotium*, nor expect his or her reading to perform specific functions.

### Reading, Sociability, and Composition

While the study of actual readers has eclipsed that of the ideal or implied reader, attention has also been paid to reading as a social, not merely a solitary, phenomenon (Davis 1983; Scott-Warren 2001). Building on the notion of writing and reading as performative acts, this critical pathway has explored the significance of dedications to books, and the way that books “are conceived not as static receptacles of meaning, but as dynamic, transacted, and above all *material* objects” (Scott-Warren 2001, 2). Burton’s library provides evidence of these transactions across a social circle that included colleagues at Christ Church, Oxford and beyond, and his family and friends, and at the same time demonstrates the breadth of his intellectual interests. He marked books that were given to him by the author, “*ex dono authoris*,” probably as gifts, although it is also possible that some of these were exchanges for his own book (Kiessling 1988, xxx–xxx). Close to home, he received books from the clerical brothers Henry King (1592–1669) and John King (1595–1939), sons of the Bishop of London and both canons of Christ Church from 1624 (K920, 921), and, a little further afield, from the Magdalen-trained Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679) (K818, K1601).



Another fellow collegian was the mathematician Edmund Gunter (1581–1626), who gave him a copy of his *The Description and Use of the Sector* (1623) (Kiessling 1988, K731) after he had taken up the post of professor of astronomy at Gresham College in 1620. Burton and Gunter's friendship was memorialized in a 1618 poem by Richard Corbett (1582–1635) on the appearance of a comet:

*Burton to Gunter writes, and Burton heares  
From Gunter, and th' Exchange both tongue and eares  
By Carriage. (Corbett [1648] 1955, 64)*

Nothing is known to survive from this exchange of letters, and so the poem, and the books, provide vital testimony to their relationship and to Burton's interest in mathematics and geometry (he owned two further books by Gunter, possibly also gifts, K729 and 730). Yet this is not the only evidence of their friendship. Burton also paid homage to Gunter within the *Anatomy*. In the section of the second Partition on "Exercise Rectified," Burton explores the cures for melancholy that are achieved through refreshment and diversion: physical exercises such as walking, fishing, and dancing, and also "recreations of the minde" ([1621–1651] 1989–2000, 2:84). Medicine, astronomy, new discoveries are all recommended:

Now what so pleasing can there be as the speculation of these things, to read and examine such experiments, or if a man be more mathematically given, to calculate, or peruse *Napiers Logarithmes*, or those tables of artificiall <sup>a</sup>*Sines* and *Tangentes*, not long since set out by mine old Collegiate, good friend, and late fellow-Student of *Christ-Church* in *Oxford*, M<sup>r</sup> <sup>o</sup>*Edmund Gunter*, which wil performe that by addition and subtraction onely, which heretofore *Regiomontanus* Tables did by Multiplication and Division, or those elaborate conclusions of his <sup>p</sup>*Sector*, *Quadrant* and *Crossestaffe*. (Burton [1621–1651] 1989–2000, 2:94)

Burton's printed marginalia give further detail both bibliographic and biographic: "Printed at *London*, Anno 1620," "Late Astronomy reader at *Gresham Colledge*," "Printed at *London* by *William Jones* 1623." Burton added the whole passage in the second edition of 1624, when a large amount of new material was incorporated into the book as a whole. This insertion may reflect in particular Gunter's success in the years between the first edition (1621) of the *Anatomy* and the second: his pioneering publication *The Description and Use of the Sector* (1623) explained the instruments Gunter had designed, among them a sector that could be used for navigational purposes, and a cross-staff designed as a logarithmic rule (Higton 2004). Burton's recommended "exercises" for melancholy are thus not merely speculative but practical ones, introducing his readers to the newest approaches in mathematics while paying tribute to a friend. The nature of this act shifts subtly in its meaning, however, after Gunter's death in 1626. Later editions (1628, 1632, 1638, 1651) retain the passage, but with a minor alteration: the 1624 edition had read "very good friend" (Burton [1621–1651] 1989–2000, 2:327). The removal of "very" probably points not to the cooling of a friendship but to the passing of a moment: the more effusive

compliment is for the eyes of the friend himself, while the tempered version stands as commemoration to Gunter in after years.

This memorialization of Gunter forms part of a wider strategy of inscribing personal relationships within Burton's writing, and is linked to his distinctive authorial fashioning. He published *The Anatomy of Melancholy* under the pseudonym Democritus Junior, following in the steps of the laughing philosopher of ancient Greece, who sat in his garden at Abdera dissecting animals to find the source of madness and melancholy (Burton [1621–1651] 1989–2000, 1:2–3, 33–34). Yet the book was widely known as both “Democritus Junior” and “Burtons Melancholy” (Lund 2010, 199). The author's identity was hence no secret, and autobiographical clues are scattered throughout the work. It is the nature of these clues, and their placement, that is particularly interesting. In the first edition, Burton included “The Conclusion of the Author to the Reader” at the end of the work, with the declared purpose “to cut the strings of *Democritus visor*, to unmaske and shew him as he is” (1989–2000, 3:469) and he signed it “From my Studie in *Christ-Church Oxon*. Decemb 5. 1620. ROBERT BURTON’ (3:473). He is explicit there about his debt to others:

It now remains, that I make a thankfull remembrance of such friends, to whom I have beene beholden for their approbation, or troubled in perusing severall parts, or all of this Treatise. For I did impart it to some of our worthiest Physitians, whose approbations I had for matters of Physicke, and to some Divines, and others of better note in our University, as wel as to my more private Collegiate friends: whose censures when I had passed, and that with good encouragement to proceed, I was the bolder to hasten it, *permissu superiorum*, to the Presse. (Burton [1621–1651] 1989–2000, 3:472)

This passage is our only evidence of the *Anatomy's* very earliest readers, those people in Burton's circle who saw and advised on it in manuscript form. It gives the work as a whole a stamp of authority, rather in the way that an academic title's “Acknowledgements” page is both explicitly a way of thanking those who have helped the work come to life and implicitly a means of establishing its intellectual credentials and situating the author within a professional network of named individuals. Burton's readers have different specialisms – medicine, theology – and we assume that the majority were fellow-academics at Oxford, but he adds that “I will name no man, or prefix as the custome is any Encomiasticke verses, which I thanke my friends have beene offered, least if either whole or part should be misliked, I should prejudice their judgment, I acknowledge my selfe much beholding and bound to them” (Burton [1621–1651] 1989–2000, 3:472–473). Burton hence gestures to the book's sociable origins even as he rejects the traditional means of indicating them, withholding from readers the names of his friends and the paratextual devices for them to add their voices in support. (Thomas Coryat takes this to the other extreme in his *Coryats Crudities* (1611) with its 56 commendatory verses; see Craik 2007, 93–114).

After the first edition, Burton removed the “Conclusion” altogether and incorporated much of its content into the long preface “Democritus Junior to the Reader,” but he did not reuse the passage about consulting friends, nor did he anywhere

“unmaske” and give his full name and location. Clues are instead more oblique, part of a game surrounding his identity that Burton initiates in the opening words of his preface (as we have seen). He is purposefully elusive to the reader in a gesture that simultaneously denies the importance of his identity – the work’s “contents,” not the author, should please us – and places the spotlight on himself as a mysterious, unknown figure who would not willingly be known. Yet very soon afterwards he gives us specific details about his own life: like Democritus, he says, he has lived a largely solitary life “to learne wisdom as he did,” “For I have beene brought up a Student in the most flourishing Colledge of *Europe*, *Augustissimo collegio*” (1:3) (a marginal note identifies this for unsure readers as “Christ-Church in Oxford”). A little later he assures us that he has gained his experience on his subject through “*melancholizing*”: believe Robert the expert, “*Experto crede ROBERTO*” (1:8). Autobiographical evidence, then, is part of the persona he develops from the earliest stages of the text.

The highest concentration of references to friends, however, occurs in the second Partition (of three: the *Anatomy* is divided up into causes, symptoms, and prognostics of melancholy; cures; and the separate categories of Love and Religious Melancholy). In writing on the healthful properties of a good climate and situation in “*Ayre Rectified*,” Burton mentions that Sutton Coldfield in Warwickshire, where he was at grammar school, stands “in an excellent ayre,” and continues,

<sup>c</sup>*Wadley in Barkshire* is situate in a vale, though not so fertill a soyle as some Vales afford, yet a most commodious site, wholesome, in a elitious ayre, a rich and pleasant seat. So *Segrave in Leicestershire* (which Towne <sup>d</sup>I am now bound to remember) is sited in a Champian, at the edge of the Wolds, and more barren than the villages about it, yet no place likely yeelds a better aire. [...] The best building for health, according to [the fourth/fifth-century writer on agriculture Cassianus Bassus], is in *high places*, & in an excellent prospect, like that of *Cuddeston in Oxfordshire* (which place I must *honoris ergo* mention) is lately and fairly <sup>h</sup>built in a good aire, good prospect, good soile, both for profit and pleasure, not so easily to be matched. (Burton [1621–1651] 1989–2000, 2:61–62)

Once again, the marginalia fill in the biographical detail: “The seat of *George Purefey Esquire*” (a kinsman of Burton on both his mother’s and his father’s side); “<sup>d</sup>For I am now Incumbent of that Rectory, presented thereto by my right honourable Patron the Lord *Berkly*”; “<sup>k</sup>By *John Bancroft* Dr. of Divinity *my quondam tutor in Christ-church Oxon*, now the Right Reverend Lord Bishop *Oxon*, who build this house for himself and his successors.” The sentence about Seagrave, added to the fifth edition in 1638, reflects Burton’s induction into the living there in June 1632, perhaps as a reward from George, Baron Berkeley (1601–1658), for the dedication of the *Anatomy* to him. The final sentence quoted, on Cuddesdon, was added in the sixth edition in 1651; Bancroft (1574–1641) was not only Burton’s former tutor, but also from 1632 his bishop, since Burton was vicar of St Thomas’s church, Oxford. There are other commendatory remarks on places connected to his birthplace, Lindley in Leicestershire, and the home towns and villages of many more friends and relations nearby (see Burton [1621–1651] 1989–2000, 2:60).

The topographical discussion thus allows Burton to establish and assert his personal networks publicly on the printed page, adding to it in order to acknowledge more recent benefactions and pay homage to friends in higher places. Yet his strategy also keeps this material away from the more prominent and conventional site for compliment: the prefatory epistles. The tributes, embedded within “Ayre Rectified,” add to the variety of his discourse (they follow the “Digression of Ayre” in which the author takes a fantasy flight around the world) and strike a note that is both personal and local. He is not just an Oxford scholar but a Leicestershire man, whose loyalty to his birthplace remains (he signed books he owned as Robert Burton “Lecestrensis” (of Leicester) as well as “ex ÆDE Christi” (of Christ Church), e.g., K780). The inscribing of friends within his work thus pays compliments to particular readers, establishes the biographical (and unnamed) author within a circle of (named) individuals, and creates a regional identity that sits alongside his university and patronage network. Moreover, it implies not only that these friends and kin will be reading his work, but that they will be reading it thoroughly, beyond the preliminaries where compliments are usually paid.

## Conclusion

The example of Robert Burton has demonstrated a few of the prevailing and emerging models of reading. What next for the history of reading in the Renaissance? Two scholars have recently called for further models that “understand the cultural and social impact of manuscript and print and the ‘use’ of books, while still taking account of the text read” (Richards and Schurink 2010, 355). While innovative approaches are revealing more than ever about the material evidence of book use, there has also been a renewed emphasis on textuality and a rebalance towards a careful, contextualized approach to literary texts-as-read. The evidence of actual readers’ responses is fragmented, open to diverse interpretations, and sometimes gives little away about what a reader of the text thought and felt about it, but it can also illuminate the sometimes significantly different responses to Renaissance texts from our own (Schurink 2008). Some of the best recent work has revealed a wide spectrum of reading strategies at work among texts and readers: even seemingly straightforward advice in a medical manual, for example, may be designed for rumination by the reader, not for instant application and re-use but to encourage a process of critical engagement (Richards 2012). If the language of use has dominated the critical terrain for the last two decades, there are signs of a renewed attention to the more reflective aspects of reading, and this may provide one – among many – new pathways for the flourishing study of Renaissance reading.

## What to Read Next

Dobranski (2005); Richards and Schurink (2010); Sharpe (2000); Sherman (2008); Spiller (2011).

## Note

- 1 All references to books in Burton's library will be given in the form K+number, corresponding to the numbered entry in Nicolas Kiessling's 1988 library catalogue.

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# Science and Early Modern Literature

*Howard Marchitello*

The seventeenth century holds a special fascination for scholars, writers, and artists, especially when the issue at hand is science both in its emergent and in its fully modern forms. This is probably a function of the general consensus that points to the seventeenth century as the moment when modern science begins to become consolidated in recognizable form from a vast array of cultural and disciplinary practices (Marchitello 2011; Harkness 2007; Spiller 2004). As will be argued in this chapter, this identification of – which, importantly, is at the same time an identification *with* – the era of Bacon (1561–1626) and Galileo (1564–1642) and Newton (1642–1727) as the point of origin of modern science is especially true and characteristic of the middle years of the twentieth century, a period in our history that may be said to constitute another scientific revolution inaugurated just before dawn on July 16, 1945 in Alamogordo, New Mexico. This interest continues today, though its forms and intentions have developed and evolved, particularly in the hands of writers and critics, from the New Critics in middle of the twentieth century to critics today whose work has been heavily influenced by developments and innovations in the field of *science studies*, a phrase meant to nominate the multidisciplinary study of science as a socially – and historically – embedded set of practices. Contributions to this field of study are written from a variety of critical and theoretical vantage points – including Science and Technology Studies (STS), Social Studies of Science (SSS), and Actor-Network Theory (ANT) – and are exemplified in texts by Bruno Latour ([1991] 1993), Latour and Steve Woolgar (1979), David Bloor (1976), Michel Serres (1995), Mario Biagioli (1999), Stephen Shapin (1998), Pamela O. Long (2004), and Peter Dear (1995, 2001), among many others (see Marchitello 2011). The following pages trace this engagement between modern literary criticism



and early modern science and literature, with a special focus on John Donne (1562–1631), who in many ways stands as a central figure in this history.

### Trinity

The foundation upon which the arguments of this chapter are built is a belief in the mutually informing and mutually sustaining relationship that exists (and has always existed) between art and science, *ars* and *scientia*: according to their respective epistemological and representational repertoires and strategies, art and science are both knowledge-producing activities and as such each seeks to fashion or to discover greater – that is, more compelling – understandings of the nature of the world we inhabit and at least in part construct (Mazzio 2009, Spiller 2004). The early modern period, as many critics have argued in recent years, is especially important in this history of the art and science relationship, which helps account for what otherwise might well appear to be the surprising appearance of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writers, both scientific and literary, in a wide range of twentieth-century artistic contexts. As an example, consider the following instance. When commissioned in 1962 to produce a new work to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the University of Michigan’s Hill Auditorium, the Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Ross Lee Finney composed *Still Are New Worlds*. Finney’s piece “for Speaking Voice, Mixed Voices and Orchestra,” provides a musical and choral setting for excerpts of key literary or scientific texts; eight of these are from seventeenth-century writers: Kepler, Harvey, Marlowe, Donne, Milton (twice), Fontenelle, and Henry More, with shorter quotations from works by Galileo and (as something of an outlier) Pindar’s *Pythian 3* (c. 474 BCE). The narrative that these excerpts tell begins in Part One with celebratory comments on the glories of the created universe: “The sun, of all the orbs most excellent” (Kepler, fragment from an early disputation), and “Our Soules ... can comprehend/The wondrous Architecture of the world” (Marlowe, *1 Tamburlaine*, 2.6), and “To ask or search I blame thee not; for Heaven/Is as the Book of God before thee set” (Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 8.66), and More’s exuberant many worlds paean:

Farre aboven,  
Further than furthest thought of men can traverse,  
Still are new worlds, aboven and still aboven,  
In th’ endlesse hollow Heaven, and each World hath his Sun.  
(*A Platonick Song of the Soul*, 59)

Part Two begins with Galileo’s famous assertion that the universe is written in the language of mathematics, an assertion for which Mark Akenside’s “Hymn” (1739) provides the plea that science lead to an apotheosis of new knowledge:

Give me to learn each secret cause;  
Let number’s, figure’s, motion’s laws

Revealed before me stand;  
 These to great nature's scenes apply,  
 And round the Globe, and through the sky,  
 Disclose her working hand.

But this narrative is disrupted by the voice of Pindar, whose ancient wisdom warns “O my soul, do not aspire to/immortal life, but exhaust the limits of the possible.” And it is left to Camus to give voice to the twentieth-century reaction: that contemporary science – science, that is, in the quantum world – leads only to figurative language, and to art:

You tell me of an invisible planetary system in which electrons gravitate around a nucleus. You explain the world to me with an image. I realize then that you have been reduced to poetry. You have ... changed theories. Science that was to teach me everything ends ... in hypothesis, lucidity founders in metaphor, uncertainty is resolved in a work of art. (*The Myth of Sisyphus*, [1942] 1955)

The closing section returns to *Paradise Lost* and book one's invocation: “Illumine, what is low raise and support;/That.../I may assert Eternal Providence,/And justify the ways of God to men.” Is this an expression of optimism even in the face of a certain ambiguity about the powers and the limits of modern science? Is this final passage ironic, a marker of humanity's humility? Or of its lack? One contemporary commentator writing about Finney's composition and this ending provides an apt characterization:

I do not pretend to know how Mr. Finney interprets them, but read against the history which I have been tracing, the familiar words echo in my ears with a melancholy far more profound than that against which science dawned. To me they say something which I can only express by changing both the order and meaning. Milton ended with an affirmation. He believed that man could assert Eternal Providence. We end with a question: May we assert Eternal Providence? Milton could and did justify the ways of God to men. I read the line today as a profoundly ironic query: Can we justify *the ways of men to God*? Two voices are there. Which will triumph in our time?

The writer of these lines in Marjorie Hope Nicolson, in a piece published in the June 1963 issue of *The Rockefeller Institute Review* and reprinted in the published text of Finney's piece. There is a certain symmetry at play here, since Finney was a reader of Nicolson's critical work on early modern literature and science. Indeed, Finney identified Nicolson's 1950 book *The Breaking of the Circle* as the source for all the passages he quotes (Camus excepted). And Nicolson, in her article, identifies the scientific crisis fundamentally at stake in Finney's piece and the curious temporality in play that allows Finney to find only in *Paradise Lost* “the language he needed to express emotions many of us share in this Atomic Age” (quoted in Finney, n.p.). Nicolson continues, “The first lines from Milton were used by the poet to describe ‘the Almighty Power,’ God, casting out the rebel Satan from Heaven. In Mr. Finney's

score, 'the Almighty Power' has become, not God, but nuclear physics." Nicolson continues:

[o]nly Milton, long before it happened, described the desolation of a devastated city caused by the atomic bomb: 'The dismal ... waste/On all sides round .../As one great furnace flamed .../No light, but rather darkness visible,/Regions of sorrow ... where peace/Can never dwell, hope never comes.' As the words are used, they are no longer what they were – a description of the Hell God made for Satan – but a description of the Hell man made for man. (in Finney 1962, n.p.)

Given this kind of identification of and with the seventeenth century, it is both very interesting and entirely appropriate to discover that the seventeenth-century poet John Donne resides at the very heart – indeed, at *ground-zero* – of the atomic age. When the scientists and engineers of the Manhattan Project, led by J. Robert Oppenheimer, detonated the world's first nuclear weapon, the test site was code named by Oppenheimer himself "Trinity" and the entire undertaking, the "Trinity Project." (And so the green-tinted, radioactive glasslike substance formed by the melting and subsequent falling to earth of airborne sand around the immediate blast site – still available for purchase – has become known as Trinitite.) When asked years later (in 1962, the same year as Finney's composition) how this naming came to be, Oppenheimer replied:

Why I chose the name is not clear, but I know what thoughts were in my mind. There is a poem of John Donne, written just before his death, which I know and love. From it a quotation: "As West and East/In all flat Maps – and I am one – are one/So death doth touch the resurrection."

That still does not make a Trinity, but in another, better known devotional poem Donne opens, 'Batter my heart, three person'd God'; beyond this I have no clues whatever. (Smith and Weiner 1980, 290)

The first of these suggestions quotes Donne's "Hymn to God, My God in My Sickness," while the second turns to Donne's Holy Sonnet 14. We could, if we were so inclined, pursue Oppenheimer's invocation of these Donne poems. We could argue that Donne's "Hymn" is a perfectly apt articulation of something like dread and awe in the face of apparent death: Donne fears that his sickness portends his imminent demise: "*Per fretum febris*, by these straits to die." (Carey [1633] 1990, 332) Perhaps Oppenheimer felt a similar sense when confronted with the sheer power of the nuclear detonation – as indeed another of Oppenheimer's now-legendary utterances seems to attest: when asked about his immediate reaction, he recalls at the very instant of the blast thinking of the line from the *Bhagavad-Gita*, "Now I am become death, destroyer of worlds" (Monk 2012, 455) (The original has "Time" as destroyer (Davis 2015, 29).) Or we might pursue a political reading: the fundamental connectedness of West and East not only on flat maps, but also within the new context of nuclear weapons and the fact of mutually assured destruction, a by-word of the Cold War which stands as another by-product of the nuclear-scientific revolution in which Oppenheimer played such a key role. Or, we might

consider the eschatological dimension of Donne's poem that promises redemption on the far side of death, a perhaps willfully optimistic interpretation in 1945 or 1962 of the nuclear arms race. In terms of the Holy Sonnet, we might consider that poem's shocking figuring of a holy violence through which redemption can become possible: given over to God's enemy, reason itself lost to this enemy – captivated, or by nature too weak and untrue – the speaker's redemption can only come forcefully, violently. "Take me to you, imprison me, for I,/Except you enthrall me, never shall be free,/Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me."

But rather than pursuing one or another of these arguments, I am most interested in thinking about how we might understand the relationship between Donne's poetics of knowledge, on the one hand, and Oppenheimer's appeal to Donne as a way of explaining the science and the morality of the Trinity project, on the other. One feature that these poems of Donne's share with one another – and that they share with Oppenheimer's turn to verse as both explanation and consolation – is a reliance upon paradox. In 1945 (or 1962) paradox may indeed be the trope that best figures the new state of being in the nuclear age: human genius gives rise to a particular science that grants to mortal "man" the divine power of absolute destruction of all living things, including most conspicuously "himself." In the opening years of the seventeenth century, perhaps it is paradox that best figures the epistemological uncertainty unleashed as a consequence of the Copernican revolution experienced as a crisis in knowledge. And (as will be considered near the end of this discussion) it is a similar epistemological paradox that allows Milton (in the passage quoted from Nicolson earlier) to write about nuclear devastation – that allows, in other words, early modern poetry both to anticipate *and* to follow after the Trinity test of 1945. By what strange temporality does it happen that early modern poetry can be both a condition *and* a consequence of nuclear devastation?

The answer to this question begins with a consideration of how criticism has positioned itself in relation to the discourse (or, the *culture*) of science – and how that position has changed over time. In the following section, I sketch this relationship, beginning with work on Donne of the 1930s, and then in the hands of the New Critics for whom Donne is an especially significant figure. To anticipate here what will be developed in the ensuing section, we can consider the New Critics by way of their emphasis on the role and nature of paradox in Donne as standing at the mid-point between thinking of Donne's poetry merely as a reflection of science as it was emerging in his own moment (particularly in the field of astronomy), on the one hand, and, on the other, the ways in which Donne's poetics can be said to be more thoroughly and rigorously engaged in the production of knowledge that – on the level of method – stands together with the work of science in the early years of the seventeenth century.

### Criticism and Science

The placement of John Donne at ground zero of the atomic age was in some ways the outcome of a perceived resonance between a mid-twentieth-century uncertainty (ontological in nature), on the one hand, with an early modern uncertainty

(epistemological in nature), on the other. Although there are many instances in Donne's works that demonstrate his interest in the new science (in his controversialist tract *Conclave Ignati*, for instance, published anonymously in early 1611 and then in an English translation a few months later under the title *Ignatius His Conclave*), Donne's most noted formulation is found in an uncharacteristically long poem of nearly five hundred lines, *The First Anniversarie: An Anatomy of the World*. This poem commemorates the death of the teenaged Elizabeth Drury, daughter of Donne's prospective patron, Sir Robert Drury, and was followed a year later by a second commemorative poem, *The Second Anniversarie; Of the Progress of the Soul* (1612).

Donne's plaintive line from *The First Anniversarie* that "new philosophy calls all in doubt" (l. 205) resonated with mid-century literary critics who had turned to Donne in the wake of his "rediscovery" in the 1920s and 1930s (Eliot 1931; Williamson 1931) – a rediscovery enabled in part by an identification of what in 1932 Allen Tate (1948) called "the modernism of Donne ... that re-establishes our own roots in the age of Donne" (323). In his 1937 *John Donne and the New Philosophy* (one of the earliest sustained studies of Donne and science), Charles Monroe Coffin cites precisely this resonance as a motivating cause of his work: "[I]n the exploration of Donne's familiarity with the new science, a phase of the Renaissance productive of so much significance both for Donne and for ourselves, I believed there would be found a satisfactory explanation of the compelling interest he has had for the twentieth century" (vii). When Coffin suggested that "we have discovered in Donne something answering to the needs of the present mind," what he has in his mind is "our scientific age" (6). And he takes the opportunity to point back to earlier "products of a time not yet ripe for the fullest appreciation of the part that scientific learning may play in the formation of the poetic imagination," including "Literature and Science," Cumberland Clark (1929) *Shakespeare and Science*, John Middleton Murry (1922), and Edward Dowden (1878, 85–121) "The Scientific Movement in Literature." (Other accounts he might have referred to on the question of science and its relation to literature are Huxley ([1880] 1997) and Arnold ([1882] 1974) – and today we would add Snow (1959). The possibility that this relationship is one of the organizing principles of modern literary criticism is worth consideration, though there is not space to do so here.)

Coffin wrote those words in 1937 and they proved prophetic of future critical interest and work in the 80 years since. Indeed, the study of Donne's relationship to early modern science would become the concern of a number of leading critics in mid-century, including Marjorie Hope Nicolson (1950; 1956) and William Empson (1993).<sup>1</sup> One particular group of critics who sustained the critical interest in Donne were the New Critics – Donald Davidson, John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, and Cleanth Brooks among them.

For Coffin, the crucial matter is the relationship of Donne's works to the new science that was beginning to take its modern shape in Donne's lifetime. The new science, that is, was a part of Donne's historical context. As such, Coffin's book signals a critical concern with emergent science as an object of study that runs in parallel to his literary critical focus on works Donne produced in the face of – and to an extent,

in response to – the new science. And in Coffin's study, science is cast as a productive force with which Donne struggled and against which his work can be understood: science as reflected by the literary imagination. For the New Critics, on the other hand, the question of science is re-cast for the literary critic as a question of *method*, an interpretive move that begins the monumental, albeit gradual and incremental, transition toward our contemporary understanding of poetry as a knowledge practice. Published in the same year as Coffin's study, John Crowe Ransom's "Criticism, Inc." (1937) calls for two changes that are in fact linked: the development of literary criticism as a professional activity and the transformation of literary criticism into a science. Lamenting the absence of a properly professional class of literary critics ("Professors of literature are learned but not critical men" (328)), Ransom points the way forward:

Criticism must become more scientific, or precise and systematic, and this means that it must be developed by the collective and sustained effort of learned persons – which means that its proper seat is in the universities. (329)

One of Ransom's concerns, if he is to legislate a new practice of criticism, is to provide a positive functional definition of 'criticism.' His first formulation: "Criticism is the attempt to define and enjoy the aesthetic or characteristic values of literature" (332). Later in the essay, having considered and rejected the so-called Neo-Humanism of figures such as Irving Babbitt that sought to celebrate a universalized moral and transhistorical value in literature and the arts (Foerster, 1930), Ransom opts for a negative definition: "Easier to ask, What is criticism not?" (342). Ransom's discussion of exclusions begins with the most important one: criticism must refuse to engage in "personal registrations," those "declarations of the effect of the art-work upon the critic as reader." Rather, criticism must be objective and focus on "the nature of the object rather than its effects upon the subject." Ransom's list of exclusions continues to identify a range of presumably common but wholly inadequate practices: synopsis and paraphrase, historical studies, linguistic studies, moral studies, and "Any other special studies which deal with some abstract or prose content taken out of the work" (345).

Ransom's formulation looks in two directions: toward a new vision of the field of literary criticism on par with other properly rigorous disciplines, on the one hand, and on the other, back to a similar and earlier demand for the "scientification" of literary criticism via psychology (the wrong choice of science, according to Ransom (1937, 143–165)), as issued most famously by I.A. Richards in a series of landmark books (1924; 1926; 1929). On this account, Ransom functions as a founding theorist of the New Criticism with Richards as an enabling precursor (Ransom, 1941). For both, the task before the critic was fundamentally a matter of literary judgment. The central problem that both addressed was the difficulty of establishing the proper method that would lead to informed literary judgment.

When Ransom draws a defining distinction, however, between the new criticism and some of the problematical practices of the old from which he thinks it still

requires rescue, he points particularly to “the idea of using the psychological affective vocabulary in the hope of making literary judgments in terms of the feeling, emotions, and attitudes of poems instead of in terms of their objects” (Ransom 1941, xi). For Ransom, as for the New Criticism generally, the practice of proper literary criticism depended upon a number of absolute prerequisites, among them the understanding of the literary text as an aesthetic object; the attention paid to the work on its own – without recourse to historical setting or biographical detail and without a concern for whatever any given reader might have been thought to bring to the text; and the demand for the practices of close reading of the literary object as it appeared on the page.

In order to assess the nature and significance of the New Critical concern with Donne and method – as distinct from the more strictly historical and contextual arguments offered by Coffin in which Donne’s poems are said to have been influenced by early modern science (the direction of influence for Coffin is essentially one-way only) – we can turn to Cleanth Brooks’s *The Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* (1947), which can be said to stand as an exemplar of the New Criticism at work. Brooks marks his indebtedness to Donne through the very title of his book, which derives from a line from Donne’s poem “The Canonization,” a poem that in typical Donnean fashion seeks to celebrate romantic and sexual love, cast in this particular example as a form of religious elevation to something like saintliness. Arguing for the exalted nature of this love, the narrator insists that if such a love is seen as “unfit for tombs and hearse,” it can nevertheless find a fitting permanence because “it will be fit for verse.” He continues: “And if no piece of chronicle we prove,/We’ll build in sonnets pretty rooms;/As well a well wrought urn becomes/The greatest ashes, as half-acre tombs,/And by these hymns, all shall approve/Us canonized for love” (Carey, ed. [1633] 1990). But Brooks is indebted to Donne for far more than a title quotation; Brooks’s critical practice itself can be said to be structured on the ethos of John Donne’s poetics. This is most clear in Brooks’s first chapter, “The Language of Paradox,” which offers a sustained close or intensive reading of “The Canonization” – particularly the ways in which that poem enacts an elaborate negotiation of a series of paradoxes in order to substantiate the larger claim elaborated throughout the book that “there is a sense in which paradox is the language appropriate and inevitable to poetry” (3). It is also clear that in order to define the structure of poetry (as the book’s subtitle promises), Brooks has to hold fast to two fundamentals: that poetry is or embodies acts of cognition, and that this cognition is distinct from what he calls “scientific truths.” As Brooks writes at the opening of Appendix Two (“The Problem of Belief and the Problem of Cognition”), it has been the “position developed in earlier pages ... to take the poem out of competition with scientific, historical, and philosophical propositions” (252). The distinction is essential:

It is not enough for the poet to analyse his experience as the scientist does, breaking it up into parts, distinguishing part from part, classifying the various parts. His task is finally to unify experience. He must return to us the unity of the experience itself as a man knows it in his own experience. The poem, if it be a true poem is a simulacrum of

reality – in this sense, at least, it is an “imitation” – by *being* an experience rather than any mere statement about experience or any mere abstraction from experience. (Brooks 1947, 212–213)

Brooks takes pains to distinguish poetry as a form of cognition from the cognitive work of science. For Brooks, science is pure denotation and it is against this understanding of science that poetry is made to emerge as a wholly separate species of cognition: “The terms of science,” Brooks argues, “are abstract symbols which do not change under the pressure of the context.” He continues:

They are pure (or aspire to be pure) denotations; they are defined in advance. They are not to be warped into new meanings. But where is the dictionary that contains the terms of a poem? It is a truism that the poet is continually forced to remake language. As Eliot has put it, his task is to “dislocate language into meaning.” (210)

As a matter of practice, when Brooks offers his reading of “The Canonization,” he is careful to attend to the formal characteristics of the poem, especially figurative language and tone, both of which are integral to understanding the nature of the poem’s structure and how that stands firmly upon what we might consider the master trope: paradox. Brooks concludes that the poem (and Donne’s poetry in general) is energized by the drive towards unity:

Donne’s imagination seems obsessed with the problem of unity; the sense in which the lovers become one – the sense in which the soul is united with God. Frequently, as we have seen, one type of union becomes a metaphor for the other. It may not be too far-fetched to see both as instances of, and metaphors for, the union which the creative imagination itself effects. For that fusion is not logical; it apparently violates science and common sense; it welds together the discordant and the contradictory (18).

What I would suggest is that the fundamental conclusion Brooks reaches is itself a function of the desire for unity that underlies the aesthetic theory of Brooks and the New Criticism in general. In a sense, Brooks looks into “The Canonization” and finds his own critical imperatives staring back at him. This valuation of unity is one of the key features of New Criticism most aggressively resisted and dismissed by literary critics and theorists in recent decades for whom the literary text is not so clearly a perfectly controlled manifestation of something so neat – or so portable – as a world view. Or an overriding philosophy. In a word, we are more willing today to consider the literary work as always partial and incomplete, as always in the process of re-negotiating its own meaning.

The most enduring of the innovations offered by New Criticism has been the attention paid to the practices of close reading, despite the distrust many have felt about the politics of such a focus (Moretti 2013). Indeed, the rigor of close reading as a method for literary reading and criticism was dominant in the field of literary studies, particularly in the American college and university classroom, thanks to Brooks and Robert Penn Warren’s *Understanding Poetry* (1938), and became more or less identified as literary criticism for generations of readers (Jancovich 1993).



What fell away fairly quickly from the prerequisites of the New Criticism was the exclusivity of focus on conceiving the literary text strictly as an aesthetic object existing in more or less total isolation from the culture that produced it and the culture of its reception. Indeed the history of late twentieth-century literary criticism is a series of shifts away from this notion – whether by way of a whole range of new practices that gather under the rubric of “theory” in the 1970s and 1980s, or by practitioners of many of those critical practices ruled out of order by Ransom – the personal, affective, and moral among them.

Criticism in the 1980s and 1990s came to be dominated (though not completely) by the practices of New Historicism and Cultural Materialism. And it is perhaps these innovations that served finally to dismantle the strict New Critical focus on the aesthetic object and introduced the possibility of thinking about literature in relation to the fullness of its cultural embeddedness, a re-thinking that brought into sharper focus matters of race and class, for instance, together with the transformative impact of gender and gender studies, postcolonial studies, and many others. The dissolution of the idea that the literary object might usefully be separated from its culture (implicit, for example, in the notion of “historical background”) enabled a far more productive blending of the historical and the literary. And what follows once our focus is on culture and aesthetic object, rather than exclusively on aesthetic objects, is the liberation of the critic and criticism from the limiting strictures represented by the demands of literary *judgment* as the *raison d'être* of criticism. No longer tied to matters of judgment and valuation, the critic is free to think about literature in new ways: as a discursive engagement with political matters, for instance, or as one of the virtually endless forces that produce culture – a realignment of the directionality of the flow of production. The literary can now more readily be seen as sharing in the production of culture, rather than culture expressing itself in a literature that is reduced to an instrumental role as a reflective device.

## Early Modern Literature and Science 2.0

Two innovations have been especially important in the creation of this new configuration of the relation between literature and science. First, there is the recognition that both literature and science are systems dedicated to the production of knowledge. This innovation can be characterized as a return to, and development of, an understanding that was effectively forgotten or rendered obscure in the decades since critics such as Ransom and Brooks were writing. The second enabling innovation derives from the fact that today we are far less likely to hold science and scientific discourse to have a purely (or nearly purely) denotative nature. Indeed, the work of the last 20 or 30 years in science studies – including ANT, SSS, and STS, and now increasingly, work by literary scholars (perhaps inaugurated in the landmark 1979 book by Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar, *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts*) – has transformed our understanding of the nature of science as a social practice.

Another way to describe the transformation in our understanding of the nature of science is to suggest that where for Ransom and Brooks and Coffin (and Nicolson and Empson) science was science in part because of its perceived status as pure (or nearly pure) denotation, our understanding of science today is more nuanced. In order for science to be purely denotative, it would have to exist more or less outside of culture, beyond the influence of society. Indeed, part of the immense prestige that accrued to science was a function of the tacit acceptance of science and its truths as standing aloof from society and culture – an aloofness that (so it was assumed) allowed science a privileged vantage point from which to take the material world as the proper object of its disinterested (objective) knowledge. This separateness of science also depended heavily upon its assumed separation from language itself; but one of the great lessons poststructuralism taught us was that all language is best understood as connotative in nature. And discourse is always interested.

At the same time, work in the fields of the history and the philosophy of science undertaken in recent decades has allowed a new understanding of science to emerge, an understanding of science as indeed wholly enmeshed within culture and society, and as fully engaged (or mired) in language – and in discourse – as are any other manifestations of human thought, including poetry. Science is no longer a naturally privileged undertaking but rather a fully human – social, political, biased, and deeply interested – set of discursive practices. For the critic interested in early modern literature and culture, science's prior transcendent status has been replaced by science *as an object of study*. The history of this transformation has been written by practitioners in science studies – a complex constellation of discourses dedicated to the study of the practices and the ideologies of science in its various disciplinary forms (Biagioli 1999; Serres 1995). These practitioners include historians and philosophers; but they are also sociologists, cognitive scientists, and literary critics. And their studies range widely and include discussions as various as mechanics, physics, mathematics, medicine, astronomy, cosmology, geography, horticulture, cognitive theory studies, and animal studies (Crane 2014; Hayden 2012; Long 2010; Cummins and Burchell 2007; Fletcher 2007; Park and Daston 2006; Preston 2005). *Early modern science and literature 2.0* represents an urgent area of study today and it has been made possible by innovations in our understanding of the nature of science itself as a thoroughly social and cultural set of practices, and by a corresponding change in emphasis that allows us to see literature as itself more clearly a discourse dedicated to the production of human knowledge.

It will be no surprise by this point in this discussion to see the figure of John Donne once again featured in these new critical practices (Winkelman 2013, Marchitello, 2011, Fletcher, 2005). To identify but one instance among many others, consider the 2013 article by Elizabeth D. Harvey and Timothy M. Harrison, “Embodied Resonances: Early Modern Science and Tropologies of Connection in Donne’s *Anniversaries*.” For Harvey and Harrison, Donne’s poems pose a complicated set of questions: “How do we know the world, Donne asks, and how do the

‘spectacles’ of science and philosophy simultaneously enable and disable perception?” (983). As they seek to provide answers to these questions, Harvey and Harrison are attuned especially to early modern science: not only does Donne “ground his central images in the discourses of natural philosophy,” but indeed they argue that “this scientific matter furnishes kernels of elegiac consolation provided by *The Anniversaries*” (984). The poems are thus understood to engage with science in the pursuit of both meaning (of loss, for instance) and knowledge, rather than merely reflecting the fact of science as a social or cultural feature. To identify in Donne’s *Anniversaries* what we might call the poetic-elegiac voice of *science* acknowledges a far more fluid model for thinking about this mutuality of literature and science than we have deployed in the past, the reciprocal version of which is the investigation of literary aspects that abide within – and help to generate – scientific texts (Hall, 2014).

### Coda

For critics today engaged in the re-evaluation of the relationship between early modern literature and science, Donne’s famous assertion from the *First Anniversarie* that “new philosophy calls all in doubt” locates a key formulation and a key moment in the history of the literature-science dynamic. It is important to note, however, that in that formulation Donne voices ambivalence about science, not its rejection. As the *First Anniversarie* makes manifest, the new science opened whole areas of human knowledge to doubt – in the form of uncertainty, rather than dogmatic skepticism – and therefore to debate: How are we to understand, for example, the appearance of new stars in a celestial firmament believed to be by its very nature immutable? Or, similarly, the disappearance of stars? Why does the sun appear to move at each rising and setting against the horizon in a pattern repeated each year? If there are both great elevations and immense depths on the surface of the earth, and if hell occupies a space within the earth, can we retain either “roundness” or “solidness” (299) as meaningful or true descriptors of the earth? And so on.

The *Anniversaries* cannot answer these new questions, but neither can these questions, nor the lamentable loss of Elizabeth Drury (whose heavenly being is literally beyond human comprehension) bar the poetic utterance: “incomprehensibleness” – of the new world, of the heavenly Elizabeth Drury – could not “deter” (469) Donne’s efforts to memorialize. The enabling condition of this effort, I would like to suggest, is Donne’s embrace of the paradox as interpretive method. Indeed, part of the greatness of these twinned poetic-scientific texts is their ability to hold two competing world-views (and, therefore, worlds) in mind at the same time, without ever resolving their manifest incompatibility. The two *Anniversaries* stand as companion pieces that together perform the difficult task of proper commemoration in which what is celebrated are not only the many and linked paradoxes that define human existence, including death and salvation (to be sure), but also the essentially

paradoxical nature of thinking and cognition. This capacity to resist resolving the apparent contest between old and new philosophy is the true measure of Donne's greatness as a poet and as a thinker.

And the place of Donne in twenty-first-century criticism – like his placement at ground-zero of the atomic age – is in some measure itself a reflection of strange temporalities on conspicuous display across his works. For an epitome of Donne's non-linear figuration of time, we can turn to Donne's *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*, and his justly famous meditations there on the tolling of the funeral bells:

*I am dead, I was borne dead, and from the first laying of these mud-walls in my conception, they have moldred away, and the whole course of life is but an active death. Whether this voice [heard in the bells] instruct mee, that I am a dead man now, or remember me, that I have been a dead man all this while, I humbly thanke thee for speaking in this voice to my soule.* (Donne [1624] 1987, 96)

For Donne, the relationship between the living and the dead body is not only a function of the material nature of matter, but also of a certain “untimeliness” (“I have been a *dead man* all this while”) that informs his understanding of existence (Harris 2009). Donne's untimeliness is a product of his religious faith, but it is tempered by his poetic and epistemological embrace of paradox. Readers today can access a more generalized untimeliness in early modern writing, both literary and scientific, by embracing the lessons of contemporary science studies and by refusing the easy division of our experience of the world into the two supposedly separate and incommensurate camps of Nature and Things and Science, on the one side, and Culture and Art and Society on the other (Latour [1991] 1993). Literature and science both offer proof positive of the fictive nature of this particular division of the kingdom.

### What to Read Next

Aït-Touati (2014); Crane (2014); Dear (1985); Mazzio (2015); Preston (2015).

### Note

- 1 See especially, in Nicolson (1956): “The Telescope and Imagination,” 1–29 (orig. pub. 1935. *Modern Philology*, 32, 233–260); “The ‘New Astronomy’ and English Imagination,” 30–57 (orig. pub. 1935. *Studies in Philology*, 32, 428–462); and “Kepler, the *Somnium*, and John Donne,” 58–79 (orig. pub. 1940. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1, 259–286). In Empson (1993): of particular interest, see “Donne and the Rhetorical Tradition,” 63–77 (orig. pub. *The Kenyon Review*, 11, 1949) and “Donne the Space Man,” 78–128 (orig. pub. *The Kenyon Review*, 19, 1957).

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# Representation

*Patricia Phillippy*

## Recycled Jewels

In the decades after Queen Elizabeth's death, the legacy of the monarch's body and face, conveyed in material remains of her reign, carried with it the difficult exchange between the secular and sacred that attended her representations and self-representations during her lifetime. Blanche Parry's cenotaph, erected according to her design before her death in 1590 and Elizabeth's in 1603 is one such remain (Figure 24.1). On the tomb, Parry's alabaster effigy kneels before that of her sovereign, presenting a pomander, a jeweled container filled with fragrant resins and spices. This object and the jeweled book in her left hand memorialize Parry's role in the royal household as the Keeper of the Queen's Jewels (Richardson 2007). The jeweled pomander is also a token of the cosmetic arts – the use of makeup, perfumes, bleaches and dyes, wigs, and sartorial extravagances – employed by early modern women to assert sovereignty over their bodies. Parry's monument to two maidens is a self-created image of femininity achieved by controlling, in death as in life, one's appearance, adornment, and effects. The queen's effigy, with clothing and hair drenched in jewels, was originally painted to the life: the polychrome tomb was literally a painted sepulcher. As Parry (1507/8–1590) took part in creating the aura of majesty surrounding the living queen, she continued that act in her memorial as well, and created her image, too, in that cosmetic performance.

Parry's painted effigy of Elizabeth (1553–1603) reminds us of the continuity between the queen's skillfully managed person and its visual reproductions; between the artistic and cosmetic arts of "painting." This chapter moves from Blanche Parry's exemplary performance of female sovereignty to explore the intersection of painting and femininity first in Elizabethan iconography, then in Aemilia Lanier's poem of





**Figure 24.1** John Guldin (attrib.), Blanche Parry Monument (detail) (before 1578). St. Faith Church, Bacton. Author's photograph.

the Passion of Christ, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, published eight years after Elizabeth's death, and finally in *Christ and the Samaritan Woman* (1607), a devotional painting by the Italian artist Lavinia Fontana (1552–1614). Parry's monument offers an apt starting point by embodying three key concerns that guide this discussion.

First, Parry's monument displays the confessional nature of identity – particularly of royal identity – in post-Reformation England by participating in the Elizabethan conversion of sacred objects to symbols of secular power. When she retired from her post in 1587, Parry prepared “A Boke of soche Jewells and other [stuff] ... in her charge,” a vast collection of 628 items (BL Royal Addendum 68). The nucleus had been inherited from Elizabeth's father, Henry VIII (1491–1546), “who made vast additions to the jewels left him by his frugal father [by] appropriat[ing] for his own use all gold, silver and gemstones remaining in the church treasuries” following the dissolution of the monasteries (Scarisbrick 2003, 183). Many of Elizabeth's jewels were literally sacred objects recycled as secular adornments. The “cult of Elizabeth” built upon these appropriations, however, resulted in a secular idolatry that rivaled the Catholic image-worship it replaced (Strong 1963; 1969; 1977): “the Queens Majesties face in her coyness,” Catholic writer Nicholas Sander complained, “is a kind of graven Image” (1624, 88).

Second, by referring Lanyer's textual portrayal of Elizabeth to portraits and effigies of the queen, this chapter demonstrates how material objects and practices enable constructions of gendered subjects. Focusing on Elizabethan uses of the

cosmetic arts allows one to consider in the more concrete terms of material objects and practices the theoretical relationship between psychological or physiological “interiority” and the body’s physical exterior. Lanyer’s portrait of the queen exploits the early modern conflation of materiality and femininity, and borrows Elizabethan modes of painting and self-creation to resurrect the queen’s body as a potent object through which female subjects might be self-defined and created. As she adorns and embellishes the queen’s remains, Lanyer gives shape to the social, sexual, and spiritual ties binding her to the memory of Elizabeth.

Finally, the various media used by Parry and Lanyer (1569–1645) to represent and commemorate Elizabeth invite an interdisciplinary approach to the literary and material remains of early modern England. This chapter takes part in the critical debate surrounding the relationship between literary texts and “material textualities”: systems of signification conveyed by material artifacts and practices (Frye 2010; de Grazia, Quilligan, and Stallybrass 1996; Jones and Stallybrass 2000). Considering texts alongside visual arts, I see literary and artistic activity “as involved in a complex web of cultural relations,” and I focus on the figures and practices of painting to negotiate and describe this network (Koelb and Noakes 1988, 1). Moreover, I contend that moving freely, although not arbitrarily, from literary to visual works and from Protestant England to Catholic Italy can remind critics of the “early modern” of the extensive, dynamic culture of the “Renaissance” (Burckhardt [1860] 1990; Greene 1982): an international cultural movement that produced, among many others, the coherent, sustained conversation on gender in which the works considered here take part. Seeking connections across national and disciplinary borders, this chapter demonstrates that such comparison and interdisciplinarity are fundamental to understanding *local* instances of the gendering of texts (Bernheimer 1995) and artworks (Cropper 1976; Johnson and Grieco 1997). By reading women’s works in relation to each other and to the cultural and confessional movements surrounding them, this chapter returns the Renaissance to the early modern.

In the past four decades, feminist literary critics and art historians have uncovered and documented formerly neglected works by women artists and writers, augmenting the predominantly masculine literary and visual canons and developing a feminine history of the arts emergent from women’s works themselves (Showalter 1981; Ferguson, Quilligan, and Vickers 1986; Gouma-Peterson and Matthews 1987; Nochlin 1988; Broude and Garrard 1992; Ezell 1993; Pollock 1999). In their inception, these critical efforts struggled to assert literary or artistic value on the basis of sex, often assuming that early modern women’s works are inherently valuable because they appeared in a period that largely suppressed female public expression. This appeal to biographical and biological fact – that is, to an essential femininity – was troubled on several fronts. Perhaps most urgently, the association of women’s artistic representations with their gendered bodies often negated the aesthetic value of their works: women artists and writers were seen as motivated by a need for direct self-expression rather than by a desire for artistic mastery (Nochlin 1988, 149).

Recent work in art history and literary studies has moved beyond the essentialism of its critical legacy, to a constructionist emphasis on gender (Gouma-Peterson and Matthews 1987, 347–348; Butler 1990). This chapter contributes to this project by arguing that early modern women's works can provide a template for contemporary constructionist approaches to femininity insofar as they self-consciously engage gender within the historical practices and discourses of painting. Rather than seeing literary and visual works as revealing authors' essential selves, I examine performances of gender in relation to painting (see also Lichtenstein 1987; Sohm 1995; Dolan 1993; Melchoir-Bonnet [1994] 2001). Since the gendered subject is a product of his or her uses of available conventions, this chapter explores the early modern "beauty industry," setting it alongside other cultural and aesthetic concerns. This method takes its cue from early modern women's works, which establish their authors' rights to self-creation and self-authorship by exposing and challenging the essentialist underpinnings of the conventions governing painting in both of its senses.

### Painted Sepulchers

A rock crystal casting bottle, used by a Tudor noblewoman to hold perfume and now exhibited by the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, suggests the vicissitudes of pre- and post-Reformation beliefs, particularly as they pertain to the female body. Composed of Egyptian rock crystal, the container predates its mounting by five centuries: "the rock crystal," according to the gallery label, "may have contained a holy relic and come to England after the Crusades. It was later mounted in silver and given its new use when religious relics were prohibited after the Reformation" (M.781810). As a reliquary, it would have housed a material remnant of a saint, perhaps a fragment of the sanctified body. With the dissolution of the cult of the saints and the iconoclasm precipitated by the Reformation, the object's function changes, no longer preserving the venerated corpse, but adorning the noblewoman's flesh.

This suggestive object illustrates points of contact between religious debates on idolatry and the period's literal and figurative approaches to women's cosmetic practices. The casting bottle figures the woman's body and its double function emphasizes the corruption of female flesh against the incorruptible saint's body. Certainly the fall into secularism in the reliquary's reuse involves a debasement of the sacred that Catholics would have found abhorrent (Sander 1624, 31–32). The resourceful recycling of the object, however, points toward the growing preoccupation with personal adornment in the reigns of the Tudor monarchs, culminating in the replacement of discarded Catholic icons by royal images in the "cult of Elizabeth" detailed by Roy Strong nearly 50 years ago. Reports of Elizabeth's physical appearance, although sometimes tainted by religious polemic, often note her generous use of cosmetics: Jesuit Anthony Rivers' claim that the queen was painted "in some places near half an inch thick" (Foley 1877, 8) may reflect Catholic suspicion of Elizabeth rather than conveying accurate details of her appearance. The aesthetic

and material effects of Elizabeth's painting – her artful imitations of the sacred body's incorruptibility – are evident in the idealizing masks of majesty and youth displayed in her portraits from the 1570s forward and in accounts of foreign visitors, such as that of the Swiss diarist Thomas Platter, who reported in 1599 that “although she was already seventy four, [Elizabeth] was very youthful still in appearance, seeming no more than a girl of twenty years of age” (Platter [1599] 1937, 192).

If the reliquary-turned-casting bottle represents the female body, its transparency complicates this symbolism. Anti-cosmetic invectives in the period assumed a desirable alliance between a woman's inner nature and her outward appearance and lamented the rupture of this link wrought by the artificiality of make-up. Thomas Taylor's *A Glasse for Gentlewomen* (1624), for example, insists that, “No outward ornament or habit may be used upon the bodie, which is severed from the inward ornaments of grace upon the soule ... [A]ll artificiall colours and covers are but filthinesse, where this [sanctification] is wanting.” He concludes with a paraphrase of Proverbs 11.22: “A jewell of gold in a swines snout, is a beautiful woman without inward comelinesse” (41–44).

While the ideal early modern woman is a “crystall glasse” (Stubbes 1591), the painted surface of her body threatened at once to display and disappear the female subject. As Amy Richlin notes, cosmetics involve a “paradox whereby a cultural practice simultaneously constructs and erases its practitioners” (1995, 200). The female body is dismembered and reassembled in two-dimension patterns and parts that rob women of subjectivity and agency. The subject of portraits of the queen – Nicholas Hilliard's two-dimensional figures, for example – is not a woman, but the accessories that attend and assign femininity and royalty. Hilliard (1547?–1619) and court painters following his lead make no attempt to offer a likeness of the queen: rather their painting displays the “mask of majesty” which was the dominant pattern for Elizabeth's images. While her face is reduced to a painted effigy, Elizabeth's clothing and jewels are represented “from life.” The queen is not a woman but a mirror of majesty: thus the *Phoenix* and *Pelican Portraits* attributed to Hilliard (both c. 1575) are mirror images of each other. The queen's virtues are materialized in the two jewels – themselves near copies of each other – that give the portraits their names. Robbed of interiority, Elizabeth is all dazzling surface.

It is a critical commonplace that the iconic, anti-representational style of Elizabethan portraiture (Strong 1963; Gent 1981) responds to Protestant nervousness about imagery and reflects the iconoclasm initiated with Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries, institutionalized under Edward VI (1537–1553), reversed by Mary (1516–1558), and reinstated in a qualified form by Elizabeth I (Aston 1988, 220–342; Phillips 1973; Siemon 1985). What has rarely been noted, however, are the implications of iconoclasm for attitudes toward the female body and its adornment, or the continuity between Protestant condemnations of idols and castigations of women's painting. This notional continuity rests on similar concerns about the sun-dering of correspondences between inward essence and outward form in religious images and women's bodies, and similar views of artistic creation and cosmetic self-creation as transgressive. As Thomas Tuke (1616) bluntly put it, recycling views first

developed by the anti-Catholic reformers of Edward VI's reign, "A painted face is not much unlike an Idoll ... and they, that make it, are like unto it, and so are all they that doe delight therein, and worship it" (2).

For the female monarch, the legacy of Tudor iconoclasm and its implications for women's cosmetic self-creation troubled the construction of her public image. If Hilliard's mirror of majesty illustrates the dismemberment and dissolution of its female subject, it also scripts the legacy of Elizabeth's efforts to control the vagaries of the looking glass, and the troubled trajectory of that project in the misogynistic and iconoclastic culture of early modern England. Despite the efforts of Elizabethan apologists to clarify the status of the royal image, confusion between substance and shadow was pervasive (see Bilson 1585, 547–580). The belief that the queen's real presence was contained within her "naturall representations" accounts for attacks on Elizabeth's images (Siemon 1985, 55; Strong 1963, 40). Elizabeth's self-fashioning, like her images, relied upon the unity of surface and substance that had previously supported Catholic defenses of imagery to create the sacred body of queenship. Yet, a reformed suspicion of the rupture between inner essence and outward shadow rendered Elizabeth, like any painting woman, a dead idol severed from essential grace. Thus, one observer wrote that "all is falsehood and vanity" with the queen, while a description of Elizabeth in her sixty-fifth year noted the ravages of her cosmetic use in unforgiving terms: "her face oblong, fair but wrinkled ... and her teeth black" (Neale 1957, 76; Rye 1865, 103–104).

If Elizabeth's self-fashioning constitutes idolatry, its legacy is comprised of equal parts apotheosis and a debasement. She is at once a model of female creative sovereignty, and of diabolical self-display.

### True Eternitie

When Amelia Lanyer begins her poem of the Passion of Christ, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (1611), under the sign of the risen Elizabeth, she constructs an equivocal posthumous portrait of the queen that is both an apotheosis and a debasement:

Sith Cynthia is ascended to that rest  
 Of endlesse joy and true Eternitie,  
 That glorious place that cannot be exprest  
 By any wight clad in mortalitie,  
 In her almightie love so highly blest,  
 And crown'd with everlasting Sov'raintie;  
     Where Saints and Angels do attend her Throne,  
     And she gives glorie unto God alone,

To the great Countesse now I will applie  
 My Pen, to write thy never dying fame ... (Lanyer 1993, 51)

The lines reflect the pragmatic redirection of Lanyer's bid for patronage with the death of the queen: thus she applies her pen to the praises of Margaret Clifford

(1560–1616), Countess of Cumberland, in Elizabeth's absence. Lanyer's opening image of Elizabeth also initiates an extended meditation throughout the poem on the troubled relationship between the superficial appearance of things – most prominently, women's bodies – and their substances. The central terms of this exploration emerge from the legacy of Elizabeth's cosmetic representations in life and death. The figure of Elizabeth ascendant – no longer clad in the garments of mortality, her beauty therefore ineffable – informs Lanyer's efforts to script women's beauty both internal and expressible. Yet this seemingly unqualified praise of Elizabeth in beatitude is implicitly critical. In describing the queen's attainment of "true Eternitie" only in death, Lanyer suggests the futility of Elizabeth's attempts to defy death with painted masks of youth and majesty. Elizabeth's conversion from vainglory to the praise of God's glory alone, moreover, indicts the idolatry of her cosmetic self-creation. As Lanyer attempts to redeem feminine flesh through the spiritual painting undertaken in her poem, she criticizes Elizabeth's personal idolatry with its contradictory condemnation of the dead letter of Catholicism and advancement of the dead mask of the deified monarch.

Inviting "all vertuous Ladies in generall" to "beautifie [their] soules" in "my Glasse" (12), Lanyer imagines her text as a mirror that reflects Christ's Passion – presenting "even our Lord Jesus himselfe" (34) – and the community of women convened in her extensive series of dedicatory verses. Lanyer is not concerned with depicting her subjects' superficial beauties, however, but in granting them an interiority to validate and redeem their problematic sex. Her "Invective against outward beuty unaccompanied by virtue" challenges the assumption that women are incapable of spiritual self-reflection. Disparaging "the matchlesse colours Red and White" as "perfit features in a fading face" (59), Lanyer implicates "the cult of red and white" exploited to praise Elizabeth's "lily-and-rose beauty" (Bowen 1999, 286). Instead she argues that "a mind enrich'd with Virtue, shines more bright,/Addes everlasting Beauty, gives true grace" (59). To delineate a valid connection between women's colors and essences, Lanyer redirects the conventional anti-cosmetic invective away from the usual indictment of women's duplicity toward a critique of men's responses to feminine beauty: "For greatest perills do attend the faire," she writes, "When men do seeke, attempt, plot and devise,/How they may overthrow the chastest Dame,/Whose Beautie is the White whereat they aime" (59–60). Lanyer's purpose is to explore how the objectifying male gaze, which reduces women to mere surface, may be replaced by the self-reflective vision of the female subject.

If women's superficial beauty is the "White" at which men aim, Lanyer suggests that authentic feminine beauty may be firmly rooted in, and redeemed as, the image of God. In her feminist retelling of the Passion, Lanyer demonstrates that women enjoy a special intimacy with God, culminating in the moment of Christ's empathetic speech to the mourning Daughters of Jerusalem (93–95). Lanyer's "Mirrour of a worthy Mind" (5) redeems the female flesh not by affirming women's essential virtues, but by constructing the female subject based upon her identity with Christ (c. 4 BCE–c. 33 CE). The failure of a sure alliance between women's inner and outer natures, rather than constituting a form of idolatry, instead offers an opportunity for

the woman writer to describe the construction and reconstruction of the female self as a productive act of self-creation. "Painting," for Lanyer, involves the repair of the severed link between color and essence, but one which proceeds by constructing feminine interiority as women's incorporation of the image of Christ.

To do so, she places women at the foot of the cross, before the mirror of Christ: "No Dove, no Swan, nor Iv'rie could compare/With his fair corps, when 'twas by death imbrac'd;/No rose, nor no vermillion halfe so faire/As was that precious blood that interlac'd/His body" (39). Lanyer recasts the reds and whites of the cosmetic culture as the body and blood of Christ, offering first a blazon of the crucified Christ (101) followed by an anatomy of his resurrected form. Laid in the tomb, Christ's body is "Imbalmed and deckt with Lillies and with Roses" (106), while his resurrected flesh embodies true reds and whites: "unto Snowe we may his face compare,/His cheekes like skarlet" (107). Imagining the Incarnation as Christ's exchange of "his snow-white Weed" for "Our mortall garment in skarlet Die" (99), Lanyer redeems Elizabethan coloring as a garment of flesh clothing an immaculate interior. The poem's closing gesture extends this sacramental imagery to establish fellowship between the female subject and Christ:

Deckt in those colours which our Saviour chose;  
The purest colours both of White and Red.  
Their freshest beauties I would faine disclose,  
By which our Savior most was honoured:  
    But my weake Muse desireth now to rest,  
    Folding up all their Beauties in your breast. (128–129)

The sanctified reds and whites are the colors of Lanyer's poetic speech and the *imago Christi*, both enfolded in the female breast.

This passage summarizes Lanyer's revisionist approach to Elizabethan painting: the internalized image of the sacred is evidence of a woman's inner beauty to corroborate her appearance. Exploiting the validating intimacy between women and Christ, Lanyer traces the movement from vision to internalization which redeems the female subject and her troublesome flesh. She scripts women's redemptive self-creation through their correct interpretation and adoption of the colors of Christ. As such, Lanyer's blazon of the resurrected Christ ends with a gesture toward her own representation of the parceled *corpus Christi*, and offers a portrait of exemplary feminine reading:

Ah! give me leave (good Lady) now to leave  
This taske of Beauty which I tooke in hand,  
I cannot wade so deepe, I may deceave  
My selfe, before I can attaine the land;  
Therefore (good Madame) in your heart I leave  
His perfect picture, where it still shall stand,  
    Deeply engraved in that holy shrine,  
    Environed with Love and Thoughts divine. (108)

The redemptive internalization of the image of Christ within the female reader provides corroborating evidence of her inner beauty to validate her appearance. Importantly, though, Lanyer foregrounds feminine agency – that of the poet and the reader – in constructing this virtue. Rather than rendering women as passive objects of observation, *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* exploits the perceived separation of colors and essences to empower the woman reader and writer to self-create.

### The Fountain and the Mirror

Lavinia Fontana's *Christ and the Samaritan Woman* (Figure 24.2), like Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, illustrates intimacy between the Savior and – in this case – the Samaritan woman while foregrounding the question of color. As Fontana explores the Samaritan's ability to interpret the visible evidence of Christ's body, she offers a



**Figure 24.2** Lavinia Fontana. *Christ and the Samaritan Woman*. (1607). Source: Photo Library of the Superintendent for the PSAE and the Museum of Naples. Reproduced with permission.



visual representation of Lanyer's redemptive poetics. Her defense of painting joins Fontana's and Lanyer's feminist projects across the divide of Reformation and Counter-Reformation approaches to the image.

In representing the episode from the Book of John (c. 90–110), Fontana stresses Christ's humanity, giving visual form to the biblical detail that "Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well" (John 4:6). His head resting on his hand, he glances up into the face of the Samaritan woman in a gesture that underscores the vulnerabilities of the flesh (hunger, thirst, and fatigue), Christ's willingness to assume these frailties, and his dependence upon women during his lifetime for comfort and relief. Fontana further illustrates the episode's preoccupation with Christ's incarnation in a background vignette depicting the apostles returning with food for the Savior. In the foreground, she concentrates on the moment of Christ's initial request for water from the Samaritan woman and her surprise at being addressed by him. The Samaritan's promiscuity (which Christ discerns prophetically) as well as her idolatry (Christ tells the Samaritan woman that her people "worship ye know not what," John 4:22) are both suggested by her richly colored wardrobe and jeweled headdress.

Fontana's *Christ and the Samaritan Woman* participates in the Reformation debate on painting and idolatry, aligning women's painting – Fontana's and the Samaritan's – with the redemption of material surfaces guaranteed, according to Catholic theorists of the image, by Christ's Incarnation. Her choice of subject foregrounds the distinction between letter and spirit, colors and essence, which attends both Protestant and post-Tridentine (1545–1563) approaches to images (Mâle 1949, 167–199; Jones and Worcester 2002), and the use of imagery in personal devotion (Miles 1985, 95–125). For both Protestant reformers and Counter-Reformation advocates of personal devotion, Christ's exchange with the Samaritan woman is a polemical crux (Calvin [1550] 1958). It is here that Christ insists that God must be worshiped in spirit and truth; here that he distinguishes between Old Testament and New Testament spirituality, associating the former with the dead letter, the latter with the living spirit; and it is here that the figure of Christ as the fountain of living waters displaces the literal well of Jacob, and the spiritual sustenance of salvation displaces the material sustenance of the flesh. When the disciples return with food, Christ responds, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of ... My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:31–34). The Samaritan woman's role in assisting this spiritual feeding is central to Fontana's treatment of the subject. In the background, the medieval city walls represent the Old Testament law, replaced by the spiritual community established between Christ and his female disciple. As Fontana performs a conversion from dead objects to living faith in the move from the background to foreground, she predicts the Samaritan's missionary career, when she will leave behind the material icon of salvation to avow the living water: "The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, 'Come and see the man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?'" (John 4:28–29 and 39).

Fontana's image, like Lanyer's poem, argues that women's exemplary reading – the Samaritan woman's ability to recognize Christ's divinity through the veil of mortality – enables a shift from the material to the spiritual, from letter to spirit. At issue in the story, and crucial in Fontana's rendering of it, is the connection between surface and substance, particularly as they attend painting and femininity. According to Gabriele Paleotti's *Discorso intorno alle imagini sacre e profane* ([1582] 1990), a post-Tridentine treatise on images that influenced Fontana's art (Murphy 2003, 2–4, 31–36), the painter appeals to the senses of her viewers with superficial techniques, such as the variety of colors, shadow, figures, and ornaments (“per la varietà de' colori, per l'ombre, per la figure, per gli ornamenti”), and thereby enables the viewer to see through the surface to the eternal truth it contains (“far è scala a gli huomini per penetrare le eterne”) (fol. 69–69v). Through the artistry of the painter, Paleotti's Christian viewers (*gli huomini*) exercise spiritual insight to comprehend religious truth. In her exemplary *feminine* insight, Fontana's Samaritan woman is the ideal post-Tridentine viewer.

This insight, moreover, guarantees the shifting surfaces of painting. Fontana may have had the tale's explicit engagement with idolatry in mind as she created her image, but in her portrait of the female idolater, she embodies the redemptive link between body and spirit. The colors in which Fontana clothes her twin protagonists suggest this bond: the Savior's red gown and blue robe are echoed in the red bodice and blue shawl of the Samaritan woman. Dressed in the robes of salvation (which, from another point of view, indict her licentiousness), her face blushed (with modesty or with art), Fontana's Samaritan advances toward her Savior. Her mind moving adroitly from surface to substance, she is fully aware of his identity and of her own. Engaged in an art of self-creation guaranteed by the internalized image of Christ, the Samaritan is an icon of women's painting that converts idolatry to redemption, dead image to living faith. Fontana's signature on the canvas, “Lavinia Font. Za. Fa. MDCVII” (Fortunati 1998, 106) reminds us of her surname, *fontana* – a fountain or well – and invites us to imagine that the Samaritan may also be a portrait of her creator, the daughter and wife of painters and the disciple and practitioner of a reformed art of painting. Engaged in depicting the story of a woman's interpretive skill and her fellowship with the most illustrious of male companions, Fontana erects a mirror for women, reflecting their skills in insightful viewing and their creative and recreative art.

## Coda

“Femininity,” Melchoir-Bonnet ([1994] 2001) writes, “is the creation of the mirror” (214). “The authority of the reflection is imposed primarily upon women who ... construct themselves under the gaze of the other” (272). The cosmetic culture of early modern England placed women before literal, visual, and textual mirrors that reflected masculine standards of feminine beauty, virtue, and vice. This “disciplinary practice produce[d] a body which in gesture and appearance [was] recognizably

feminine.” Through a gradual process of internalization, twenty-first-century women and their early modern ancestors are complicit in creating “a ‘practiced and subjected’ body ... on which an inferior status has been inscribed” (Bartky 1988, 64, 71). The beauty industry insists that a woman “connive,” as John Berger (1972) puts it, “in treating herself as, first and foremost, a sight” (51). As “self-policing subjects,” women engage in a “self-surveillance [that] is a form of obedience to patriarchy” (Bartky 1988, 79).

Viewing the practice of making up as “self-deconstructing, since this focus on the surface calls into question the existence of any underlying self” (Richlin 1995, 186), a number of contemporary feminist critics have compared cosmetics to decapitation; an “eroticization” of the female head which silences women and robs them of identity. As Howard Eilberg-Schwartz (Eilberg-Schwartz and Doniger 1995) writes, “it is precisely the desire to be looked at rather than the desire to look which is signaled by cosmetics” (2). Policed and self-policed, early modern women’s “right to paint” may seem to amount merely to their complicity in a system in which they could only please or displease male governors, rather than pleasing or governing themselves.

Yet the project of constructing female subjectivity outlined in this chapter challenges the essentialist assumptions of the disciplinary practice that is the early modern cosmetic culture: a regulatory fiction that understood women’s nature as simultaneously decorative and debased. To grant women the power of self-determination by insisting upon their interpretive ability and intellectual capacity for discrimination does not simply replace one essentialist view with another. Rather, Parry, Lanyer and Fontana imagine femininity as performative, as constructed by one’s engagements with cultural and discursive genres and material practices. These performances redefine “masculine” traits (self-reflection, for example) as equally available to women. Deploying a *fiction* of essence, these women envision a new femininity as a product of women’s acts rather than their natures. Through their redemptive painting, as it moves from the body’s surface inward, they create and describe the “essence” of woman.

### What to Read Next

Frye (1997); Gent and Llewelyn (1990); Riehl (2010); Snook (2011); Starkey and Doran (2003)

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# Historiography

*Nicholas Popper*

## “The Kings Castle”

Sometime in 1567, an unknown counselor presented to Queen Elizabeth I (1533–1603) a manuscript tract entitled “The Kings Castle,” outlining learning indispensable to the ideal monarch. The counselor briefly discussed religion before embarking on an extended disquisition concerning the fortification most necessary to ensure stability: the study of history. As he advised, “exercise yoursele in readings of Histories wherein you shall finde a livelye viewe of the lords proceedings on earth, there shall you increase politique prudence that will make your hart skillful in all points belonging to your estate and offices. Hide not your eyes from that profitable knowledge in yt you shall stem the tempestious turmoiles of kingly states, wch of all other states (except god guides the Helm) is most indaingered to miserable shipwrack” (BL MS Egerton 3876 f. 49<sup>r</sup>). Some histories were preferable for teaching Elizabeth to withstand her reign’s distressing fragility. The Queen, he insisted, should give special priority to “the Histories of your owne Predecessors kings,” and observations on their successes and failures should guide her rule: “Using them as the meanes god giveth you for your instruction,” he explained, “learne to arme your selfe that you may be mightely fenced against all fantastical, headie & perilous devises” (Ibid., 50<sup>r</sup>–51<sup>r</sup>). Study of the past was an impregnable fortress against calamity.

As the author continued, it became clear that his emphasis on historical knowledge supported a particular agenda. Preparing a smooth succession, the author asserted, was the greatest of a monarch’s many responsibilities. Most prominently, the counselor gave a frank assessment of Henry VIII (1491–1547), praising the Reformation while criticizing his lavish military expenditures and noting that his hasty sale of annexed papal lands squandered steady income for one-time cash infusions.

Nonetheless, Henry had succeeded in his most important task, if barely. Expanding on decades-old rumors, the counselor reported that before the birth of a legitimate son, Henry had recognized Henry Courtenay (1497/8–1538), Marquis of Exeter, as heir apparent. Mindful of Henry VI's reign, the author saw Edward VI's birth as introducing rather than resolving complications, for danger inhered in having a spurned adult heir and a minor prince royal. Though Henry "had almost forgotten the Tragedie of King Hen: ye sixt, & his heire apparent," he eventually orchestrated Exeter's fall, and the succession was "safely secured when hee had driven ye lions & Panthers wth other proud beasts, out of the way, & had left no stumbling blocks in ye way of his sweete sonne ye Prince." (65r–68r) Henry's machinations – informed by his own recognition of a historical parallel – skirted rebellion.

The advice of "The Kings Castle" was elaborated in many pamphlets, speeches, and letters of this moment: for the health of her rule and stability of her realm, Elizabeth needed to chart a firm path to succession. What distinguished this work was the idiom in which it was couched, for this little-known tract marked an early instance of the tidal wave of historical study, analysis, and counsel that emerged during her reign and poured forth through the end of the seventeenth century. Over this period, the study of the past obtained a new authority while generating a new array of forms, evidence, methods, and practices. The initial impetus for the rise of historical study was political and religious, but the broader story of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English historiography is one of diversification and expansion.

### **Historiographical Transformations**

Until recently, modern historians' examinations of English Renaissance historiography have tended to focus on its contributions to the formation of the "scientific" historical method, distinguished by a reliance on primary sources, emphasis on concurrence and causation, attentiveness to source biases, and abhorrence of anachronism, fictionalized speech, and other mechanisms that subordinated the relation of past events to rhetorical criteria (Fussner 1962; Baker 1965; Levy 1967; Ferguson 1979). Authors like William Camden (1551–1623) and Edward Hyde (1609–1674), Earl of Clarendon were the luminaries in this firmament, figures who advanced critical evaluation of sources, judicious narrative economy, and secular modes of causation. They were praised for modelling their challenges to the medieval chronicling tradition on the works of continental Renaissance humanists like Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), Francesco Guicciardini (1483–1540), and Jacques Auguste de Thou (1553–1617), who themselves imitated ancient historians. This transformation in historical writing was seen as precipitating a revolution in historical consciousness, as ever-improving accounts of the past allowed early modern Britons to discern differences from their predecessors and to internalize the emancipating possibility of change over time.

A recent cadre of scholars – most prominently, Daniel R. Woolf – have successfully challenged this Whiggish, teleological narrative (Woolf 2000; 2003; Kewes 2006).



Early modern historians, they have shown, sought to mobilize contextually-specific ideologies and practices to intervene in the debates of their own period. While aspects of their work might resemble elements of the modern historiographical method, this methodological ideal was never their animating objective. Rather, the cultural authority granted to historical study in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries stimulated historical innovation in the service of political, social, and religious agendas, and understanding the transformations that took place requires understanding how historical works sought to intervene in their broader contexts.

There was, to be sure, change over this period. While at the beginning, historical narratives were predominantly oriented towards producing analogical typologies, by the end historians often described a past possessing its own distinctiveness, autonomy, and logic through a more diverse set of instruments. In what follows, I show how the dynamics driving the use of histories in “The Kings Castle” impelled an array of transformations, focusing on the how historical authors conceptualized, framed, and executed their communion with the past, while also remaining attentive to the audiences for histories.

### Cannibalizing the Chronicle

The author of “The Kings Castle” drew on the historical knowledge that was most common to English men and women of this period – that of their own past. This operated at several scales, for English men and women accompanied a strong sense of their own local and regional histories with a general familiarity of the realm’s dynastic history. Most of this knowledge was transmitted orally, but through at least the first half of the sixteenth century, the primary *written* form of accessing the British past was undoubtedly the chronicle. This genre entailed the recording of events without establishing a hierarchy of their importance or requiring analysis of causation, though divine providence was assumed as the final cause. Though later humanist readers often complained that chronicles seemed a disconnected log of random occurrences and that their creators often recorded improbable or false hearsay, the monastic and civic communities underlying their creation had used them as vital registers of news, wars, prophecies, births, deaths, gossip, and rumors. Chronicles were not expected to be the set literary performances that humanists prized, but rather were accretive communal miscellanies, living texts that were added to over time. Works like Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historiae Regum Britanniae* (by 1139) and Ranulf Higden’s universal chronicle *Polychronicon* (1327–1364) – or summaries of them – often were the first entry in volumes subsequently updated with other chronicles and thick annals of local events in forms ranging from list to verse. Because they were compilations, their narrations of events often contradicted each other, which chroniclers only sometimes addressed. Chronicles thus constituted registers that occupied a liminal status between historical work and historical evidence.

The circulation of chronicles enabled by the advent of print technology transformed them. Chronicles, to be sure, were popular items for publishers, and they continued to be produced through the end of the sixteenth century. But both the expense of producing such lengthy texts and the market they found encouraged adaptation. While some readers continued to use printed chronicles as historical digests – often expanding them by entering their own notes – others practiced a cannibalizing form of reading them, focusing on their historical, sacred, commemorative, or other aspects. Publishers and authors, looking to capitalize on the potency of specific elements suspended in chronicles, segmented them through a variety of publications, including newssheets, almanacs, historical poems, narrations of miracles, compendia of moral observations based on histories, chronologies and more (Woolf 2000). But, though sixteenth-century chronicles tended to take more narrow chronological or geographical parameters than had many of their predecessors, they were still produced anew, and often they were published as collections, much as they had been compiled before. The mid-sixteenth century thus witnessed a profusion of writings that adapted aspects of chronicles to make the past accessible.

### Humanism and the Uses of the Past

Additional developments feeding the diversification of historical writing also intensified the potency attributed to knowledge of the past. Though antiquity always conferred authority in early modern Britain – custom, after all, was a form of historical memory – more streams fed into a surging tide promoting historical knowledge, elevating the authority of the past beyond its traditional depth.

The spread of the humanism in the sixteenth century unquestionably augmented the value of the past (Grafton 2007). In the earlier part of the century, humanist historians were most concerned with producing narratives that abetted wisdom and with authenticating sources through the resources of philology. In the first phase of its penetration into England, humanist historiography generated two landmark works: Thomas More's unfinished *History of King Richard III* and the Italian expatriate Polydore Vergil's *Anglica Historia* (1534). These narrated their subjects in far different registers than did chronicles, but their immediate reception illustrates the flexibility of chronicle culture. More's work is illuminating – this rich, detailed consideration of Richard III's motivations offered an exemplary source for moral reflection. But it remained unpublished during his lifetime, and its first print iterations were imperfect versions appended to the John Hardyng's verse *Chronicle* (1543) and the second edition of Edmund Hall's chronicle *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre Famelies of Lancastre & York* (1550). Similarly, while Vergil's devastating challenge to the Galfridian myths of Britain has long been recognized, its principled reliance on classical sources for the ancient past ceded to dependence on chronicles, other medieval texts, and oral testimony in its later books. It too owed much to chronicle culture, and its reception – in particular its rejection by John Leland (c. 1503–1552) and others who disliked Vergil's censure of the myth of Brutus – was shaped by ideological rather than methodological considerations.

Indeed, humanist values and practices rather than humanist texts would transform the landscape for historiography in early modern England, in particular the ascendancy of new historicist strains of humanist counsel in the 1560s (Popper 2012). Classical scholarship in fifteenth-century Italy had always been intricately linked to governance, as Leonardo Bruni, Lorenzo Valla, and others applied their philological expertise as chancellors, ambassadors, secretaries, propagandists, and ornaments of courtly wisdom; indeed, they portrayed their humanism as their competitive advantage in the pinched marketplace of preferment. Along with inheritors like Erasmus (c. 1466–1536), they tended to treat the past as a theater of moral exempla, and they pressed patrons and polities to imitate the virtuous and eschew the vicious in the classical sources they treasured, distinguishing their histories' role as handmaidens to moral philosophy from the medieval chronicles they derided as barbaric.

Humanist historiography began to shift in the early sixteenth century. Always on the prowl for powerful models from antiquity, scholar-statesmen like Machiavelli and Guicciardini gravitated towards the classical examples of Polybius (c. 200–c. 118 BCE) and Thucydides (c. 460–c. 400 BCE), emphasizing history's value as a theater of causation rather than as a theater of exempla. Along with admirers like Thomas Elyot (c. 1490–1546), they stressed that the most skillful counselors learned patterns of causation from reading histories and applied this wisdom in prudent advice to their princes. Their emphasis on causal interpretation further distanced their histories from chronicles.

This stance was embraced by the learned elite throughout Europe in the 1560s. The widespread instability precipitated by dynastic rivalries and Reformation conflicts provoked learned statesmen to search the past to discover precedents for the turmoil of their present. Arguments about counsel became arguments about which pasts were being repeated. Publication of histories increased dramatically, along with auxiliary genres abetting historical analysis, from geographies, to antiquarian encyclopedias, to guides to reading histories. Such works proliferated as scholars insisted that monumental changes could ensue from obscure causes, leading them to canvas the historical record for ever more minute shards of evidence. England's dynastic and religious uncertainty made the realm fertile ground for this culture, and accordingly many powerful figures adapted its methods for their own ends. From the 1560s, high counselors like Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, sponsored expert readers to provide counsel by giving them policy-oriented questions to be answered by reading histories (Jardine and Grafton 1990; Sherman 1995). The author of "The Kings Castle" may have drawn his evidence from chronicles, but its mobilization tapped this nascent strain of historical counsel, one which would characterize succession tracts of the 1590s far more than its contemporaries a generation earlier.

### **The Uses of Ecclesiastical History**

The enthusiasm for historical knowledge among elite counselors may have stemmed from humanist trends, but its broader social acceptance was sewn outside Whitehall (Woolf 2003). Above all, the ecclesiastical elite of Elizabeth's early reign stressed the

historical license for their church settlement, supplementing the primary exegetical ground of theological debate with argument over the sacred past in the effort to earn political support. This program brought to a broader audience an emphasis on history as arbiter of social division.

Though the Reformation was justified on historical grounds, little historical argumentation was used to rationalize it beyond the collection of evidence from chronicles known as the *Collectanea satis copiosa*. In Henry's reign, the antiquaries John Leland and John Bale (1495–1563) struggled to preserve testimonies of the medieval past during the Dissolution of Monasteries, but their efforts had little effect on the shape of the church. By contrast, in the first decade of Elizabeth's reign the Archbishop of Canterbury, Matthew Parker (1504–1575), oversaw a robust, historically-oriented campaign to justify the settlement he presided over (McKisack 1971). Parker sent emissaries across Britain and the continent seeking medieval chronicles, Anglo-Saxon records, and documents that illuminated Rome's usurpation of the autonomy of the English Church. He published those he deemed most polemically effective from his enormous collection, typically equipped with prefaces indicating how they supported the Elizabethan settlement. A similar method underlay John Foxe's enormously influential *Acts and Monuments* (1563), which fused evidence drawn from a wide range of medieval and modern sources to concatenate England's ecclesiastical history as a tradition of martyrs. Clerics like John Jewel (1522–1571) also relied on intimate knowledge of ecclesiastical histories in polemics linking the Anglican Church to primitive Christianity (Betteridge 1999).

The efforts of such men did not emerge from organic exigency. In Mary's reign, Foxe, Jewel, and others had fled to the continent where they encountered vibrant communities of Protestant ecclesiastical historians. Though Parker was not exiled, his correspondence with the Croatian Lutheran Matthias Flacius Illyricus (who presided over the massive collaborative ecclesiastical history known as the *Magdeburg Centuries*) stimulated his own enterprise.

Though these men may have derived their practices from contact with prominent continental reformers, like Flacius and others they aspired to persuade a far broader readership than just the elite. In the contested theological landscape of Elizabeth's early reign, their ecclesiastical histories aimed to reach both elite and common audiences hoping to persuade a young population that had never known religious stability to accept the doctrine of the present's continuity with the past restored from Rome's shadows.

### The Flowering of the Past

Both Renaissance and Reformation forces contributed to the efflorescence of the study of the past in late-sixteenth-century England, and in both cases, unearthing previously hidden evidence was considered essential to the power of histories. It is a striking feature of this culture that widespread enthusiasm for historical knowledge preceded even modest composition of historical accounts; that the author of "The

Kings Castle” adapted chronicle evidence for humanist counsel is indicative of the broader landscape. The latter half of Elizabeth’s reign and James’ reign, however, witnessed a blooming in historical production, bringing literary production in line with general enthusiasm. This flowering manifested itself as expansions in the topics, forms, and methods of historical writing.

One prominent indication of the elevated authority of histories was the swelling publication of editions and translations. Most English readers interested in ancient and European histories before the 1560s had contented themselves with continental editions, but after this point English production surged. Editions of Polybius, Sallust (c. 86–35 BCE), Herodotus (5C BCE), Tacitus (c. 56–c. 118) and more hit the market in the two decades before 1590, as did more editions of works by Machiavelli, Guicciardini, Philippe de Commines (c. 1447–1511), Annius of Viterbo (c. 1432–1502), Justus Lipsius (1547–1606), and others. Larger enterprises became feasible; a full edition of Livy, for example, was first published in 1589, and a translation by Philemon Holland in 1600 (Cox Jensen 2012). Over the next decade, Holland also issued translations of Suetonius (c. 70–c. 130), Ammianus Marcellinus (c. 330–395), and Pliny (23/24–79); and during roughly the same years, Edward Grimeston translated more recent works by José de Acosta (1539/40–1600), Simon Goulart (1543–1628), Pierre Matthieu (1563–1621), and others. Interested readers could thus far more easily learn about classical antiquity along with the ancient, medieval, and modern pasts of other European realms.

Classical editions tended to be produced in pursuit of patronage, their translators or editors hoping to gain employment under powerful advisors such as Leicester (1532/3–1588). Editions of more recent works, such as the numerous translations of French histories of recent civil wars, typically paired this goal with more polemical ones, such as building public support for England’s allies abroad.

A prominent place remained for traditional methods amid this eruption of histories. Some of the most successful texts clearly drew on the chronicle tradition; one such was Holinshed’s *Chronicles* (1577, expanded in 1587), a collection of English, Irish, and Scottish histories that would be plundered by poets and playwrights in subsequent decades (Kewes, Archer, and Heal 2013). Similarly, John Stow, one of its contributors, also produced highly successful chronicles, including *A Summarie of Englyshe Chronicles* (1565) and *Annales of England* (1580). Though these texts relied on traditional modes of historical writing, they also demonstrated the vitality of the form for creating public responses to contemporary debates. The religious pluralism of the authors of Holinshed’s *Chronicles*, most notably, juxtaposed conflicting responses to the confessional diversity that the Elizabethan regime strove to squash. While some of its contributors like William Harrison agitated militantly for a Protestant state, others like Richard Stanihurst set forth pasts that lamented the fall of Catholicism. His history of Ireland resembled those of expatriate Catholic ecclesiastical historians Nicholas Sander and Nicholas Harpsfield, who responded to Parker’s program by using chronicle evidence to produce histories that challenged both Elizabeth’s right to rule and the basis of the Anglican Reformation.

Stow, though religiously conservative, did not aim his texts at confessional ends, but rather to defend London's local identity. Especially in his *Survey of London* (1598), he pursued this end by prioritizing evidence that previous historians – including many humanists – had ignored: non-narrative textual sources like charters and writs, and material culture like inscriptions, coins, and ruins. These antiquarian methods reflect his friendship with the foremost English historical scholar of the period, William Camden. Camden's connections with continental luminaries like de Thou and Abraham Ortelius inspired his remarkable *Britannia* (1586), an examination of ancient Britain that relied heavily on material evidence, accessed both through fieldwork and through correspondence with an impressive range of informants. His efforts inspired a wave of admirers and the formation of the Society of Antiquaries; it also motivated critics like the Catholic controversialist Richard Verstegan, whose *A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence* (1606) used antiquarian methods, to condemn the Reformation.

Camden's devotion to primary sources also underlay his 1616 *Annales*, which recounted recent British history. If antiquarianism was one great legacy of continental contact, the perspective of the *Annales* reflected the other: that of what was called "politic history." Heavily influenced by Tacitus, histories of this genre traced shifts in high politics to cravenly human causes – especially courtly intrigue, machination, and deceit – and presented their narratives as transmitting experience for counselors seeking to understand how to navigate *realpolitik* early modern courts (Levy 1987; Millstone 2014). These texts emerged as a powerful form of English historical writing in the 1590s in works like John Hayward's *The First Part of the Life and Raigne of King Henry IV* (1599). Though this text was implicated in Essex's disastrous rising, politic history continued to thrive in works by Francis Bacon (1561–1626), Francis Godwin (1562–1633), and others.

Despite the hesitation of many powerful figures to publicize the reasoning underlying politic histories, much of the thriving production of historical drama and poetry was composed in this key. Samuel Daniel's *The Civil Wars* (1595) was a landmark of politic historical poetry, but this approach also underlay the historical drama and poetry of Shakespeare (1564–1616), Marlowe (1564–1593), Jonson (1572–1637), George Chapman (1559/60–1634), and Thomas May (1596?–1650). These works closely scrutinized the manipulations of historical courtly figures, suggesting that the politics of the present, like the politics of the past, hinged on arcane slights, real or imagined, suffered by those in the elite chambers of power. They often drew their essential material from works imported from the Continent to set events in lands distant and past, freeing them to deploy their own powers of interpretation to map the original narratives onto the present. Similarly, those who examined past aspects of British history drew their fundamental evidence from chronicles and other historical works, but exercised considerable authorial leeway to assign motivations, devise speeches and courses of action, and otherwise recast inherited historical narratives as present-focused politic histories. Earlier humanists had staked their authority to their linguistic expertise; these figures grounded their persuasiveness on their illumination of hidden motives.

The intense gravitation towards historical analysis – often influenced by continental predecessors – manifested in numerous other ways as well, including Michael Drayton's antiquarian verse *Poly-Olbion* (1612), the chronologies of figures like Thomas Lydiat, Richard Knolles' *Generall History of the Turkes* (1603), and the importation of more recent histories of continental explorations of the East and West Indies. These, too, maintained their distinctive motivations, whether arguing for a particular form of the Anglican church, encouraging Christian unity, or promoting commercial enterprise. The intellectual landscape of the years between 1570 and 1615 was dominated by the production of a variety of forms of original historical inquiries aspiring to achieve specific contemporary ends.

### How to Write a History

The diversification of forms (or species) of historical writing and types of evidence forced the emergence of different processes of historical writing. Walter Raleigh's methods of composing his *History of the World* (1614) while imprisoned for treason in the Tower of London offers a case study illuminating the transformed environment (Popper 2012).

Raleigh's project was conventional in its outline: he sought to write a universal history illuminating divine providence from Creation to his present, and his narrative was oriented towards generating prudence, hoping thereby to earn James I's favor. For him, as for the author of "The Kings Castle," histories constituted irreplaceable testimony of the dynamics of change whose internalization would establish disciplined and pious rules for conduct.

But contextual shifts transformed Raleigh's labor. He was aided by a library of nearly 500 books – a *copia* unthinkable for historians even a half-century before. These books addressed the scriptural past, the classical world, late antiquity, medieval Europe, and the turmoil of the present throughout the Old World and the New. They took a range of forms – chronicles, histories, chronologies, annals, compendia, dictionaries, historical geographies, antiquarian tracts, and many more. Historians' practices were not scalable, and the surfeit of sources forced Raleigh to reconfigure his task, moving him from a compiler of evidence to its judge. In this service, he adapted contemporary scholarly practices. Some early modern readers entered comparison and correlations in the margins of their copies of books; like many others, he instead deployed a system of alphabetized notebooks to collect evidence. This method required the reconceptualization of his sources from narratives into massive compilations of discrete observations, some of which he extracted and grouped with similar passages. Re-assembling this material into a historical narrative posed a monumental challenge. Raleigh was attentive to the credibility of his sources, and he viewed Scripture as the true word of God. But he accepted that many authors erred, that their accounts even of events they witnessed might have been inflected by prejudice, that the transmission of texts had introduced. His role as historian required him to assess evidence for its fit with other evidence, for only

by identifying the right pieces could he restore the puzzle of the past. This also required of him frequent conjecture, and he posited unnoticed gaps in time in the historical record, conflated or distinguished historical figures, and tweaked or disregarded inconvenient evidence in the service of his larger narrative.

Raleigh's goal, like so many before and after, remained to discern God's will on earth. But his efforts reflected a shift in the instruments used to do so. Early modern historians remained driven by the insatiable conviction that the past – if properly reconstructed – offered the only true guide to the present. But, more suspicious of the veracity of their sources and more reliant on their own experience and reason to conjecture away contradictions and gaps between sources, they increasingly fashioned their own versions of the past. The art of history became an art of conjuring, and its seemingly infinite possibilities daunted even the most committed acolytes. In seven years of work Raleigh narrated almost 4,000 years of human history, but this brought him only up to the second century BCE, and he abandoned the work before arriving at the ages of Caesar or Christ, let alone his present. The past had become endless.

## Dissemination

Nearly all seventeenth-century developments in historical writing stemmed from the forces established in the Elizabethan and Jacobean period. Historical culture continued to emphasize analysis of causation to engender political prudence, and histories themselves became significant cultural forces as readers internalized their modes of explanation. At the same time, the desire to find new aspects of the past to illuminate the present promoted the expansion of history's geographical scope, an increased production of supplementary aids, and the printing of collections of primary sources.

The increased value placed on histories was marked by the establishment of the first chairs in history at Oxford (1622) and Cambridge (1627). But their most significant appeal under the early Stuarts was politic history's promise of exposing the insidious court culture many disaffected Britons saw as driving their turbulent present. The fashion for politic histories compounded the strife they purported to reveal, as an increasing segment of the early Stuart polity grew to see their world through a Tacitist filter. While Oxford's first Camden chair in history, Degory Wheare (1573–1647), avoided controversy in his lectures on Florus and produced a substantial guide to the reading of histories, his Cambridge counterpart Isaac Dorislaus (1595–1649) was dismissed for lectures on Tacitus that, his enemies maintained, justified rebellion against legitimate princes. The rage for Tacitism fueled a conviction that conspiracies and tyrannical aspirations underlay all political maneuvering. The dramatically conjectural subgenre of "secret histories" arose, claiming to expose the shocking amorality of counselors like George Villiers (1592–1628), Duke of Buckingham and the hidden motivation behind controversial measures like Ship Money, much as the author of "The Kings Castle" elevated rumors about Exeter into a powerful historical explanation. This pattern of reasoning exacerbated social divisions, for all tensions could be figured as evidence of the creep of tyranny and



the destruction of subjects' rights (Millstone 2014). The ubiquity of politic histories helped sow the grounds for the Civil Wars – evident in Dorislaus' role in preparing treason charges against Charles I shortly before his own assassination by royalist exiles.

The most prominent historian of this period, Camden's student Robert Cotton (1571–1631), was profoundly committed to politic history analysis, but his career also highlights several other significant features (Sharpe 1979). For one, his correspondence with eminent continental scholars reflected English scholarship's continuing entanglement with Europe's. Second, commitment to politic history was not reserved to those alienated from the crown. From its advent in England, those in power had used its logic to link all dissent to seditious Jesuits or Puritans, and Cotton initially rose under the star of one of James I's favored counselors, the crypto-Catholic Henry Howard (1540–1614), Earl of Northampton, who applied such methods to outmaneuver his enemies. Third, Cotton strove to apply methods of historical analysis to the present, and to this end he collected state papers, letters, memoranda, and material culture that might contain vital clues to the logic of contemporary events. This expertise rendered him a valuable resource for counselors. After Howard's death, he moved between patrons, eventually growing disenchanted with Buckingham and establishing a partnership with the firebrand John Eliot (1592–1632). This alliance brought him under greater scrutiny, and his position grew more tenuous with what he claimed was the unapproved publication of his *A Short View of the Long Life and Reign of King Henry III* (1627), which examined how a king ultimately shed a corrupt and overweening counselor – an obvious historical staging of anti-Buckingham counsel. In 1629 his library was closed and the massive collection of papers removed from his custody.

Cotton's antiquarianism was shared by many contemporaries who grew similarly incensed by Caroline rule. In large measure, this was because their notion of the English constitution rested on a version of the past articulated by Edward Coke (1552–1634). According to this interpretation, parliament as a whole far predated the Norman Conquest, and the authority of this body, along with the common law, ensured the natural order of English governance entailed by a limited monarchy presiding over a polity of freeborn subjects. In their history, William the Conqueror (1027/8–1087) invaded with the seeds of absolutist tyranny that now ran wild under the Stuarts. Their historical inquiries were directed to demonstrating the antiquity and persistence of parliamentary authority – especially the Commons – along with unearthing precedents for circumscribing royal power. In the early 1640s, the Puritan controversialist William Prynne (1600–1669) composed histories of Parliament and the Great Seal in addition to numerous historical exposés of the nefarious designs of Charles' counselors and the Jesuits who allegedly controlled them. He also published state papers to illuminate the progress of crown–parliament relations. Similarly, Milton's epic *History of Britain*, composed around 1649, traced the heroic past of God's favored nation, and John Selden (1584–1654) produced massive, erudite, pioneering histories of legal and ecclesiastical aspects of English history with the aid of Cotton's library and his own collections.

But historical scholarship was not solely the preserve of anti-Stuart agitators. Indeed, even Prynne's later career belied this claim, for at the Restoration he was appointed Keeper of the Tower Records. This was largely because in the late 1640s his interpretation had changed, persuaded by Robert Filmer (1588?–1653) that medieval records did not indicate the Commons' permanent existence, but rather the necessity of parliamentary collaboration with the crown. From this office, Prynne continued to publish historical records, hoping to convert those who clung to the myth of the ancient constitution.

Filmer's own analysis had drawn on the vibrant community of antiquarians who had in the previous decades advanced the study of the medieval past far beyond what Parker's circle had achieved. Henry Spelman (1563/4–1641), most prominently, relied heavily on Cotton's library to examine the development of feudalism in England (Pocock 1957; Parry 1995; Broadway 2006). His greatest intellectual successor was the royalist William Dugdale (1605–1686), whose exacting examinations of Warwickshire antiquities, St. Paul's Cathedral, and English monasteries further illuminated the vibrancy and complexity of the medieval church in contrast to the austerity of Puritans and Independents. Essential to their view was the conviction that the medieval past was distinct from the turbulent present and itself had been the site of radical change. Unlike "The Kings Castle," which projected an unchanging ideal of the English monarch's relationship to their subjects, their seemingly dry tomes revealed the dynamism of English society and exposed the intellectual poverty of projecting assumptions from the present into the past.

Such research continued to shape political argumentation, and Whig and Tory interpretations of history solidified in the 1680 dispute between the Whig William Petyt (1640/1–1707), who again invoked the notion of the "ancient constitution," and Robert Brady (c.1627–1700), whose Tory position drew on royalist antiquarianism to illuminate the post-Conquest origins of Parliament (Pocock 1957). Historical argumentation remained rife throughout the Restoration, as figures like the Royal Historiographer, James Howell (1594?–1666), and the parliamentarian John Rushworth (c.1612–1690) deployed various strategies to produce histories of the Civil Wars that assigned culpability to the predecessors of their contemporary enemies (Neufeld 2013a).

Similar to the antiquarian opening of medieval Britain, this period witnessed an increasing examination of local and oral traditions concerning buildings, landscapes, springs, miracles sites, and more (Woolf 2003; Walsham 2011; Neufeld 2013b). Many readers used these studies to nourish their religious allegiances. But these texts also opened new paths, for some readers grasped them as curiosities and entertainments, sparking a new practice of reading that would emerge powerfully in the eighteenth century. The emphasis on material culture and encouragement of curiosity in such studies, furthermore, provoked publishers increasingly to include visual modes of representation within their volumes.

The scope of English histories expanded beyond the borders of the realm as well. Selden had been an active participant in continental debates and examinations of

ancient Jewish history and customs; similar ecclesiastical histories of Jews and Muslims started appearing in substantial quantities late in the seventeenth century, as England's colonial project brought its subjects into more contact with such groups in the Mediterranean and beyond. Paul Rycaut's *Present State of the Ottoman Empire* (1665) was the most prominent of many histories that purported to explain the pasts and customs of foreign peoples (Toomer 2009; Bulman 2015). Like many others, including Lancelot Addison's histories of Jews and North African populations, his did so while also making veiled recommendations for political prudence.

Alongside these developments, classical editions and translations, continental histories, abridgments, summaries, chronologies, and more continued to pour forth from British presses, and poems and playwrights continued to fashion their own accounts of the past. Audiences for historical narratives of all kinds expanded beyond what had been imaginable a century prior, and the past assumed ever-greater prevalence and authority in English life.

## Conclusion

English historical culture, then, was reconfigured by the rage for history that arose in the sixteenth century. Above all, the structure of historical inquiry encouraged interpretation rather than recording in historical work, and accordingly practitioners devised new patterns of causation to past events, assiduously pursued different remnants of the past that they then assigned newfound authority, and devised innovative methods of communicating the diversifying array of pasts they aspired to record – most visibly in the rage for antiquarian tracts and politic histories that characterized the seventeenth century. At the same time, the creation of such works reflected persistent features of this culture. For even as many of its practitioners pursued obscure knowledge of distant and exotic pasts for commercial, religious, and other rationales, the guiding logic of most histories remained that guiding the author of “The Kings Castle” – to use study of the British past to best understand the ideal policies for the British present.

## What to Read Next

Grafton (2007); Kewes (2006); Popper (2012); Woolf (2000; 2003).

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## Devotion

*Timothy Rosendale*

“Let man’s soul be a sphere,” wrote John Donne in 1613, “and then, in this,/ Th’intelligence that moves, devotion is” ([1633] 2010). But this dynamic guiding force of the soul, the poem goes on to lament, is subject to the distraction and corruption of “foreign motions,” and this is why the speaker finds himself riding west on the day of the year when his attentions should be most resolutely east-facing – Good Friday. The remainder of the poem goes on to contemplate the implications of this disloyalty, and to imagine, if conflictedly, a submissive reconciliation with Christ which sets all aright (Rosendale 2012).

Similar associations of devotion with submission and subjugation have, in a curiously secularized way, played a role in theoretical and critical considerations of subjectivity in the last several decades. In a pair of brilliant and deeply influential arguments that set the terms for much subsequent New Historicist practice, Stephen Greenblatt contended in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (1980) that Thomas More (1478–1535) and William Tyndale (c. 1494–1536) were, despite their apparent diametrical opposition and mortal enmity, driven by surprisingly similar forms of self-annihilating devotion. Each died a martyr to and for a sectarian cause: More for the consensual authority of the Roman Catholic Church in the face of Protestant Biblicism, Tyndale for the vernacular Scripture in defiance of Rome’s efforts to restrict and control the meaning of the sacred text. Different, opposed causes, to be sure, but for Greenblatt the dynamics are ultimately identical. He states at the outset that one of the “governing conditions” of early modern self-fashioning is “submission to an absolute power or authority situated at least partially outside of the self – God, a sacred book, an institution such as the church” (8–9); and he accordingly later concludes that each man had “an intense need for something external to himself in which he could totally merge his identity” (111). In response to what

Greenblatt sees as “the wrenching possibility that their theological system was a fictional construction” (113), both More and Tyndale “search ever more insistently for a new basis of control, more powerful and total than the one they have helped to undermine” (114). In this, they exemplify Greenblatt’s increasing conviction that the human subject is “remarkably unfree, the ideological product of the relations of power in a particular society” (256).

This account is elegantly insightful, and it continues to exert considerable influence over critical assumptions and practice. Of particular interest for the present chapter is its participation in a long and rich tradition – including a good deal of psychoanalytic, Marxist, and poststructuralist theory – that skeptically interrogates the assumed integrity and autonomy of the subject, and argues to the contrary that individual consciousnesses are shaped (and indeed, some argue, entirely constituted) by forces well outside of their comprehension or control (see, for example, Augustine [397–401] 2009; Althusser [1970] 1971; Lacan [1970] 2002; Foucault 1982; Geertz 1973). Such decentering inquiries have yielded a great deal of insight and subtle analysis for which we should be grateful. But they also carry their own inherent forms of distortion and blindness. I am particularly concerned with their frequent tendency to exercise a kind of analyst’s condescension: assuming that the early moderns lacked our range of insight, that we can and should assimilate their categories to our own, that we can understand them and their interests better than they themselves were able to. Thus, to continue with the paradigmatic example of Greenblatt, early modern religion isn’t really about God and the self (neither of which may really exist to begin with); it’s about ideology, power, social and psychological pressures, compulsive needs to align with and submit to overwhelming external powers. More and Tyndale can find themselves only by abnegating themselves, and it is at bottom this – not their faith in the principles of Christianity, which amounts to a kind of false consciousness – that explains their suicidal devotion. And as a bonus, that this principle can account for two people who understood themselves as being in radical opposition to one another becomes a part of its explanatory power: if two mortal enemies like these are ultimately doing the same thing, surely that testifies to the pervasiveness of this dynamic across the board.

The implicit reasoning and influence of this kind of analysis can be found everywhere, but there are reasons to question some aspects of its seductiveness. We might wonder, for instance, if it really is satisfactory to conclude after a hundred pages of astounding subtlety that two of the most remarkable figures of early Tudor England did not really understand what they were doing in their most passionate pursuits. Surely, despite the many insights produced along the way, this is a worryingly reductive and biased way of thinking about early modern religion and subjectivity. This might seem an inevitable outcome of an avowedly secular criticism, especially when combined with what I have called the analyst’s condescension, but I don’t believe this needs to be the case, and indeed I don’t think that the historically attuned critic’s options are limited to naïve fideism or condescending secularity. As some of the most articulate critics of the latter tendency have demonstrated in their own work (Fish [1967] 1997; Strier 1986, 1989, 1995; Shuger 1988, 1990, 1994; Diehl

1997; Cummings 2002; Aers 1992, 2003, 2009; Beckwith 2003, 2012) taking early modern religion seriously on its own terms does not conflict with, but rather can greatly enhance, productive critical analysis – in part because it better respects its subject matter.

We might also wonder about the adequacy of theory and criticism that goes too far in arguing for the external constitution of the subject as simply “the ideological product of the relations of power” – or as Roy Porter (1997) puts it, “just a construct, a trick of language, a rhetorical ruse.” (12) In his own metanarrative of his book, Greenblatt describes his initial intention to “understand the role of human autonomy in the construction of identity” (1980, 256), and how it gradually shifted to a recognition of the early modern subject as a “cultural artifact” of power relations. Instead of writing a book in the vein of Burckhardt ([1860] 2002) and Cassirer ([1927] 2010) on the triumphant Renaissance emergence of humanist subjectivity, he ended up writing one more in the vein of Foucault (1982) and Althusser ([1970] 1971) on the degree to which we are unwittingly heteronomous epiphenomena of ideology and power rather than makers of ourselves. I want to stress once again that we have learned much from this kind of criticism, but here too there are dangers of radical reductivity. If human subjects are merely effects of ideology, if they/we are thoroughly constituted so as to willingly endorse and collaborate with our own subjugation, we risk a criticism and an existence that are not only depressing but also terribly dull – good at documenting the intricate mechanisms of our subjection, but much less good at accounting for dynamics of resistance, critique, real selfhood.<sup>1</sup> Thankfully there has been something of a retreat in the field from the excesses of recent decades, but a central challenge of good criticism is always this: how do we account justly for the complex relations between the inner self (and/or the literary text) and all that presses in upon it from the outside, without excessively privileging or dismissing either?<sup>2</sup>

Attending to early modern devotion provides a useful set of paradigms for how this might work. The word *devotion* itself comprises a range of senses, of course. It can express Petrarchan eros (Shakespeare, *Antony & Cleopatra* 1606–1607, 1.1.5), political allegiance (Shakespeare, *Richard 2* 1595–1596, 1.1.31), or religious activity or inclination; while this chapter will focus on the third sense, it might elsewhere be usefully extended. The word derives from the Latin *votum* (vow, wish, prayer) by way of *devovere* (literally, among other possibilities, “to promise away”), which can mean to devote, vow, sacrifice, or dedicate, but also to doom, destine, curse, or bewitch. Those latter senses provide an intriguing glimpse of the tensions implicit in the word, and this chapter will return to those, but the primary senses indicate what is at the heart of devotion: a giving or setting apart for a particular pursuit or object. This setting apart, especially when declared by a vow, brings us close to *dedicate* (to say apart), *consecrate* (an intensive making-sacred), *sacrifice* (a giving or surrendering of something to a deity), and even *sanctify* (to declare or set something apart as sacred), and on to the general field of religious senses of devotion. In the *Oxford English Dictionary*, this field encompasses religious earnestness, reverence, or devoutness (1a); religious worship or observance, prayer and praise (2a); a form of prayer or worship (2d); an offering or oblation (3); or simply the action of setting

apart to a sacred use (4). In English, the correlate nonreligious senses were back-formed from the religious in a mirror image of their development in Latin (where the religious senses developed out of earlier secular ones).

Devotion, then, presupposes a subject and an object, in a relationship that validates both without erasing or emptying out either. Devotion can be commanded or even coerced, and it can be hollow or even faked, but at its core is a presupposition of sincerity and voluntary giving. Normally, when I devote my attention or my resources or myself to something, I am giving them to an object that I have deemed worthy; the act thus dignifies both its object and its subject, even if the act itself is an act of submission or surrender of the latter to the former. In this sense devotion is perhaps better understood as a phenomenon of reciprocity or negotiation than of domination or cancellation.

Ritual theory – a sophisticated hybrid of cultural anthropology, sociology, and religious studies – has provided some powerful insights into this. Roy Rappaport (1999) called ritual “the basic social act,” seeing in its complex symbolic dynamics of assertion and submission the fundamental articulation of culture, the self, and the transcendent (137). Catherine Bell (1992) has adapted Foucault’s more nuanced later work (especially his 1982 essay “The Subject and Power”) to counter the reductive tendency to regard the subject as an ideological illusion created by power. Bell contends that ritual is a relationship of only “relative domination,” and emphatically “*not* a matter of simply reinforcing shared beliefs or instilling a dominant ideology;” as a “strategic embodiment of schemes for power relationships,” it can be appropriated, and can “promote forces that have been traditionally thought to work against social solidarity and control.” She concludes that “the person who has prayed to his or her god, appropriating the social schemes of the hegemonic order in terms of an individual redemption, may be stronger because these acts are the very definitions of power, personhood, and the capacity to act” (215–218). Bell’s argument is a useful counter to lopsidedly hegemonic models of power and subjectivity; it recognizes ritual as not just a totalizing mode of domination, but as a more fluid and bidirectional social transaction between the propagators and the participants of ritual ordering, and between subject and the object of devotion.

I have taken this small detour for two reasons. The first is that in the remainder of this chapter, in which I will discuss various forms of early modern devotion, I will begin with England’s preeminent form of public devotion (the Book of Common Prayer), and the thinking of Bell and other ritual theorists has been highly useful in my own thinking and writing on that underconsidered subject. But I will also argue that this basic insight, in its astute combination of theoretical sophistication and common sense, can illuminate more than just public ritual and liturgical forms of devotion; it can also remind us that other forms of devotion too are not mere self-cancellation. The Prayerbook is one of the great public monuments of the English language, but I will argue that even in the more personal and lyrical devotion of Donne (1572–1631) and Herbert (1593–1633), devotion consists of much more than simple submission to a transcendent and irresistible other.



The advent of the first Book of Common Prayer in 1549, which translated, adapted, and displaced the prior Latin Sarum Use liturgy for public worship, bore many of the hallmarks of the hegemonic model of devotional authority that I have been critiquing. (For more on the history and the uses of the BCP, see Hefling and Shattuck 2006.) Liturgy by its very nature works in the mode of the collective imperative. In its careful scripting of the words and actions of church worship, it tells its users when to stand and sit and kneel (all bodily gestures of respect, attention, deference, prostration), when to speak, what to say, when to be quiet; it speaks to them in modes of declaration, command, and exhortation; it speaks ventriloquistically through them by dictating the form and content of their utterances, and in so doing it requires not just passive assent but active first-person affirmation of its values and authority. Liturgical form, that is, has a deep and inherent predisposition toward authority and collective order, and a fundamental part of its brief is to regiment and integrate individual subjects into that order. And while this intrinsic political charge is potent enough in its own right, in England the stakes were raised considerably. The Prayerbook, while produced by properly ecclesiastical experts, was legally authorized by royal and parliamentary power in the first Act of Uniformity (1549). The Act's preamble outlines a problem of liturgical diversity, which will be remedied by the single, uniform text of the BCP; this liturgy, it argues, will in turn provide a counterweight against unauthorized further innovation. This burden of restriction and homogeneity is most clearly developed in the Act's central penal clauses, which forbade under relatively stiff penalties the use of any other form of worship by clergy or laity; also forbidden were any modification or public derogation of the liturgy. The logic of Uniformity, and by implication the logic of liturgical reform, imagines the Reformation as not just a disaffiliation from international Roman Catholicism but as a comprehensive internal consolidation of language, worship, and religion generally. The Prayerbook was the textual emblem of an autonomous kingdom linguistically, religiously, and politically unified under the hierarchical authority of its church, state, and monarch – and a way of daily performing that ideological ideal into being.

Now this – all of which I believe to be true, and have argued at length elsewhere (Rosendale 2007) – would seem to provide rather marvelous support for the kind of analysis that this chapter is aiming to qualify, and indeed it would be a convincing instantiation of it were it not for the fact that there is more to the story. For there is in the BCP a fundamental tension, in which hierarchical subordination is persistently counterbalanced by implicit assertions of much more individualized forms of authority. Its profoundly influential use of the English language instead of the Latin of transnational Catholicism, for example, is undoubtedly a linguistically political act of separation, definition, and consolidation, but it is just as deeply linked to the Protestant emphasis on individual engagement and comprehension. Similarly, the Prayerbook effaces its own institutional mediation of truth by explicitly subordinating its own authority to that of the Bible it deliberately restored to the center of worship and teaching; when Cranmer insists in his essay “Of Ceremonies” that the liturgy is “not to be esteemed equal with goddes lawe,” he makes clear that public

devotion is meant not as an opaque end in itself but as a conduit to the divine (Ratcliffe [1549, 1552] 1949, 288). A parallel logic manifests itself in the Eucharistic liturgy, which in 1549 distances itself from the absolute ontological claims of Catholic transubstantiation and blurs them into ambiguous metaphor by praying that the bread and wine would “be unto us” (rather than simply “be”) the saving body and blood of Christ (222). The short-lived 1552 revision moved decisively beyond this by referring in more strictly Reformed fashion to the elements as “creatures” that facilitate “remembraunce” of Christ’s sacrifice (389), and the 1559 Elizabethan words of administration combined both prior versions to restore the individual’s interpretive latitude in determining what this sacrament meant (Cummings 2011, 137). What these interrelated aspects of the BCP point to is a set of dynamics in public worship that are not reducible to a logic of either hegemonic power or unmediated selfhood. Despite the ideological loadedness of its form and history, this liturgy to a significant degree mitigates its own claims to authority, and presents itself as a facilitator of contact between a transcendent God and individuals who bear substantial responsibility for how they understand and pursue that relationship. The collective and authoritative claims of the Book of Common Prayer, that is, exist in a dialectical relationship with the Protestant subject that they implicitly recognize and enfranchise. The private self, while legally bound to a public order, is invited by that very order to enter into negotiations and partnership with it.

The English liturgy was thus engaged in a very delicate balancing act, and while most were willing at least to conform to it, there were from the start many critics on both sides of the religious and political spectrum. Conservatives emphatically disapproved of its linguistic and theological concessions and its political implications, while the enthusiastically reform-minded decried its residual popery and collective formalism. From the 1555 “troubles at Frankfurt” to the Admonition Controversy of the 1570s to the Millenary Petition of 1603 to the Parliamentary abolition of the liturgy in 1645 to its restoration in 1662 and beyond, English Protestants debated whether a traditional, fixed liturgy was conducive to true devotion (Rosendale 2007, 117–132, 201–204). Are the private and the public self discrete, separable entities, or must they be unified to be authentic? Does public worship play a valuable social and communal devotional function to which individuals should submit themselves, or must public worship reflect the more specific and extemporaneous movements of the individual soul? What is the proper form of devotion? (Rosendale 2007; Targoff 2001).

These ongoing debates over public devotion thus continually exhibit the basic tension I have been describing. But the publicly devotional self does not engage with just the state, or the collective; he or she is also in dynamic relationship with God, and for this reason early modern private devotion is frequently traversed by analogous divisions and struggles. Thomas Browne’s genial syncretism, his optimistic blending of Puritan austerity and Catholic ceremony (*Religio Medici* [1643] 2012, 1.3) in the midst of civil war, is a delightful oasis of moderation in a highly divisive age, and perhaps a better embodiment of aspirational ecumenicism than the Church of England itself. In his confidence that the “invisible devotion” of the God-seeking

inner self can be beneficially fostered by exterior and bodily factors, as well as reciprocally shaping them, he articulates a version of a negotiated answer to these questions that is further displayed in the hierarchy of authority he sketches out in 1.5: “In briefe, where the Scripture is silent, the Church is my Text; where that speakes, ‘tis but my Comment; where there is a joynt silence of both, I borrow not the rules of my Religion from *Rome* or *Geneva*, but the dictates of my owne reason.” But *Religio Medici* amply demonstrates that Browne’s “own reason” does not function solely in the void of silence; it brings itself to bear on both Scripture and the Church (among many other things) in its inquisitive pursuit of true devotion.

Other seventeenth-century writers offered similarly complex responses to devotional conflicts, both public and personal. Milton (1608–1674), who abandoned his ecclesiastical ambitions out of his growing disapproval of the conservative Caroline Church, categorically rejected liturgy in *Eikonoklastes* (1649), and his reasons for this are related to his denunciation of “linen decency” and “gross conforming stupidity” in *Areopagitica* ([1644] 1991, 270): the pursuit of God and truth must be a vigorous individual endeavor that external or collective forms can only restrict or falsify. Conducting oneself outwardly in ways that do not align with one’s inner state can, for Milton, only be God-offending hypocrisy. Hobbes, to the contrary, saw no problem with dividing the inner and outer self to some degree. While in *Leviathan* ([1651] 2012) he is highly protective of interior conviction, and sees the violation of private belief and conscience as a feature of the “Kingdom of Darkness,” he also regards external public action of any kind as a gesture of obedience to the civil order (46.37, 42.11). While the “*Mortal God*” *Leviathan* may require one’s public devotion to take a certain form, one’s private devotion to the real God may be something else entirely, and this to Hobbes is not a problem but the guarantor of both individual interiority and secure civil order.

If, as this chapter has been attempting to demonstrate, early modern religious devotion was rarely if ever a straightforward or unidirectional phenomenon, perhaps those variously conflicting energies are themselves a source of the intensity and concentration of devotional discourse, of its sense that much is at stake in it. Some of the most remarkable literary-devotional writing of the era is in the form of lyric poetry, poetry that focuses largely (but not exclusively) on the devotional “I” rather than the liturgical “we.” Here too, though, things do not have a univocal or monopolar simplicity. Mary and Philip Sidney’s verse translations of the Psalms took the scriptural paradigm of poetic devotion, prayer, and conversation with God and turned them into astoundingly varied poetic forms. The biblical Psalms themselves – which were considered collectively, individually, and universally relevant, and were publicly read through in their entirety each month in English churches as part of the liturgy – do far more than simply praise and submit to God; they are also replete with complaint, confession, rejoicing, penitence, love, accusation, petition, fear, self-assertion, doubt, and a range of adversity in which the adversary may be other people or God himself. Calvin called them “an anatomy of all the parts of the soul, in as much as a man shall not find any affection in himself, whereof the image appeareth not in this glass.” (Sidney and Sidney [c.1600] 2009, x) The Psalms are,

in short, far from being exercises in self-cancellation, and the Sidneys' renderings replicate this in their astonishing display of technical and aesthetic mastery; among the 172 poems there is only a single exact duplication of stanzaic and metrical form. (xxiii)

The Sidney Psalter became an influential model for devotionally inclined English poets, perhaps in part because it recapitulates a basic problem of complex relational devotion (how much is this about me, and how much is it about God?) in specifically poetic terms (how far can one assert one's own spiritual and poetic agency without infringing the divine prerogative and thus undermining the whole project?). When Donne ecstatically proclaims that the Sidneys' poems "tell us *why* and teach us *how* to sing," ("Upon the Translation," 22) one wonders if he is admiring simply their poetic godliness and godly poetics, or also the ways in which they embodied the tensions between submission and assertion, God and the self, with which he himself struggled so deeply. One of the most difficult and compelling features of Donne's Holy Sonnets is the way they veer wildly from resignation to hope to despair, and oscillate between reliance on God and on himself for salvation. He famously begs in "Batter my heart" to be violently overwhelmed by a God that seems fundamentally gracious and wholly necessary for salvation, but elsewhere he is not so sure. His poem "If poisonous minerals" begins by asking very pointed questions about whether human damnability is even basically fair, and why God isn't nicer about it. In its sestet, the speaker (whom I take to more or less be Donne) appears to humbly resubmit to God, but does not really let go: he appeals to Christ's "only worthy blood," but immediately adds, "and my tears" (10–11) – thus reasserting a role for himself in his own salvation. Donne's remarkable closing statement that "That thou remember them, some claim as debt;/I think it mercy if thou wilt forget" appears to resolve this conflict, but it is not clear in which direction it does so. Does "them" refer to "my sins" from line 12, suggesting that final line asks for them to be forgotten? Or is it "some [people]," suggesting by parallelism that the speaker feels he would be better off without God's attentions? The pronominal ambiguity powerfully indicates a deep ambivalence in Donne's relationship to God, and this struggle is reflected in the account of his devotional life in "Oh, to vex me." There he confesses his constantly inconstant tendency to "change in vows, and in devotion," and his propensity to treat God like the women he chases (see also "What if this present" and "Show me, dear Christ") with "flattering speeches" (10). In both his "profane love" and his "devout fits," his devotion is characterized by inconstancy and wandering desire, and is thus hardly devotion at all in the sense of sworn loyalty.

But disloyalty is of course not the whole story of Donne's devotion, nor are suspicion and self-assertion the whole story of his attitude toward God; as he says in "Batter my heart," "dearly I love you, and would be loved fain." While these things are often playfully treated in his secular poetry, in his religious poems they are highly serious, and his anguished struggles with God and with himself are what gives the poems their peculiar compellingness. This devotional candor assumes a similarly gripping and scarcely less poetic form in Donne's remarkable prose *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions*, a series of 23 devotions he wrote while suffering and recovering

from relapsing fever in late 1623. Each of these takes some aspect of his experience of illness (e.g., taking to his bed, the arrival of the physician, his fever spots, a tolling bell) and develops it into a spiritual metaphor of the human condition (respectively: sinfulness, solitude, God's authorial hand, and mortality). Each has a three-part structure: an opening meditation "upon our Humane Condition" ([1624] 1999, 1) which establishes the theme and explores it in powerful but relatively conventional terms, an expostulation or "debatement with God" which can be surprisingly confrontational, and a closing prayer which typically attempts to resolve or submit to or defer the questions aired in the expostulation. We can see immediately from this structure that these devotions are not exercises in rote submission, but rather acts of penetrating self-analysis, figuration, and frank dialogue with God in which Donne attempts to understand himself, his suffering, and God's purpose and role in all of it. Often the expostulations take the form of an anguished *Why?* Why must suffering and misery and death be our lot? "Thy hand strikes me into this bed," he says flatly to God (III, 16); I need to understand why. "I have not the righteousness of Job, but I have the desire of Job: *I would speak to the Almighty, and I would reason with God*" (IV, 21); "Why hast thou changed thine old way, and carried us by the ways of discipline and mortification, by the ways of mourning and lamentation [?] ... Is the glory of heaven no perfecter in itself, but that it needs a foil of depression and ingloriousness in this world, to set it off" (XVII, 105)? But this "holy importunity" and "pious impudency" (X, 60) in fact lead somewhere. Donne asks God early on to "interpret thine own work" (II, 11), and his own contentious devotions enable him to modify his own hermeneutic. "Let me think no degree of this thy correction casual, or without signification; but yet when I have read it in that language, as a correction, let me translate it into another, and read it as a mercy" and part of God's "determined and good purpose which thou hast sealed concerning me" (VII, 45). And so his heated debatement with God leads Donne to see God's "declaration of [him]self in this my sickness" (XIX, 123), and to reread suffering, no less than joy, as part of God's particular love and good purposes toward him. "These heats, O Lord, which thou hast brought upon this body, are but thy chafing of the wax, that thou mightest seal me to thee: these spots are but the letters in which thou hast written thine own name and conveyed thyself to me" (XIII, 82). Vigorously asserted conflict and suffering become the means to assurance and eternal union of the self and God – an enhancement, not an extinction, of the former, and a glorification of the latter.

To characterize the *Devotions* this way is to point up an affinity between Donne's devotional writing and Herbert's that is sometimes overlooked. Many readers sense, not inaccurately, that where Donne is willing to leave radical questions and tensions unresolved in his religious writings, Herbert strives always toward resolution and submission. But this is a bit too schematic, and creates (in contrast to the sexily tormented Donne) a dully unconflicted image of Herbert that his writing itself contradicts. In Walton's well-known account (1670), Herbert described *The Temple* as "a picture of the many spiritual conflicts that have passed betwixt God and my soul, before I could subject mine to the will of Jesus my Master, in whose service I have now found perfect freedom" (Herbert [1633] 2004, 311). This is a good

self-accounting, and one that we would do well to remember: Herbert's devotion does work toward submission, but to leave out the conflicts that get him there would be a disservice to the dynamic nature of his personal and poetic devotion. In the very first poem of "The Church," he presents God with a "broken ALTAR .../Made of a heart, and cemented with tears," but contends that "No workman's tool hath touched" its pieces, because "A HEART alone/Is such a stone,/As nothing but/Thy pow'r doth cut." Herbert's profession here is undoubtedly sincere but already tricky: in what sense is the poetic artifact untouched by craft? Unless he is claiming unmediated divine inspiration, which is doubtful, surely, in this carefully shaped poem, the workman's hand is manifest. "The Altar" here establishes two important patterns that will play out throughout *The Temple*. First, Herbert introduces the recurring metaphor of the sinful heart as a stone, which he will elaborate repeatedly in subsequent poems as something upon which God engraves his will and love (not unlike Donne's fever spots). In "The Sinner," he asks God to "restore thine image," and reminds him that "thou once didst write in stone"; in "Sepulchre," the human heart transforms from something worse than the cold tomb of Christ to a site of divine inscription in spite of itself; in "Nature," he asks God to "smooth my rugged [and tombstonelike] heart, and there/Engrave thy rev'rend law and fear." In these examples from just the first 15 poems – and there are many more – Herbert devoutly reverses the scene of writing to radically defer his authorship to God's, and see himself as the obdurate palimpsest of God's will. This powerfully submissive impulse, so central to Herbert's deep devotional drive to wholly subject himself to divine grace, plays out further in the explicitly metapoetic meditations of the two Jordan poems. In the first, he questions the need for allegory, convention, complexity, ornament, and even rhyme in religious poetry, to finally revel in the ideal devotional utterance *My God, My King* – a purified "poem" that points only to God, and contains almost no trace of artifice or workmanship. In "Jordan (2)," Herbert narrates his own prior aesthetic seduction into the attempt to "weave my self into the sense" with poetic embellishment, until he is chided by an unidentified "friend": "*How wide is all this long pretence!/There is in love a sweetness ready penned:/Copy out only that, and save expense.*" Here we are given not even a four-syllable poem, but simply a name of an abstraction ("love") whose faithful reproduction is the only real measure of poetry's devotional value.

But of course, both Jordan poems, like "The Altar," do not really practice what they preach; in spite of their disavowals, they exist in the form of skilled and highly wrought poems that cannot but call attention to themselves, and this brings us to the second pattern I promised. Herbert's frequent recourse to tropes of writing, it turns out, cuts both ways. While he was exquisitely aware of the potential for devotion in verse to become devotion *to* verse, and thus a form of idolatry, the larger issue gestured at in "Jordan (2)" is the self-aggrandizing egoism implicit in writing. In the passion poem "The Thanksgiving," this originates as a genuine literary-devotional question to Christ:

Shall thy strokes be my stroking? thorns, my flower?  
Thy rod, my posy? cross, my bower?

But how then shall I imitate thee, and  
 Copy thy fair, though bloody hand?  
 Surely I will revenge me on thy love,  
 And try who shall victorious prove.

The devout imitation of Christ through writing, this passage suggests, carries built-in problems of correspondence, compensation, and ultimately competition. This effort fails at the end of the poem, and that failure's acknowledgement in the following poem is paradigmatic, but it is not decisive. Indeed, the repeated resurfacing and recorection of the overassertive self is one of the principal motifs of *The Temple*, and is likely one of the main "spiritual conflicts" to which Herbert referred. Among the many poems of praise, confession, entreaty, wonderment, complaint, submission, and other psalmic modes that attempt to encapsulate the divine and the self in language, the recurrent emergence of the aspiring self is often subtle but sometimes jarring. In "The Temper (1)" he asserts that were it not for his devotional variability, "how should my rhymes/Gladly engrave thy love in steel,/If what my soul doth feel sometimes,/My soul might ever feel!" Here as elsewhere, this becomes better integrated into his relationship with God, but the initial inversion can only be called presumptuous: the speaker is no longer the stone but the engraver, and not only that but the engraver of the engraving material itself. He has, albeit in a moment of devotional ecstasy or frustration, switched places with God.

I do not wish to make Herbert into a skeptic, or a Faustus, or even a Donne; he is none of these, and *The Temple* abounds in counterbalancing moments that affirm the primacy of grace and humility. In "Submission," for example, he confesses his pride's tendency to "disseise thee of thy right," and concludes that "perhaps great places and thy praise/Do not so well agree." In "Prayer (1)," after 13 lines of astonishing metaphorizations of prayer, he ends by saying that it is simply "something understood," which might affirm either the potential or the utter insufficiency of language to encompass that which is really important. At the end of "Denial," he implicitly shows us the gracious intervention of a heretofore apparently indifferent God who repairs the speaker's heart and verse before the request is even complete. And in "The Quiddity," he contends that while his poetry is not a means of earthly greatness, "it is that which while I use/I am with thee, and *Most take all*." The ambiguity of these concluding lines – who is doing the using, and the taking, and of what? – is indicative of both the high stakes and the constitutive conflicts of Herbert's devotional poetry.

Like the Book of Common Prayer, then, the devotional writings of Donne, Browne, and Herbert are not about utter self-abnegation. While each in its way does strive for individual submission to a social/political/ecclesiastical or divine other, it is a vigorously negotiated submission, worked out in an agon of self and other, sometimes to the point of combativeness; in none of these cases is the submission total, final, absolute, or self-annihilating. Indeed, the prevalence and depth of these dynamic tensions suggests that they are inevitable and perhaps necessary to a proper understanding of early modern devotional subjectivity, and it is for precisely this reason that devotional literature can provide such a useful corrective to skewed

assumptions regarding it. It is undoubtedly erroneous to think the human subject is radically autogenous and autonomous, or as Milton's Satan describes himself, "self-begot, self-rai's'd" ([1667] 1991, 5.860); early modern devotional texts pervasively insist on this in their frank acknowledgment of the claims made on the self by others (God, Satan, society, church, state). But it is equally erroneous to think that, even in its attempts at devotional submission, that subject is wholly illusory, a heteronomous mirage of discourse and power. In their tendencies toward display, resistance, assertion, and negotiation, these texts remind us that devotional engagement is inevitably a two-party process, and a double-edged sword.

### What to Read Next

Bell (1992); Donne ([1624] 1999; [1633] 2010); Herbert (1633 [2004]); Shuger (1990). Targoff (2001).

### Notes

- 1 Consider Althusser's paraphrase of Pascal – "kneel down, move your lips in prayer, and you will believe" – which appears to imagine belief only as a consequence (not a cause) of physical prayer, and prayer itself as caused by external imperative ([1970] 1971, 168). This questionable sequence of command>action>belief is one version of Althusserian interpellation, in which the subject comes to exist only in response to external pressures.
- 2 Historian John Jeffries Martin has made a similar and very useful critique of both the bourgeois and the heteronomous models of subjectivity, and argued that "the formations of the self we encounter in the Renaissance are radically at odds with not only Burckhardt's but also Greenblatt's authorized version" (2004, 15). He contends that the self is best understood as a negotiated relation between interior and exterior experience, and that cultural scripts, while very real, "are not written onto a blank slate; they are written onto a complex organism *already* capable of thought, feeling, emotion, and desire" (19). And Terry Eagleton has called for a "more dialectical spirit" to counter the postmodern overcorrection of bourgeois subjectivity; we need "to grasp the decentring of the subject as a transitive social action rather than some curious ontological condition" (1997, 265, 269).

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# The Book

*Helen Smith*

The book lies almost flat, one leather strap resting on a page and holding it open.<sup>1</sup> Its fanned leaves offer glimpses of the book's contents – illuminated initials, a fragment of music, black and red rubricated text, a decorated border framing a vivid illumination. The skirt of a red robe, and a skull at the foot of a wooden post, are enough to disclose the subject matter of the obscured image: it is the crucified Christ, flanked by the mourning figures of Saint John and the Virgin Mary. Surrounded by darkness, the book gleams; it is a luxury object, elegant and richly made. Everything from the gilding surrounding the letter “A” to the clean organization of the two ruled columns, and the quantity of white space around the text, punctuated by the decorated ascenders and descenders of the letters, speaks to the status of this book. The variety of virtuosic forms – colored and decorated capitals, calligraphic flourishes, musical notation, flower-strewn border, and full-page miniature – demonstrates the multiplicity and complexity of the book arts.

The book is almost legible. Columns of text vanish behind turning leaves; the central opening is obscured by curling vellum, inviting us to reach forward and grasp the page-in-motion. Try to do so, however, and your fingers meet not treated calf-skin but oil on wood – and soon after that, the firm grip of the security guards at the Uffizi gallery in Florence, where the painting now hangs (Figure 27.1). The image, part of the Medici collection from as early as 1669, is a *trompe l'œil*; the evident skill of the luxury book – probably a missal – a means for the unknown artist, at work during the first quarter of the sixteenth century, to demonstrate his – perhaps her – own craft in rendering a version of the book so palpable it begs to be touched.

This painting is remarkable in making a book its sole subject, detached from the explanatory context of desk, shelf, or reader. Nonetheless it is characteristic of a



**Figure 27.1** Scuola tedesca. Libro Aperto, Sixteenth century, Galleria degli Uffizi, inv. 1890, n. 6191. Reproduced with the permission of Ministero dei beni e delle attività culturali e del turismo.

Renaissance artistic enchantment with the form and function of the codex. Books – closed, open, or with a finger between the leaves – appear time and again in Renaissance paintings: laid on side-tables, stacked by the elbows of diplomats, humanists, or the fathers of the church; in the hands of court ladies; in the process of being written in by poets, saints, and tax collectors. In Guiseppe Arcimboldo's famous portrait, *The Librarian* (c. 1566), books are stacked to form the figure of their custodian; grouped with hour-glasses and skulls, they invite the viewers of *vanitas* paintings to reflect upon mortality; in images of *wunderkammer* and art collections, books remind us not only of their role as catalogues and advertisements, but of their status – at least in particular contexts – as marvels and wonders.

Some books are legible as specific texts: in Quentin Massys' *Portrait of Peter Gillis* (1517), the town clerk of Antwerp points to a book written by his friend Erasmus; in a memorializing *Portrait of a Lady, Probably Mrs Clement Edmondes* (British School, ca. 1605–1610), Edmondes displays her husband's popular *Observations upon Caesars Commentaries* (1600). Commentators frequently describe painted books as props: objects that attest to the learning, piety, or profession of the subject, or forge an iconic link with the author (Hackel 2003). Yet this interpretation does not account for the sensuousness with which artists dwell on the folds of the page, or the precision with which they render text, book block, and binding. Books also stand in for

knowledge. Briefly paralleling paintings of curiosity cabinets with “the scriptoria of theologians and sages painted by the likes of Antonella da Messina, Botticelli and Ghirlandaio,” Cristina Acidini notes that the mingled “documents and instruments” of these portraits, which uniformly include books, represent “a universal knowledge that embraces broad and copious references to the study of nature and the cosmos” (2009, 68). In its splendid isolation, the *libro aperto* prompts us to look again at this plethora of painted books, understanding not only their symbolic content but their allure as aesthetic objects, the sensuality of the surface, and the extent to which their reproduction allows the artist to display significant skill.

The painting also asks us to reconsider the status and kinds of knowledge contained or encoded in a book. In answer to this challenge, this chapter adopts three seemingly unlikely guides. The first is Bruno Latour’s ANT (Actor-Network Theory), which refuses the “modern” divide between active subjects and acted-upon objects in favor of tracing networks that are at once material and semiotic, linking together quasi-objects and quasi-subjects in a series of translations. For Latour, “action is distributed among agents, very few of whom look like humans”; objects, from hammers to speed-bumps, laboratory equipment to baskets, “are actors, or more precisely, *participants* in the course of action waiting to be given a figuration” (2005, 50, 71).

Latour’s ANT is joined, in an uneasy alliance, by Tim Ingold’s SPIDER (Skilled Practice Involves Developmentally Embodied Responsiveness). Where Latour argues that agency is common to both animate and inanimate bodies, and that the “social” consists in those bonds which bring them together in particular formations, Ingold opposes “the real complexity of living organisms” to “inert matter” (2011, 94). Emphasizing the importance of environmentally situated sensation and response to embodied experience, and locating agency in the sensing body immersed within its world, Ingold insists upon the “close coupling of bodily movement and perception” (90). This argument forms part of Ingold’s broader emphasis upon skill, as a quality that develops as the worker – whether human or animal – grows within and in response to its environment.

The final member of our group is Donna Haraway’s intimate, pathogen-sharing companion and co-worker: her dog, Cayenne. Situating her influential “Cyborg Manifesto” as a response to the politics of the first Bush administration and the “Star Wars” defense program, Haraway suggests that a new mode of critique is needed for the twenty-first century. It is in her relationship with Cayenne that she finds the beginnings of the necessary “story of co-habitation, co-evolution, and embodied cross-species sociality” (2008, 4). Haraway delights in the biological as well as ecological intermingling of companion species. Arguing that the mutual entangling of human and canine microorganisms constitutes “a sure case of what the biologist Lynn Margulis calls symbiogenesis,” Haraway wagers, of herself and Cayenne, “I bet if you were to check our DNA, you’d find some potent transfections between us” (15).

This band of animal guides is here to encourage us to think in novel terms about the book as object and practice. In recent years, the material text has become a

vigorous sub-field of scholarly inquiry. Theorists of the book investigate how “meaning is transmitted through bibliographical as well as linguistic codes” (McGann 1991, 57), asserting, in Roger Chartier’s much-quoted dictum, that “there is no comprehension of any written piece that does not at least in part depend upon the forms in which it reaches its reader.” (1994, 9) The book has been reconceived as an object in motion, and as a manufactured commodity, brought into being not only by its author but by a host of agents including printers and booksellers, patrons, scribes, readers, and domestic workers (see Darnton 1982; Smith 2012). The extant books of the early modern period are, I argue here, not static products that encapsulate made knowledge but hybrid embodiments of knowledge-in-motion.

Creeping into the scriptorium and printing house, or nosing at the freshly made pages of an elegant codex, ANT, SPIDER and dog illuminate the range of interlocking networks, sensate and embodied exchanges, and transfections that constitute the history of books’ making and use. With Latour, we will consider the shaping presence of objects, tools, and books themselves; with Ingold, we will mark the responsiveness of laboring bodies; and with Haraway we will trace the blurring of boundaries between books, bodies, and technologies.

Taking the *libro aperto* as its starting point, this chapter explores what it is tempting to term the Renaissance episteme of the book, and argues that books embody certain forms of skilled collaboration and bodily practice. Yet the *libro aperto* is an object out of time, produced at the moment that print came to dominate the early modern book trades. Moving from the making of manuscripts to the production of the printed book, I turn to a text both geographically and chronologically distant from the *libro aperto*: Joseph Moxon’s *Mechanick Exercises on the Whole Art of Printing*, published in parts in 1683–1684. Pointing to the forms of embodied knowledge, and the tensions between rule and practice, captured in Moxon’s detailed manual, I argue that the printing house, like the scriptorium, was home to all three of our animal companions – a site where technologies and tools as well as humans were understood as responsive agents; where skill emerged in a developing relationship with the working environment; and where potent exchanges troubled the distinction between bodies and books. The resulting codex was not only a product of experience but an experimental tool through which writers and readers grappled with the representation and interpretation of their world.

Books – physical things created through the material and intellectual labor of craftsmen and women – are objects that are shaped by but also shape their makers and users, “channel[ing] those who encounter them into particular bodily postures and motions” (Selcer, 2010, 4). The Renaissance book (insofar as the singular term can apply to the variety of material forms in which texts found shape in this period), shaped mental as well as corporeal attitudes, constituting, in Daniel Selcer’s words, “a reservoir of imaginative or metaphorical forms” (16) through which makers, writers, and readers approached and imagined their environment. As my closing examples show, whether written or printed, the book was not only a tool for the circulation of knowledge, but a means by which early modern philosophers, poets, and artists conceptualized and made sense of their world.

\* \* \*

On closer inspection, the promisingly detailed text of the *libro aperto* evades legibility: rows of bastarda minims are punctuated with capital letters, but only three words, “Ave maris stella,” can be read, beneath the musical notation. So too, the music seems to offer the possibility of performance, but is distinctly jarring when sung. If part of the function of *trompe l’œil* is to make us “aware of the uncertainty and ambiguity of appearances and knowledge itself” (Giusti 2009, 20), this example redoubles that effect, offering a book that promises but resists revelation. The knowledge that is at once proffered and concealed leads to the divine, reminding us that knowledge was, in this period, a theological as well as an epistemological problem. For the elite, literate viewer, familiar with high-end manuscripts, this painted book, like contemporary *trompe l’œil* images of curiosity cabinets, functioned as a study of “the products of human ingenuity” (Fumaroli 2009, 52), while reveling in its own ingenious craftsmanship. Did our imagined viewer study these painted pages, creating for him or herself the opaque phrases, sounding or singing the music they knew, rather than the painted notes, dwelling on the imagined contours of the picture of Christ – reproduce, while meditating upon a reproduction, the meditative practice associated with the devotional book? To a less privileged onlooker, was this a doubly inaccessible image of illegible devotional knowledge, or a picture of a luminous object, familiar from the spaces of public devotion, and itself imbued with something of a sacral character? (On the use and significance of Catholic books see Duffy 2007, Reinburg 2014.)

In the *libro aperto*, the book is not the only illusion: its painted border is typical of the Flemish style of “strewn” border that dominated European book illumination by the beginning of the sixteenth century, and drew on the techniques of *trompe l’œil* to present flowers, fruits, insects, and birds whose shadows, shape, and texture make them appear to be lying on – rather than part of – the space of the page. It has been suggested that “the success of *trompe l’œil* depends on the extent to which the painting or object enters ‘our’ space” (Acidini 2009, 11). To the knowing viewer, however, this open book offers not simply to intrude into graspable reality, but to transport him or her into a space and posture of reading made familiar by a distinctive artistic tradition. A contemporary viewer would have been familiar with the conventional appearance of tantalizingly splayed volumes in the painted hands of saints and doctors of the church. Paintings of the Virgin Mary and female saints show them absorbed in reading, a pose imitated by elite women in their own godly portraits (Kren and McKendrick 2003, 380–382). In Luca Signorelli’s *Holy Family* (c. 1479), Mary holds one open book, studying its pages intently, while another lies at her feet, facing the viewer. Like this inviting volume, the *libro aperto* re-orientates the open book of Renaissance iconography, placing the observer in the position of meditative reader.

In its elegant wholeness, the *libro aperto* threatens to efface the diverse and difficult labors of the book’s makers, performing what Latour terms “black-boxing,” in which complex operations are rendered invisible by their own success (1999, 304).

High-end texts like this were the product of a cluster of agents – including one or more authors, compilers, translators, manufacturers of vellum, ink, and writing tools, a bookbinder, bookseller, scribe or scribes, rubricator, corrector, illuminator, miniaturist, perhaps a pattern-maker, and – often – a patron, whose commission helped to determine the book's final form and contents. To this list, we might add a number of Latour's non-human actants, including the availability and texture of vellum or parchment pages, the tractability or otherwise of ink and paint, rendered changeable by alterations in manufacture or environmental conditions, and the shaping presence of exemplar copies. These agents could work closely together, or be separated by distance and time. The finest manuscripts were sometimes the products of international collaborations. Margaret of York's book of *Les Visions du chevalier Tondal* (1475), for example, written by David Aubert in Ghent and decorated by Simon Marmion in Valenciennes, reflects in its physical form the mobility as well as the magnificence of the Burgundian court (Kren and McKendrick 2003, 12). Books, their constitutive materials, and sometimes their makers, crossed geo-political and economic as well as linguistic borders, on occasion as ambassadorial agents or factors in trading networks, at other times as objects of suspicion and regulation.

Book makers left traces – some accidental, others deliberate – of the precise and exhausting labors that constituted the finished codex. Leila Avrin records the notes left by Latin scribes of the Middle Ages, which range from a plea to “Let the reader's voice honor the writer's pen” to an equally heartfelt request: “Now I've written the whole thing: for Christ's sake give me a drink” (1991, 224). A portrait included in *Miracles de Notre Dame* (after 1456) renders the Burgundian author, translator, illuminator, scribe, and priest Jean Miélot's scriptorium in exquisite detail, emphasizing the constrained and delicate gestures required of the scribe, as well as the convenient arrangement of his source-books and writing materials. Describing writing and drawing as twinned “processes of enskilment” (2007, 147), Ingold argues that the scribe learns first to copy models, “gaining fluency in his manual movements and precision in handling the inscribing implement,” in a process in which the shaping of letter forms also shapes the body: “he learns to bring the implement into the right angular relation with the surface, and this ... can call for further adjustments not only to the movements of his arm but in his entire bodily deportment.” Exquisite skill, Ingold concludes, “emerges in and through the growth and development of the human being in his or her environment” (148). Portraits depicting scribes at work remind us of the embodied and situated nature of the writing process, and the mutuality of physical and intellectual composition. Writing of copyists and correctors, Daniel Wakelin argues that “The craftsman's insights as a reader develop in the material process of writing, while his material process of writing reflects his ideas about literature” (2014, 4). Wakelin's observation emphasizes the combination of physical and imaginative craft that constituted the manuscript – and, as we will see, the printed book – at each stage of its production.

The *libro aperto* is a product of the rich range of processes and relationships described above, as well as of the craft of the unknown painter in oils. The painting strikes an anachronistic note, celebrating the heights of manuscript artistry at



precisely the moment when print began to dominate the book trades. This shift pushed creative illuminators, who had previously worked at a range of price levels, “to concentrate on the luxury end of the market, where, for a limited workforce, fame and fortune remained possible” (Reynolds 2003, 16). Peter Stallybrass (2008) has argued that the dominance of print not only affected patterns of manuscript production but brought the concept of the “manuscript” into being, defined belatedly as a handwritten text, in opposition to techniques of mechanical reproduction. Perhaps perversely, we might suggest that the luxurious manuscript of the *libro aperto* is a material and conceptual product of print.

Important scholarship has done much to revise our view of the transition between these two media, and emphasize the importance of scribal reproduction throughout the early modern period (e.g., Beal 1998; Boffey 2012; Love 1993; McKitterick 2003). Nonetheless, from the moment that the first indulgences were lifted from Gutenberg’s press, contemporaries identified printing as a distinctive art. Print spread rapidly from Mainz through the German Empire, to Italy, France, the Low Countries, and beyond. By 1490 presses had been established in over 200 cities across Europe, including in Westminster, where Caxton established his press in 1476, and London, where John Lattou set up a press in 1480, which he went on to run in partnership with William de Machlinia (Pettegree 2010, xiv; see also Blayney 2013). Printing flourished in centers of trade, nourished by the existing infrastructure. Many books were commercial objects, and authors, translators, compilers, and stationers began to demonstrate an acute awareness of the fate of books in a busy marketplace.

Yet it would be reductive to characterize early printing as wholly profit-driven. Some stationers published texts that reflected their desire for spiritual or political, rather than economic, profit (Lesser 2007). Authors paid for the printing of their own texts, or found patrons willing to sponsor publication (Parry 2002). An intriguing pair of printed letters preface Thomas Bedingfield’s translation of Girolamo Cardano’s *De consolatione* ([1542] 1573). In the first, which appears to have accompanied a manuscript translation, Bedingfield presents the book to the Earl of Oxford, begging him “*either not to make any pertakers thereof, or at the least wise those, whoe for reuerence to your L. or loue to mee, will willingly beare with myne errors*”. In reply, the Earl insists that Bedingfield’s work should not be kept private; it would have been “*an vnardonable error, to haue murdered the same in ye wast bottomes of my chestes*” (A2r–A3r). The printed title-page declares the book was “*published by commaundement of the right honourable the Earle of Oxenford*”; in an additional prefatory puff, Thomas Churchyard explains that the translator “*sent the coppye to a noble man to be reade and lapt vp in sylence, hee groping the grounde and bowels of the booke, sets incontinent openlye abroad the body, y<sup>t</sup> euery good imagination might make a noble notamy [sic] of the matter*” (A5v).

Churchyard’s comparison materializes the book’s subject matter as itself a body, laid open to anatomical dissection. It also serves to remind us of the book’s structure: the physical interplay between what is enclosed and what is made available to view by slicing the uncut pages and turning the leaves. This comparison becomes still more potent when we consider the role of books in making anatomical

knowledge more widely accessible. Most famously, Andreas Vesalius' *De Humani Corporis Fabrica* (*Seven Books on the Fabric of the Human Body*) (1543), a large folio whose figures represent the pinnacle of woodcut illustration, contains layered paper mannequins which push the technology of the book to its limits in order to reproduce the revelations of anatomical study.

Printed books, like manuscripts, were the products of craft, epitomes of intellectual and manual labor. Something of that labor is described in one of the earliest vernacular printing manuals, Joseph Moxon's *Mechanick Exercises of the Whole Art of Printing* (1683–1684). Moxon's account of the printing house has proven invaluable to scholars seeking evidence of the operations of the press, though caution is essential (see Dane 2010). Moxon explicitly refuses to describe the "Old-fashion'd Presses ... used here in *England*", in favor of "the New-fashion'd Press, because it is not well known here in *England*; and if possible, I would for Publick benefit introduce it" (45). Throughout the book, Moxon attempts to define clear rules for the operations of the print shop, arguing that "*a* Typographer ought to be equally quallified with all the Sciences that becomes an Architect, and then I think no doubt remains that Typographie is not also a Mathematical Science" (11).

Such a description appears to chime with the idea of knowledge as prior to practice: what Ingold describes as "a cognitive capacity to work things out in advance, in the head, prior to their implementation in the world" (2011, 93). Yet despite Moxon's insistence upon replicable rules, the *Mechanick Exercises* is characterized by recurrent descriptions of bodily posture, feeling, and movement. In describing how the press-man applies ink to the set type, Moxon invokes the importance of "craft (acquired by use)" (289). Describing the elaborate motions required to apply an even coating of ink to a forme of type, Moxon concludes that this counter-intuitive complexity "is a Handcraft, which by continued use and practice, becomes familiar to his Hands" (290). Wakelin's observation on the skill of the scribe – that "craftsmanship has its own internal logic and autotelic reward of doing something well" – is equally applicable to the mutual operations of the printer and his or her tools (2014, 8). There is something satisfying in Moxon's description of work as "familiar to his Hands," as in his insistence that the worker's tools should be adapted to render them "handy and Handsome," suited to the grasp of their maker and user ([1683–1684] 1978, 175).

Throughout Moxon's text, the formality of rules is disrupted by a prose dense with the pressures of conveying the particularities of practice and the bodily movements that bring together the worker with his or her materials and tools. Meditating upon the work of making, Ingold argues:

there is more to the manufacture of artefacts than the mechanical transcription of a design or plan, devised through an intellectual process of reason, onto an inert substance ... The forms of artefacts ... are rather generated in and through the practical movement of one or more skilled agents in their active, sensuous engagement with the material. (2000, 88)

The gap between rule and application – between Moxon's insistence on the beauty of geometric form, and his equal, though implicit, delight in the expressive shapes of

human bodies moving in concert with their tools – must be closed by a theory of habitual practice that locates memory in musculature and physical knowing within a structuring environment, rather than in the enacting of “*Geometrick Rules*” ([1683–1684] 1978, 87) upon recalcitrant forms.

When he finally comes to the work of printing a sheet, Moxon invokes “various Set and Formal Postures and Gestures of the Body” in a lyrical description of responsive action (293). The section is too long to quote in full, as Moxon takes six pages to describe “these exercises so suddenly varied, that they seem to slide into one another; one Posture beginning when the former is but half performed” (296). In these pages, Moxon displays an uncharacteristic adverbial verbosity, using the word “nimble” ten times to describe the actions of the press-worker’s hands and eyes in a series of extended sentences punctuated by colons, semi-colons, and commas rather than by the full stops which would foreclose the fluidity of motion captured in Moxon’s breathless prose.

Embracing technologies as part of the “more-than-human” world, Haraway insists: “technologies are organs, full partners in what Merleau-Ponty called ‘infoldings of the flesh.’ I like the word *infolding* ... to suggest the dance of world-making encounters” (2008, 250). Moxon’s descriptions frequently describe moments of transfer and interaction between body and machine, of material changes that render bodies and technologies at once different from themselves and akin to one other. He notes that the pressman plays a crucial part in the construction of his press, “it being not only a care incumbent upon him, but a Curiosity he would assume to himself to direct and see the Joyner set and fasten it in a Steddy and practical position” (253). The notion of “oversight” suggests that the joiner works to a pre-determined plan, that the press takes shape precisely in accordance with instructions “given in advance.” Yet the press-man quickly enters into the process of construction, stepping in between the stages of building to “besmear” the head, tennants, coffin, and ribs of the press (note the corporeality of these terms) with grease or soap made from animal fat or vegetable oils (253). In this process, the workman is in sensuous contact with the wood of the press, not simply coating it, but working fat and oils into the grain of the wood at the same time as those oils permeate and soften his hands. On a daily basis, the press-man tends his press, covering it before he goes to dine, returning to reshape and refresh his tools, and washing the press once or twice to ensure clean printing and smooth operations.

Unexpectedly, the practical knowledge of the print house emerges twice in the margins of Moxon’s text, where a press-house worker appears in conversation with the printed instructions. On page 275 a note reminds the reader, who seems to be imagined to be working directly from the book, and is required to have a waste sheet of paper ready, “On p. 267 he told you to lay this sheet by.” On page 105, our annotating reader remarks next to a promise that the connection between Roman and Italic letters “in proper place shall be further shewed”: “He did not return to this subject.” Anticipating the reading process, and the remainder of the text, these comments act as a vivid reminder that Moxon’s *Mechanick Exercises* is not just a book about, but a product of, printing. The labor of the printing house is made visible not just as the book’s subject but as its constitutive process and material precondition.

Resisting a straightforwardly determinist view of the influence of the environment upon a manuscript text, Wakelin argues that “while literature depends on the hard work of artisans and on material conditions – on shaping letter-forms, scraping parchment, finding exemplars – conversely the labour of artisans is shaped by literature’s qualities of style, form and structure, and by the scribes’ thinking about those qualities” (2014, 9). The same is true for the products of the press. Though early modern authors frequently bemoan the errors and excesses of printers, Moxon insists that it is the compositor’s job “as well to make the meaning of his *Author* intelligent to the *Reader*, as to make his Work shew graceful to the Eye, and pleasant in Reading” ([1683–1684] 1978, 211). Moxon argues that the compositor needs to understand the text he reproduces “so that he may get himself into the meaning of the *Author*,” and ensure that “his *Indenting, Pointing, Breaking, Italicking, &c.* the better sympathize with the *Authors* Genius, and also with the capacity of the reader” (212).<sup>2</sup> Alert to the reader’s needs, Moxon shows a concern for visual elegance and for physical ease; the book should “humour the Eye” (214). This insistence on empathic form suggests that the experience of the aesthetic is not limited to linguistic effect; pleasure may derive from the encounter with the book as an object of vision as much as from its intellectual, poetic, or cartographic content, and the two may be mutually reinforcing.

The aesthetic pleasures of the book return us to the fanned pages of the *libro aperto*, a painting that celebrates the visual delights of the book object, and comments on – while reproducing – the embodied skill and multiple agents that constitute the work. Writers across a range of genres, from lyric verse to natural philosophy, equally contemplated the book as object and concept. Paying attention to their accounts of books, their making, and their effects takes us some way toward recovering the absent mythology lamented by Latour, who complains: “We possess hundreds of myths describing the way subjects (or the collective, or intersubjectivity, or epistemes) construct the object ... Yet we have nothing that recounts the other aspect of the story: how objects construct the subject” ([1991] 1993, 82).

Chartier argues that the mimetic energy of the works of the Spanish Golden Age is reflected in the manner in which writers “transform into the very matter of fiction the objects and practices of writing,” most famously in Don Quixote’s visit to a printing house in Barcelona (2014, 15). In England, a rich range of authors created compelling “bibliofictions,” “literary representations of books, their life-cycles, and the communications circuits in which they operate” (Reid 2014, 7). A vibrant sub-genre of poems described the material histories and possible futures of the book object, tracing its genesis in flax and rags, and contemplating its transition to waste paper. John Taylor gleefully celebrates the mingling of social classes in the pages of a book, pointing out the mixed histories of its constituent rags:

And some of these poore things perhaps hath beene  
The linnen of some Countesse, or some Queene,  
Yet lies now on the dunghill, bare, and poore  
Mix’d with the rags of some baud, theefe, or whore. (1620, D4v)

The shirt of a lord or king, Taylor explains, may meet no better fate than being made into cheap “pot paper,” while that of a “Tiburne slaue,” or executed criminal, may be transformed into luxurious “paper royall.” In a further inversion, “dirty socks, from off the feete/From thence be turnd to a crowne-paper sheet.” Taylor further suggests the physical intimacy of the reading experience in a queasy “Comparison between a *Whore* and a *Booke*”:

As *Bookes* are leafe by leafe oft turn'd and tost,  
So are the Garments of a *Whore* (almost)  
For both of them, with a wet finger may  
Be folder or unfolded, night or day. (1622, B7r)

Taylor laments the ill use met by some books which fall to “Slovens” who “soyle a *Booke* in little space,/And slaver it, and so the Leaves deface:” (B7v), and points out the practical and bodily functions to which pages may eventually be turned, by “knaves” who use them “to wrap Drugs or Spice,/Or which is worse, in Privie matters use them:” (B8r), vividly reminding us that the intimate, bodily exchanges and transfections we witnessed in the printing house extended to and shaped the reading experience.

This literary attention to the form of the book suggests the extent to which, for writers, the book was an object conveniently “to hand.” Books’ presence, imaginatively reproduced in the steeply stacked shelves of painted scriptoria and closets, reminds us of their potency both as sources to consult and as an imaginative means to conceive of and address metaphysical questions. Religious writers embraced the metaphor of the earth as a divinely written book (see Curtius 2013), a tradition that adds another iconographic aspect to the revelation promised by the *libro aperto*. In an influential and widely translated biblical paraphrase, Guillaume de Salluste Du Bartas declared:

This world a booke in folio, doth proclame  
With letters capital, the Authors name:  
Each kind, a page, each sundrie shape a line;  
Each creature, is a character to teach: (B4v)

The metaphor invites the reader to contemplate both creation and the book held, transforming the codex into a means not just to read about but actively to consider creation. While the trope is conventional, shaped in part by poetic and devotional tradition, it is difficult not to imagine this compelling figure as emerging from and informing the situated experience of reading and writing.

From Galileo (1564–1642) to Hobbes (1588–1679), Descartes (1596–1650) to Leibniz (1646–1716), natural philosophers drew on the structures of the book to tackle complex questions, demonstrating, in Selcer’s words, “the ineluctably material and historically-embedded nature of philosophical textuality itself.” (2010, 161) Moxon’s contemporary and acquaintance Robert Hooke offers a compelling example. His *Micrographia* exploited the technologies of the press and of engraving, as well as of the microscope, to offer unprecedentedly detailed views of objects and organisms.

In his description “*Of the Feet of Flies*,” in which Hooke observes a part “consisting of two flat pieces ... which seem to be flexible, like the covers of a Book” (1665, 170), we can see the extent to which the codex acted as a convenient analogy for the interpretation of the natural world.

Acts of book handling and use launched Hooke on new microscopic adventures. We may wonder how Hooke treated his library, given that his observations included the bookworm “which upon the removing of Books and Papers in the Summer, is often observ’d very nimbly to scud, and pack away to some lurking cranney” (208); the “Crab-like *Insect*” spotted when “I chanced to observe a very smal creature creep over the Book I was reading” (207); and “a small white spot of hairy mould, multitudes of which I found to bespeck & whiten over the red covers of a small book” (129). For Haraway, the microscope is a prime example of a body-technology hybrid, an “interacting grappling device” that allows us to “experience in optic-haptic touch the high mountains and valleys, entwined organelles and visiting bacteria, and multiform interdigitations of surfaces we can never again imagine as smooth interfaces” (2008, 250). At the beginning of his book, Hooke relates his microscopic observation of a multitude of full stops, pointing out that their apparent clean roundness is illusory: “the most curious and smoothly *engraven strokes* and *points*, looking but as so many *furrows* and *holes*, and their *printed impressions*, but like *smutty daubings* on a matt or uneven floor with a blunt extinguish’d brand ... And as for *points* made with a *pen* they were much *more rugged* and *deformed*” (1665, 3). Here at the beginning of his own beautifully produced book, Hooke directs the reader’s technologically enhanced attention to its physicality, allowing the book to enter into the space of experiment as a subject of study as well as an account of practice.

\* \* \*

The Book in the Renaissance was at once an object and an idea. It was a source of aesthetic fascination and delight; an object “to hand” for poets, philosophers, and theologians; and an imaginative resource possessed of considerable power to shape the experience and articulation of the environment. As a manufactured whole, the book effaced the traces of its production, yet this obscurity was always partial: in manuscript books, the flesh side of vellum felt and looked different to the hair side; in printed books, lighter and darker pages attested to the shifting movements of the press-worker. The book contained within its pages the material traces of scribal or print-house labor. It stood as a source of ideas not only by presenting written or printed texts, but by presenting itself as an object of thought, scrutiny, and analogy. The rich iconography of the book shaped readers and viewers, suggesting the postures, contexts, and ideals of right reading, from the pursuit of divine knowledge to the recognition of life’s fleeting nature encoded in wrinkled and crumpled pages. At the same time, readers and writers deployed not just the contents of the book but its unfolding interpretive form as a conceptual frame that shaped the contours of questions ranging from the mechanics of insect feet to the entirety of creation.

## What to Read Next

Swann (2001); Raven (2007); Kearney (2009); Ogborn and Withers (2010); Yeo (2014).<sup>3</sup>

## Notes

- 1 Warm thanks to Kenneth P. Clarke, Jeanne Nuechterlein, Kathleen Kennedy, and Elaine Treharne, whose comments and conversation about the *libro aperto* stimulated my thinking and helped to develop this chapter.
- 2 As Alonso Víctor de Paredes admits in his *Institucion, y origen del arte de la Imprenta* (c. 1680), where compositors needed to save or fill out space to compensate for their errors in judging how much text was required for each forme, they might resort to ‘*medios feos y no permitidos*’ [ugly and forbidden means], including cutting out words or entire sentences (cited in Chartier 2014, 92).
- 3 Swann (2001) draws our attention to the Renaissance craze for collecting, and to the participation of books – both as physical objects and as texts – in this process. Raven (2007) charts the development of the English book trade, and the proliferation of printed texts while the essays in Ogborn and Withers (2010) encourage readers to recognize the significance of place, and the lively effects of books’ movements upon meaning. Kearney (2009) challenges the imagined divide between Catholic sensuality and a Protestant emphasis on the bare word, and traces shifting attitudes to the physical presence of the book. And Yeo (2014) argues that even as scientific “virtuosi” claimed to turn away from book-learning, they drew on humanist techniques of commonplacing and note-taking to ground their practice, and make sense of their results.

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# Travel and Chorography

*Angus Vine*

## Plotting a History of Particulars

In 1576 the antiquary and topographer William Lambarde (1536–1601) published the first edition of *A Perambulation of Kent*, a comprehensive chorographical survey of the history, landscape, and law of his adopted home county. Lambarde’s work is notable for many reasons, not least of which is how it popularized an emerging literary genre among Renaissance English readers. For the *Perambulation* is one of the earliest English examples of chorography – and the very first example dedicated to a single county (Adrian 2011, 51). Lambarde begins the work, after extensive prefatory and dedicatory material, and a map of Kent, by epitomizing his chosen genre and outlining a grand, national, and universalizing literary vision associated with it. “Order,” he wrote:

now requireth, that I shew in particular, the boundes of eche Shire and Countie, the seuerall Regiments, Bishops Sees, Lasts, Hundrethes, Fraunchises, Liberties, Cities, Markets, Borroughs, Castles, Religious houses, and Schooles: the Portes, Hauens, Riwers, waters, and Bridges: And finally, the Hilles and dales, Parkes and forests, and whatsoeuer the singularities, within euery of the same. (B1r)

In the event, the totalizing project that he describes here never got off the ground, and Lambarde only ever provided this kind of exhaustive historical and topographical description for his adopted home. Nonetheless, in rehearsing his plans in this way, and in plotting this history of particulars, he did enumerate the essential qualities and encapsulate the typical contents of Renaissance chorography.

For much of the twentieth century, scholarship paid scant attention to works such as the *Perambulation* or to their genre. While the existence of chorography was generally noted, its importance to the literary and intellectual culture of the Renaissance was widely overlooked. Histories of Renaissance historiography, for example, such as Fritz Levy's *Tudor Historical Thought* ([1967] 2004), typically mentioned chorography, recognizing it as an important alternative to the chronicle for historical expression; some also acknowledged it as an important antecedent of nineteenth-century topographical projects such as the Victoria County History. But few works of literary or historical scholarship attempted systematically to study it, to uncover its rhetoric, its organization or its models, let alone examine in any detail its political, religious, and intellectual loyalties or affiliations. Chorography was unfashionable and thus largely ignored.

In the past two decades, however, things have started to change, with both historians and literary scholars rediscovering the genre. Much of this work reflects a growing critical interest in space – what theorists have described as the “spatial turn” in the humanities (see further Warf and Arias 2009). Central to this disciplinary development has been the work of the French Marxist theorist Henri Lefebvre, who argued in his *La Production de l'espace* ([1974] 1991) that space is not some kind of fixed entity or neutral container that exists outside the forces of history, but is instead “a (social) product”, and as a result is also “a tool of thought and of action” (26). One of the key implications of this argument is that “every society – and hence every mode of production with its subvariants (i.e., all those societies which exemplify the general concept) – produces a space, its own space” (31). Another important implication, as Lefebvre goes on to note, is that “[i]f space is a product, our knowledge of it must be expected to reproduce and expound the process of production” (36). For Lefebvre, then, space is a concept that is necessarily multiple, ideological, and political. It is also, just as importantly, historical: “[i]f space is produced, if there is a productive process, then we are dealing with *history*” (46). It is not hard, therefore, to see how his arguments opened up both historical conceptions of space and historical representations of it to scholarly examination, and a series of critical studies have duly followed (Klein 2001b, McRae 2009, Sanders 2011, Hertel 2014).

Lefebvre himself was skeptical about the value of texts for exploring the processes that produced space. “When codes worked up from literary texts are applied to spaces,” he argued, “we remain, as may easily be shown, on the purely descriptive level” – something that for him “evade[s] both history and practice” (7). Nonetheless, subsequent scholars across the humanities have taken the opposite approach and have repeatedly turned to literary material to explore the construction and production of Renaissance space. Chorography, as Julie Sanders (2011) has noted, has been a focal point for this kind of research (10). Inherently interdisciplinary, fundamentally concerned with space and place, and intimately connected with cartographic practices (Adrian 2005) and antiquarian scholarship, chorography not only foregrounded many of the concerns of contemporary, spatially inclined scholars, but also many of their disciplinary innovations. Thus, what to a previous generation of historians and literary critics might have looked at best like a curiosity of the past,

and at worst like an intellectual dead end, has started to be recognized not only as an important discipline in its own right, and one central to those quintessential Renaissance practices of mapping the land and recovering the past, but also as a crucial site for understanding the production of Renaissance culture more broadly.

Chorography was clearly and consistently theorized in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Both chorographers themselves and writers about chorography invariably looked back to the same classical source to authorize and define their genre and discipline: Claudius Ptolemy's *Geography*. (See Gautier Dalché 2007.) Ptolemy (c. 90–c. 168) defined *chōrographia*, “regional cartography,” as a subset of, but also in contradistinction to, *geōgraphia*, “world cartography.” Where *geōgraphia* is “an imitation through drawing of the entire known part of the world together with the things that are, broadly speaking, connected with it,” *chōrographia* “sets out the individual localities, each one independently and by itself, registering practically everything down to the least thing therein (for example, harbors, towns, districts, branches of rivers, and so on)” (Ptolemy [c. 150] 2000, 57). English writers who repeated Ptolemy's definition included the physician and cartographer William Cuningham (c. 1531–1586), who argued that chorography “sheweth the partes of th' earth, diuided in them selues” and “seuerally describeth, the portes, Riuers Hauens, Fluddes, Hilles, Mountaynes, Cities, Villages, Buildinges, Fortresses, Walles, yea and euery particuler thing, in that parte contained” (1559, B3v–B4r), and the mathematician Arthur Hopton (c. 1580–1614), who offered an almost identical definition in his *Speculum Topographicum* (1611). “Topographie (with some called Corography),” he asserted, “is an Arte, whereby wee be taught to describe any particular place, without relation vnto the whole, deliuering all things of note contained therein, as ports, villages, riuers, not omitting the smallest: also to describe the platforme of houses, buildings, monuments, or any such particular thing” (B1r). Pedagogues, too, defined the discipline in similar Ptolemaic terms: Thomas Blundeville (1522?–1606?), for example, in his catechetic *Exercises* (1594) answered the question “What is Chorographie” by characterizing it as “the description of some particular place, as Region, Ile, Citie, or such like portion of y<sup>e</sup> earth seuered by it selfe from the rest” (S6r).

If Ptolemy provided the *locus classicus* for theoretical definitions of chorography, the emergence of the genre in the sixteenth century was also due to a range of other, more contemporary influences – to what Robert Mayhew has described as “a proliferation of new knowledge claims” (2011, 32). These ranged from Columbus's discoveries, which transformed and pluralized knowledge of the world as a whole by revealing new peoples, new plants, and new lands, none of which fitted easily into existing epistemic frameworks (Conley 2007, 404), to a series of more localized, perceptual shifts in identity and knowledge. In England, these were associated primarily with the Reformation and the Dissolution of the Monasteries, which together not only proliferated knowledge by liberating books and manuscripts from the monastic libraries in which they had previously been held, but also resulted in new interpretative paradigms and new ways of observing and describing the world. More specifically, the Reformation also led to what A.L. Rowse, in a now unfashionable account,

described as “an increasing awareness of the land itself” (1950, 32). Given this, it is hardly surprising that a genre that had the land at its core started to grow in popularity. Furthermore, with its conjunction of geographical enquiry and historical recovery, and its determination to record every notable particular in a given location, chorography also offered an increasingly attractive vehicle for the articulation of local and national identity – both of which were, following the break from Rome, in the process of being redefined. Not only could chorography provide a valuable sense of cohesion, but it also had the potential to underlay any projected identity with the authority of both time and place.

The chorographies that emerged in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were strikingly diverse, ranging from massive surveys of the nation as a whole to minute studies of individual regions, and from grand printed projects, designed for a country-wide (and sometimes even international) readership, to texts that circulated in manuscript and were only ever intended for readers known to the author himself. At one end of the scale, there were the expansive chorographical and antiquarian surveys of William Harrison (1535–1593) and William Camden (1551–1623): the *Historicall Description of the Island of Britain*, prefaced to editions of Holinshed’s *Chronicles* (1578 and 1587), and the *Britannia* (1586; translated into English by Philemon Holland in 1610). At the other end, there were the modest, unpublished county surveys of Staffordshire, Pembrokeshire and Devon written by Sampson Erdeswicke (c. 1538–1603), George Owen of Henllys (1552–1613), John Hooker (c. 1527–1601), and Tristram Risdon (c. 1580–1640). (For a more comprehensive list of examples from the period see Taylor 1934.) Furthermore, as Henry Turner (2001; 2007) and John Gillies (2001) have shown, chorography’s influence also reached beyond historical and geographical surveys to shape a whole range of other genres in the early modern period, from Shakespearean tragedy to Elizabethan satire. By the end of the sixteenth century, the importance of chorography was such that it featured in school curricula. Richard Mulcaster (1531/2–1611), first headmaster of Merchant Taylors’ School in London, prescribed the study of “drawing” for the “thorough help” it could bring to a range of learned disciplines, including “Chorographie” and “Topographie” (1582, H1v).

Perhaps the most characteristic aspect of chorography, in both theory and practice, was the emphasis that writers placed on specificity. From the Ptolemaic stress of the individual detail to Lambarde’s copious and comprehensive project, chorographies invariably accentuated the particular – both in its original, but now obsolete, sense of belonging to only part of something, and in its broader, more current sense of specific or not general. Indeed, in the case of Lambarde, he openly contrasted the chorographical *Perambulation* with the “generalitie” of his earlier historical project, the unpublished *Dictionarium Angliae Topographicum et Historicum*. That work, he argued,

exhibited in generalitie, the names, scituation [*sic*], & compasse of the Realme, the number of the sundry nations inhabiting within the same, the seuerall lawes, languages, rites, & maners of the peoples, the conuersion of the cuntry to Christianitie, the diuisions and limites of the Kingdomes, the beginnings and alterations of Bishopricks, and such other things incident to the whole. (B1r)

While the contents are similar to those of the *Perambulation*, the crucial distinction is that the earlier work addresses the “whole,” constructing England as a coherent “Realm,” whereas the latter is concerned with regional identity and anatomizes only one part of that realm.

Most subsequent writers of chorography followed Lambarde’s lead. In the prefatory epistle to *The Survey of Cornwall* (1602), perhaps the liveliest of all Renaissance chorographies, Richard Carew (1555–1620) informed his readers that his “treatise plotteth downe *Cornwall*, as it now standeth, for the particulars” ([1602] 2004, ¶4r), a description that both reminds us of the particularity of the genre and, in its cartographic lexicon, reveals its intimate connections with other forms of geographical knowledge. Thomas Westcote (*d.* 1637?) described his *A View of Devonshire* ([c. 1630] 1845), a chorography that remained unpublished until the nineteenth century, in similar terms – albeit, in his case, distinguishing not only between the particularity of the genre and the generality of other kinds of description, but also between the general and the particular within his own work. “Now having, according to my poor ability, showed you a description of this province of De-Avonshire, with the nature and quality of the soil, together with the natural disposition of the natives,” he wrote at the beginning of Book 2, “it will be expected that there should yet be a more particular view taken of the hundreds, corporations, market towns, castles, parishes with their churches; that nothing may be defective of what is spoken of in the survey or description of other counties” (93). Westcote, it seems, was compelled to this “particular view” by readers’ expectations for the genre and by his own local pride as a Devonian and the fear that his county might otherwise suffer from intellectual neglect.

Westcote’s distinction between the generality of his first book and the particularity of the rest of his narrative is, in fact, also characteristic of chorography. The fundamental structure of the genre is a general description, essentially historical, followed by an enumeration of particulars organized according to the land. We see exactly the same structure, for instance, in John Norden’s *Specvlvm Britanniae. The first parte An historical, & chorographical discription of Middlesex* (1593). Norden’s work begins with “A BRIEFE DECLARATION OF THE TITLES, INHABITANTS, DIVISIONS, AND SCITVATION OF ENGLAND OR BRITANNIA maior”: a brief summary of British and English history, from the first inhabitation of the island up to the reign of Elizabeth I, which he calls “a necessary introduction to our *Speculum Britanniae*.” Having given this historical overview, he then proceeds to his description of the land, and he represents this transition explicitly as a shift from the general to the particular. “Hauing thus briefly touched the generall,” he observes, “I purpose to proceede to the particular descriptions of this our BRITANIA: wherein [...] I thought it not vnfit to begin my *Speculum Britaniæ* with MYDDLESEX, which aboue all other Shyres is graced, with that chiefe and head Citie LONDON” (C1r).

This emphasis on the particular resulted in a distinctive narrative style and an identifiable chorographical rhetoric. Chorographies were defined by their accretive and copious structure – by what Ralf Hertel has characterized as the “inherent

logic” and “narrative structure of ‘and then’” (2014, 49). Both the demands of the genre, as spelt out in the Ptolemaic formulation, and the antiquarian, restorative tradition, which was so closely bound up with it, produced this copiousness – copiousness, that is to say, both in terms of subject matter and of expression, and thus also in the humanist, rhetorical sense expounded most famously in Desiderius Erasmus’s *De copia* (1512). At its most extreme, this resulted in a work such as the *Britannia*: a text that in successive editions revealed in its own expansiveness and that, in its author’s repeated requests for contributions from his readers, actively sought to grow in size and length. More commonly, this “logic” resulted in the kind of narrative relentlessness and urge to list that characterize so much chorographical writing. From the catalogues of Michael Drayton’s chorographical poem *Poly-Olbion* ([1612; 1622] 1961) to the lists of Norden’s *Middlesex*, early modern chorographies sought to generate narrative abundance as well as contain it, and to expand historical and geographical knowledge as well as collect it. This in turn also often resulted in a rich blend of textual practices, with chorography bringing together extremely diverse sources and voices – what I have described elsewhere, in relation to *Poly-Olbion*, as its characteristic “multifariousness” (Vine 2010, 171, 177–178). A chorographical narrative might therefore include a description of a tessellated pavement, an account of a family pedigree, an extensively plotted river course, and a bardic song. By the same token, its textual practices might incorporate antiquarian reconstruction, genealogical description, geographical survey, and snatches of verse.

The urge to particularize was not, of course, just the preserve of chorography. Other kinds of early modern text, in particular compilations of knowledge, were underscored by a similar set of priorities, as modern scholars, especially in the history of science, have started to show. For Barbara Shapiro, chorography’s attention to particulars was part of a wider intellectual discourse at the time: what she has called “the culture of fact.” Central to her argument are the different strategies and various attempts by writers of chorography to demonstrate the truthfulness of the particulars they gathered – devices that find parallels in a range of other early modern genres and disciplines, from the scientific to the legal. Chorographies, she argues, “typically insisted that they truthfully reported ‘matters of fact,’” and “[w]herever feasible they claimed to be ‘eye-witnesses’ of honesty and good character” (2000, 64): hallmarks of the “culture of fact.” For John M. Adrian, chorography’s discourse of particularization finds one of its closest parallels in Baconian induction, where the gathering of particulars is the first step in the advancement of learning and the initial stage in the establishment of axioms. He also suggests that chorography’s persistent “naming and describing is a way of understanding what might otherwise be a heap of confused or insignificant details” (2006, 325) – a way of imposing order on, and thereby making sense of, an otherwise unruly and incomprehensible landscape. Such parallels remind us of the epistemological importance of chorography’s catalogues and its accretive structure, and reveal that its lists of names, places, and things have significance above and beyond simply what is recorded.

If the essence of chorography was particular rather than universal knowledge, chorographers were nevertheless still interested in an extremely broad range of topics. Chorography was, in the words of Alexandra Walsham, a “hybrid genre,” which “characteristically combined topographical description of a region with historical narrative, antiquarian observation, genealogical information, etymological speculation, and social commentary” (2004, 29). Nowhere is this “hybrid” nature made more explicit than in Westcote’s introduction to the *View*, where he asserts that he has intermixed “a pleasant tale with a serious discourse, and an unwritten tradition with a chronicled history, old ancient armories and epitaphs, well near buried in oblivion” and that he has also added “ancient families now extinct, or rather transanimated into others” and “some etymologies seeming and perchance strange and far fetched” ([c. 1630] 1845, xvi). By the seventeenth century, chorography also increasingly included natural history, overlapping more and more with the research of scientifically oriented scholars. Where Lambarde and his contemporaries were interested narrowly in human history, later generations of regional writers broadened the scope of their works to include fauna and flora, fossils, studies of the weather and matters speluncar. For Carew, this meant recording “creatures of a breathing note [...] such as minister some particular cause of remembrance” ([1602] 2004, G1v) as well as describing the Cornish landscape and its history, while for George Owen it resulted in attention to the puffin (“a bird in all respects bred of birds of its kind by laying eggs, feathered, and flying with other birds, and yet is reputed to be fish”) and an extraordinary poetic flight of fancy on the lobster, which compares its carapace to the “tassets, vambraces, pauldrons, cuisses, gauntlets and gorget curiously wrought and forged by the most admirable workman of the world” ([1602–1603] 1994, 133, 128).

Nonetheless, for all the diversity of its contents, the core of chorography and regional study more broadly, at least until the end of the seventeenth century, remained the conjunction of geography and history. In essence, the genre sought both to describe the landscape and to document the human traces, past and present, on that landscape. As such, it consisted of a geographical framework upon which a range of historical concerns and particulars typically hung. Authors overlaid their mapping of the land with insistent attention to its past – from Carew describing the monuments and inscriptions dotted around Cornwall to Lambarde’s explanation of the ancient Kentish custom of gavelkind, from accounts of funerary urns half buried in the soil to the genealogies and pedigrees that fill so many pages of so many chorographical books. History, in other words, offered much of the subject matter, but geography provided the underlying structure and organization. Where other forms of early modern historical narrative organized their knowledge from a notional origin, usually a genealogical one, chorographies were organized spatially rather than temporally, plotting their particulars on a geographical rather than a historical axis. Chorography, in other words, was not only a knowledge of particulars, but was itself a very particular, spatial kind of knowledge.



## Journeys, Space, and Place

The spatial organization of chorography also explains one of its most salient internal features. Writers of chorography almost always represented their works as journeys, imbuing their collections of particulars with an imaginative charge and a figurative language that to modern readers may be unexpected. To contemporary readers, however, neither would have been particularly surprising. Chorography, as scholars of cartography and visual culture have started to show, was always regarded as an art rather than a science. In the words of Kenneth Olwig, it “belonged more to the realm of the descriptive artist than to that of the mathematician and scientist” (2002, 33), while for Lucia Nuti its final aim – “[c]reating recognizable images of the visible features of the single parts of the *oecumene*” (1999, 90) – is testimony to the same thing. (Οἰκουμένη was the term used by Greek writers to denote the known, inhabited world.) Where cartography called for projection, and geography required the calculation of distances, chorography needed a pictorial sensibility, the ability to represent visual images in words. For all its roots in mathematics and Ptolemaic science, chorography was therefore as much about narrative and description – about what John Adrian has called “the subjective authorial voice of literature” (2005, 44). Chorography, as a result, was never seen as inimical or in any way opposed to the imagination. The range of literary works that bear its influence, from various of Shakespeare’s plays to William Browne of Tavistock’s *Britannia’s Pastorals* (1613), offers further testimony to that.

In light of this, the decision of chorographers to draw upon metaphor and to figure their works as journeys makes more sense. The languages of travel and journeying, moreover, were also the obvious choices here. Travel not only provided chorographers with a model for observation and description, and a model that was itself extensively theorized in the *artes apodemicae* of the period, but it also offered a cohesive and geographically sanctioned structure upon which to hang their particulars. The *artes apodemicae* were manuals of travel, which taught the prospective traveler both how he should comport himself and what he should observe and how he should organize those observations when he wrote them down. What these manuals recommended had a great deal in common with chorographical and antiquarian practice (Vine 2010, 143–149; Stagl 1995). Furthermore, travel narratives were themselves concerned with that very representation of space and place, which in one way or another also lay at the heart of chorography.

For Lambarde, the metaphor of travel was important enough for him to foreground it in his title. “Perambulation” in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries could mean a walk or journey on foot, a survey or inspection or, in a legal context, the action of walking round a territory to beat the bounds (*OED*, *n.1*, 2 and 3). The *Perambulation of Kent* is all three things: a walk through the county, a survey of the county and an establishment of the county boundaries. Lambarde, in an extension of the perambulatory metaphor, is the reader’s “*Xenagogus* or guide” ([1576] 1596, B1v), and his work, in a striking neologism, is the “*Xenagogie*” (2L4r) or guidebook. The text itself is organized as a pair of journeys, one around the diocese of Canterbury, and the other around that of Rochester. In each case, Lambarde uses the diocesan

geography to order his journey and structure the particulars that he enumerates, as their respective opening passages make clear:

First to begin at Tanet, and to peruse the East and South shores, till I come to the limits betweene this Shyre, and Sussex: then to ascend Northward, and to visite such places, as lie along the bounds of this Diocese & Rochester, returning by the mouth of Medway to Tanet againe, which is the whole circuit of the Bishopricke: and lastly, to describe such places, as lie in the body and midst of the same. (G5r)

[I]t followeth that I enter into the particular description of the Diocesse, wherein I meane to followe the order that I haue taken in Canterbury before: Namely, to begin at the Northeast corner, and from thence (first descending along the bankes of Medway, and then passing by the Frontiers of Sussex and Surrey, and lastly returning by the Thamise shore to the same point) to enuiron the whole Bishopricke: which done, I will peruse what it containeth in the inner parts also, and then betake me to rest. (Z2r)

Lambarde sustains the metaphor of travel throughout the rest of the book. The effect is to weave the places and particulars that he describes into a coherent narrative, as the passages where he negotiates the transition from one location to another make clear – passages such as his description of the Isle of Thanet, where he asserts, “Now a worde or two touching Ippedsflete, whereof I spake before, and of Stonor, within the Isle, & then I will leaue Tanet, & proceede in my iourney” (G8v), and then at its end, “Now woulde I forthwith leade you from the Isle of Tanet, to the ruines of Richborow, sauing that the Goodwine is before mine eie, whereof I pray you first harken what I haue to say” (H1r).

Other writers of chorography used the metaphor of travel in the same way. Westcote structured the *View* as a series of river journeys, one of the dominant conventions in the chorographical tradition, and portrayed himself as “a poor travelling pilgrim passing on his way,” who reports what he has “seen and observed of the antiquities, names, situations, government, and other things” ([c. 1630] 1845, 184), while Carew guides his readers through his text in a similar fashion. Early in the second book, for example, he speaks of making “easie iournies from place to place” and taking “the Hundreds for [his] guydes” ([1602] 2004, 2C2r). The rest of the book then follows a readily plotted journey, beginning with the eastern reaches of Cornwall (“My first entrance must be by the hundred of East, so named for his site, and therein, at *Plymmouth Harbour*” [2C2v]) and ending with Penwith Hundred in the far west (“My last labour, for closing vp this wearisome Suruey, is bounded, as *Cornwall* it selfe, and so the West part of England, with Penwith Hundred” [2R1v]). As with Lambarde, Carew also returns explicitly to the metaphor of travel at the end of his book, promising there to “refresh” those readers “who haue vouchsafed to trauaile in the rugged and wearysome path of my ill-pleasing stile” (2S3r–v). Drayton, too, used a similar peregrinatory device: *Poly-Olbion* follows the progress of his chorographical Muse across England and Wales, a structure that, in the words of George Wither, in his commendatory poem for the 1622 edition, enables the reader to travel “From CORNWAL’s Foreland to the Cliffs of DOVER” (1). In fact, for Wither, the reader travels further on these imaginary journeys than on any

actual peregrination; as he observes later in his poem, he has “More goodly Prospects” seen in four days reading than he “could have known/In foure yeares Travailes” (3–5).

If one reason that chorographers figured their works as imaginary journeys was organizational, another major factor was that the texts themselves were often the products of actual travel. To quote Stan Mendyk, in what remains the most comprehensive account of regional study in the early modern period, chorographers “[g]enerally [...] observed local antiquities and conditions firsthand, by touring either on horseback or on foot, then compiled accounts that express the pride each of them had in his county or region” (1989, 6). Chorography, in other words, was predicated on travel, and the particulars that it described were more often than not really observed by its authors. In this respect, there was considerable overlap between chorography and the peripatetic strain of antiquarianism, which sought out ancient objects and buried artifacts and studied the contours of the landscape, and was embodied by figures such as Camden and John Leland (c. 1503–1552) – both of whom were also prominent in the history of chorography. But there was a third reason, too, why writers of chorography turned to perambulation and travel, and that reason that takes us from research, observation, and the organization of knowledge to the underlying politics of the genre.

### The Politics of Chorography

Much of the contemporary scholarly interest in chorography has focused on its politics, although what those actually are by no means universally agreed. In 1992, in his *Forms of Nationhood*, a work born out of, but that also distinguishes itself from, the new historicist criticism that from the 1980s started to dominate Renaissance literary criticism in North America, Richard Helgerson restored scholarly attention to chorography and its politics. For him, chorography was one of a range of sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century discourses – poetic, legal, cartographic, exploratory, dramatic, and religious – that together constituted an extraordinary and ambitious intellectual project: the making of England as a nation, the establishment of what Edmund Spenser called a “kingdome of oure owne Language” (1580, 6; quoted in Helgerson 1992, 18). In the case of chorography, that “kingdom” was a very particular one, and one that perhaps paradoxically “left little place for the representation of royal power” (117). In Helgerson’s eyes, the very fact that chorography focused on the part rather than the whole, on local rather than national identity, on the county rather than the kingdom, made it a challenge to regal power and enabled it to offer an alternative vision of England to that embodied in the figure of the monarch. Just as its sister discipline, cartography, “opened up a conceptual gap between the land and its ruler” by allowing Englishmen “to see in a way never before possible the country,” and by reducing royal authority to a set of insignia or symbols on the edge of a map, and thus rendering it “a merely ornamental adjunct to that country” (114), so chorography also led to a separation between subject and ruler.

Helgerson saw this as an unwitting consequence in earlier chorographies such as the *Britannia*, which were, he acknowledged, “firmly identified with” the monarch (131). However, he argued that during the reign of James I, that separation was increasingly deliberate and the opposition to the monarch increasingly conscious. Indeed, by the second decade of the seventeenth century, chorography, in his words, “had become a dangerously political activity” (130): a genre that, in its adherence to the country, the shire and the land, and in its growing attention to the gentry at the expense of the monarch, became one of the key vehicles for sentiments that would lead ultimately to the Civil Wars of the 1640s.

More recent critics, writing in a historicist rather than new historicist vein, have tended to follow Helgerson in his attention to the politics of chorography, but to temper his argument about the extent to which they were oppositional. For Andrew McRae, the upsurge in interest in the land, the gentry and their pedigrees, exemplified by chorography, was less a challenge to the monarch and more a matter of the reassertion of conservative gentry values. As he argues in his 1996 book *God Speed the Plough*, chorography’s “conjunction of topographical frame with genealogical detail combines patriotic celebration of the nation with an attention to the owners of the countryside” (232). In a subsequent book, he reiterates the point, arguing that while Helgerson was right to draw attention to how chorography and cartography made the land visible, “their own social and spatial politics were invariably more conservative” than he allowed (2009, 31). For Bernhard Klein, who is closer in theoretical orientation to Helgerson’s version of historicism, the politics of chorography were nonetheless twofold, a duality that reflects two very different traditions within the genre. On the one hand, he argues, chorography could offer “the privilege of the map, projecting on to a plane, and presenting to full view, a totality of spatial relations,” but on the other it could also “belong to the order of the itinerary or tour, exploring space through movement and operative action.” Where the former, which he associates with Camden, “guarantees the stability of a political order,” the latter, which he connects with Harrison, foregrounds “a degree of diversity and fluidity that challenges any monolithic view of the nation’s cultural and social configuration” and “provides the elements for alternative narratives, other discursive voyages, that might convey spatial experiences of a complex social realm at odds with the dominant royal perspective” (Klein 2001a, 208–209). If the latter did have the potential to be oppositional, or at least to voice a perspective on the land other than the monarchical one, the former most certainly did not.

In acknowledging that the politics of chorography were not necessarily radical, Klein and McRae’s accounts both more successfully accommodate a work such as the *Britannia* – a text that the latter describes as the “epitomizing achievement” of the genre (2009, 32) – than Helgerson’s argument of unwitting opposition. Arguably, they also more successfully accommodate works such as Lambarde’s *Perambulation* and Norden’s *Middlesex*: texts that, on the face of it, do illustrate Helgerson’s point about the privileging of the part over the whole. For, despite their insistent localism, these are texts that share the *Britannia*’s totalizing imperative and its concomitant support for the established order. Neither Lambarde nor Norden intended their

county surveys to stand alone; both conceived them as part of much larger projects that would describe the country as a whole on a county-by-county basis. In Norden's case, that project was thwarted by a lack of financial support and patronage, and the only other of his county surveys to be published in his lifetime was his description of Hertfordshire. In Lambarde's case, it was the sheer scale of the project that got the better of him (and the fact, as he acknowledged in a letter, that he got wind of Camden's own grand plans (Edwards [1864] 2010, 236)). He never, however, abandoned his desire for it, as comments near the end of the *Perambulation* illustrate. "I can but wish in like sort," he wrote, "that some one in each Shyre woulde make the enterprise for his owne Countrie, to the end that by ioyning our Pennes, and confering our labours (as it were, *ex symbolo*) we might at the last by the vnion of many partes and papers compact one whole and perfect bodie and booke of our English Topographie" (2L4v). His attention to the part, in other words, was never a challenge to the whole: his chorography of Kent always presupposed an ultimate topography of England in its entirety. As John Adrian deftly puts it, his text thus "maintain[s] the distinctiveness of place," even as it "integrate[s] the local into a larger and stronger vision of England" (2006, 316).

For Lambarde, the key to this negotiation between local and larger visions was the two journeys around which he structured his text. As a literary mode, perambulation would have appealed specifically to the landowners and local gentry, who were the customary readers of chorography, and who themselves periodically beat the boundaries of their property and perambulated their land, but in its cohesive-ness it would also have opened his work up to a wider readership and thus facilitated its absorption into his larger topographical project. In the *Perambulation of Kent*, therefore, the metaphor of travel is integral not only to the work's organization, but also to its underlying political vision. And this holds true whether we follow Helgerson's exposition of chorography or the less radical line that has come to dominate scholarship, and for which I have argued here – whether, that is to say, we see the work's exclusiveness or its appeal to a larger, national project as its predominant feature.

Furthermore, the same holds true for the vast majority of chorographies, certainly until the 1630s and the more delimited manuscript projects of that decade, and potentially until the second half of the seventeenth century when regional study, under the influence of the Royal Society, began to move away from the Ptolemaic model to a more insistent focus on natural history (Mendyk 1989). This chapter began with Lambarde's *Perambulation of Kent*, and has taken that text as its central example, because of its earliness and because it provides so comprehensive and considered a discussion of the genre. But it could just as easily have taken Norden, Camden, Carew, or Owen as its central figure. Chorography, for all these authors, and for countless others, constituted historical or antiquarian particulars plotted on a geographical axis and structured around an imaginary journey, itinerary, or progress. Scholarship, following Helgerson and in the wake of the "spatial turn" in the humanities, has started to explore both aspects of this conjunction, chorographical particulars and the chorographical imagination, as this chapter has also shown.

But much work remains to be done. Only a limited number of authors (Camden, Lambarde, Harrison) have seen any sustained discussion, and while chorography's links with cartography and chronicles have been extensively documented, its connections with other forms of geographical and historical knowledge, and other genres, remain underexplored. Chorography, therefore, is ripe for further study – and that means continued attention to travel, journeys and space, imagined or otherwise.

### What to Read Next

Adrian (2011); Brayshay (1996); Hall (1995); Helgerson (1992); McRae (2015).

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# Index

- abjection, 97
- Abrams, M.H., 283
- Acidini, Cristina, 398, 400
- Act of Uniformity, 386
- Addison, Lancelot, 380
- Adorno, Theodor, 90–91
- Adrian, John M., 416, 418, 422
- aesthetics, 133
- early modern, 92
  - as ideological patterning, 97
  - as “non-identical”, 90
  - relation to power of, 251
- Africa, 242–243
- agency, 3 *see also* Latour
- and authorship, 8, 16, 256
  - and choice, 56–67
  - and culture, 47
  - and devotion, 389
  - disappearance of, 62, 383
  - and environmental disorder, 160–161
  - female, 29–30, 236, 361
  - and the hand, 121
  - and heterosexual subjecthood, 36–38
  - and identity, 57, 64
  - and painting, 357, 361–363
  - and passions, 64
  - reappearance of, 62–63
  - and SPIDER, 398
- Agnew, Jean-Christophe, 148, 151, 152, 155, 156
- Ahmed, Sara, 39
- Aitchison, Jean, 283
- Akenside, Mark
- “Hymn”, 338–339
- Alberti, Leon Battista, 92–94
- Alcmaeon of Croton, 118
- allegoresis, 285
- allegory
- characteristic binaries of, 285, 288
  - and metaphor, 9, 281, 283, 284–285
  - and narrative, 241, 285–286
  - and *The Faerie Queene*, 286–288
  - theories of, 285
- Allen, Graham, 282, 320n
- Althusser, Louis, 62, 384, 393n
- ambivalence, 57, 97
- analogy, 288–292
- history of, 288, 292n
  - and knowledge, 290
  - and metaphor, 9, 281, 283, 288–290

- and micro/macrocosm, 116–117, 118, 120, 290  
and pre-modern “episteme”, 46–47
- Anderson, Judith, 9
- Angelico, Fra, 94
- antiquarianism, 208, 209, 372, 375 *see also*  
church  
and chorography, 412, 420, 422  
as evolution in method, 212–213  
and literature, 215–216  
and nostalgia, 216  
and political history, 378–380
- Appadurai, Arjun, 130, 133–134
- Archipelagic studies, 184–186  
and animal studies, 186
- Archipelago, Atlantic  
importance of Ulster to, 183  
politics of, 175, 184  
and Union, 6, 179–180
- architecture  
and literature, 206–208, 214, 216–217
- Arcimboldo, Guiseppe  
*The Librarian*, 397
- Arden of Faversham*, 266, 267, 272–276  
figure of the steward, 276  
importance of Jack Fitten in, 275  
and property, 272–273  
and service relations, 273  
and women’s bodies, 276
- Arendt, Hannah, 71
- Ariosto, Ludovico, 238  
*Orlando Furioso*, 237, 239–240
- Aristotle, 163, 288  
and analogy, 289  
and anatomy, 118, 121, 122, 123  
and friendship, 32  
and imagination, 244  
and knowledge, 86–87, 237, 282  
*Poetics*, 1, 237, 242, 289
- Articles of Peace, the thirty-five, 173, 175–177, 178, 180, 183
- Asad, Talal, 73, 74, 77–78, 80–81
- Ashmole, Elias, 212
- Asia, 242–243
- Aubrey, John, 209, 212
- Auerbach, Erich, 71
- authenticity, 57, 266 *see also* personhood
- author, 16–17 *see also* book; reader  
death of, 16, 117  
and doctrinal controversy, 207  
and glosses, 318–319  
and heterosexual desire, 36  
multi-authored text, 184, 193, 230–231  
and publication, 295–297, 399, 401, 402, 405
- authority *see also* authorship  
and antiquity, 371  
and court, 251, 255  
devotional, 386–387  
ecclesiastical, 78, 211, 225  
household, 7, 265–267  
and possession, 272–276  
and privacy, 268–272  
intellectual, 220  
and self-fashioning, 382–383  
sovereign, 6, 227, 249, 252–253, 420–421  
state, 184  
writerly, 36, 256
- authorship, 8, 310–320  
and canon, 16  
civic, 310–311  
and the divine, 311, 391  
female, 36  
inspired, 315, 320n  
laureate, 310–311, 312, 314, 316  
and manuscripts, 297–298  
paradigmatic nature of Spenser’s sense of, 319  
self-authorizing, 311, 319–320, 356  
and space, 199  
and tradition, 312, 316, 319–320
- Avrin, Leila, 401
- Aylmer, Bishop John, 231
- Bacon, Francis, 32, 46, 122, 230, 326, 337, 375  
*Advancement of Learning*, 168, 213  
and Aristotle, 288  
and chorography, 416  
*Essays*, 5  
and experimental science, 224–226
- Baker, David, 6, 156
- Bakhtin, Mikhail, 117, 118
- Baldwin, William, 319

- Bale, John, 215, 373
- Barbour, Reid, 208, 209, 210, 214
- Barkan, Leonard, 116, 117
- Barker, Francis, 117
- Barney, Stephen A., 285, 286
- Barthes, Roland, 21
- Bartky, Sandra Lee, 364
- Bartlett, Robert, 44, 46
- Bates, Catherine, 3, 251, 260
- Beaumont, Francis  
*Knight of the Burning Pestle*, 238
- beauty *see also* desire  
 and court, 249–250  
 female, 88, 359–361  
 and God, 125, 225  
 female, 88, 359–361  
 and male gaze, 359
- Beck, Bishop Antonie de, 210
- Bedingfield, Thomas, 402
- Behn, Aphra, 121
- belief *see also* devotion  
 and forms of worship, 217, 225–226, 356  
 and science, 167–168  
 and theatricality, 71–72
- Bell, Catherine, 385
- Belsey, Catherine, 98n, 117
- Benjamin, Walter, 71
- Bennett, Jane, 137
- Berger, John, 364
- Berkeley Castle manuscript, 297–298
- Berlant, Lauren, 36, 38, 267
- Berlin, Isaiah, 4
- Betteridge, Thomas, 72, 79, 252
- Bhagavad-Gita*, 340
- Bible, 226, 319  
 Ephesians, 75, 102, 288  
 Job, 77  
 John, 362  
 Jonah, 79  
 Kings, 125  
 Luke, 94  
 New Testament, 362  
 Old Testament, 73, 362  
 and prayerbook, 386  
 Proverbs, 357  
 Psalms, 388–389  
 Song of Songs, 285
- binary oppositions, 24–25  
 and allegory, 288  
 and dominant/subordinate, 20–22
- Blomefield, Francis, 212
- bloodline, 4, 47–48, 109–110, 274  
 and Spenser's Mutability, 50
- Blundeville, Thomas  
*Exercises*, 413
- Bodin, Jean, 46
- body, 4, 115–127, 203, 402  
 corporate, 221–222, 225, 231  
 female, 119, 357  
 painting of, 271, 355, 357, 360,  
 363–364  
 fragmentation of, 87–88, 116, 120–121,  
 125, 126, 129n  
 and household, 267, 270, 276  
 humoral and environment, 46, 119, 124  
 and identity, 24, 118, 390  
 racial, 44  
 mechanizing of, 122  
 medicalized, 123–124  
 and pain, 118  
 and politics, 117, 123, 223, 226, 229, 230  
 and publishing, 401, 404  
 queer, 119–120  
 and religion, 46, 71, 115, 123, 125, 349,  
 357–358, 387  
 and self, 59, 64, 122  
 sexualized, 119, 123  
 as social phenomenon, 116  
 and space, 270, 272  
 theories of, 115, 116, 121, 123, 124  
 textualized, 124–126  
 and universe, 116, 117, 290
- body politic, 78, 116, 221, 222, 225,  
 227, 230
- Boehrer, Bruce, 7
- Boleyn, Anne, 255, 256
- book, the, 396–408 *see also* printing;  
 reading  
 aesthetic pleasures of, 405, 407  
 bibliofictions, 405  
 bibliographic code, 399  
 as cognitive resource, 9, 399, 407  
 divine, 168, 406  
 as gift, 325, 329–330

- iconography of, 400, 406, 407  
 as idea, 407  
 and marginalia, 327, 328  
 as metaphor, 406  
 as material artefact, 130, 317, 319, 328,  
     329, 333, 398–399, 401, 407, 408n  
 other uses of, 406  
 in paintings, 396–397  
 as practice, 398, 399, 403–404, 407  
 print technology, 403, 407  
 raw materials of, 406, 407  
 sexualizing of, 120  
 status, 396–398, 405  
 as substitute for author, 317  
 trans-nationality of, 401  
 Book of Common Prayer, 8, 385, 386–387  
     subject position in, 386–387, 392  
 Borlik, Todd Andrew, 162  
 Boyle, Robert, 165  
 Brady, Robert, 379  
 Braidotti, Rosi, 73, 74, 78–81  
 Bray, Alan, 119–120  
 Brayman, Heidi, 300  
 Bredbeck, Gregory, 23  
 British, the, 175, 178, 181, 183, 184  
 Bromley, James, 3  
 Brooke, Christopher, 319  
 Brooks, Cleanth, 260, 342, 344–345,  
     346, 347  
 Browne, Janet, 167  
 Browne, Sir Thomas, 326, 392  
     *Religio Medici*, 387–388  
     *Repertorium*, 208–215, 216, 217  
     *Urne-Buriall*, 208  
 Browne, William, of Tavistock  
     *Britannia's Pastorals*, 418  
 Bruni, Leonardo, 372  
 Bruster, Douglas, 230, 231  
 Bullinger, Heinrich  
     *The Christian State of Matrimony*, 269  
 Bunyan, John, 326  
 Burckhardt, Jacob, 117, 133, 134,  
     384, 393n  
 Burnett, Mark Thornton, 109  
 Burrow, Colin, 238  
 Burton, Jonathan, 44  
 Burton, Robert, 325  
     as book user, 327–329  
     library of, 325–326, 327  
     and personal networks, 329–333  
     *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, 326–327,  
         329, 330, 331–332  
 Butler, James, Marquess of Ormond, 173,  
     175, 177–179, 180, 181, 183, 185  
 Butler, Judith, 23–24  
 Butler, Martin, 253  
  
 Calvin, John, 71, 290, 362, 388  
 Calvino, Italo, 190–191, 193  
 Camden, William, 213, 214, 369, 377, 378,  
     420, 422–423  
     *Annales*, 375  
     *Britannia*, 375, 414, 421  
 Camus, Albert  
     *The Myth of Sisyphus*, 339  
 canon-formation, 15, 16  
 Capellanus, Andreas, 103  
 capitalism, 101, 102, 148, 191  
     mercantile, 102  
 Cardano, Girolamo  
     *De consolatione*, 402  
 Carew, Richard, 417, 422  
     *The Survey of Cornwall*, 415, 419  
 Carew, Thomas, 299  
 Carlino, Andreas, 126  
 cash, 101, 102, 112, 148–157  
     cash nexus, 6, 148, 150–153, 157  
     and imagination, 153–154  
 Cassirer, Ernst, 384  
 Cassius, Dio, 126  
 Castiglione, Baldassare  
     *The Book of the Courtier*, 252, 260  
 Catholicism, 35, 71–72 *see also* Donne  
     English, 70, 139  
     militant, 75  
     and Reformation, 386  
 Catholics, 176, 177, 178, 180, 181, 182, 184,  
     312  
     as dissidents, 71, 75, 79  
     and role of Mary, 302  
     and secularization, 356  
 Cavell, Stanley, 89  
 Certeau, Michel de, 193, 194, 202  
 Chapman, George, 375

- character, 62, 103, 241  
     psychology of, 105–106  
 Charles I, 102, 125, 173, 175, 177, 181, 225, 378  
 Charles II, 173, 183, 209  
 Charon, Rita, 123  
 Chartier, Roger, 399, 405  
 chastity, 242, 267, 269, 270  
     and love, 34–35, 36  
     and political autonomy, 258  
     and virginity, 35  
 Chaucer, Geoffrey, 168, 311, 312, 318  
     *House of Fame*, 316  
     *Troilus and Criseyde*, 314  
 Cheap Ward, 195  
 Cheapside Cross, 195–198, 202–203  
 Chedgzoy, Kate, 16  
 choice, 57, 62, 64–67  
 Chomsky, Noam, 63  
 chorography, 8, 411–423  
     an art, 418, 422–423  
     and antiquarianism, 412, 416, 420  
     and cartography, 420–421  
     diversity of, 414, 416  
     early modern theories of, 413, 417  
     epistemologies of, 416–417  
     growth in popularity of, 413–414  
     journey metaphor in, 418–420, 422  
     and literary influence, 414, 416  
     literary structure of, 415  
     and literary style, 415–416  
     and national identity, 414, 420  
     politics of, 420–421  
     and Renaissance culture, 413  
     and spatial knowledge, 417–418  
 Christ, Jesus, 75, 79, 94, 102, 120, 125, 140, 197, 202, 221, 224, 231, 301, 302, 305, 377, 382, 387, 389, 390, 391–392, 396, 400, 401  
     and the female self, 359–363  
     the passion of, 354, 358, 359  
     and the Samaritan woman, 362  
 church, 6, 81, 206–219, 285, 382 *see also*  
     Browne; counter-reformation;  
     devotion; liturgy; Reformation  
     and antiquarianism, 212–213, 215–216, 217  
     drama, 70  
     and historiography, 373, 376, 379  
     and literature, 206–208, 217, 299, 301, 311, 312  
     and civil war, 179, 182, 206–210  
     and local community, 208–217  
     and memory, 208–209, 213–214  
 Churchyard, Thomas, 402  
 Cicero, 281, 317  
     *De oratore*, 282, 284–285  
 city, 6, 190–191 *see also* London  
     and civic nostalgia, 198  
     dramatic language of, 191–193  
     legibility of, 191  
     migrational, 194  
     striation and smoothing of, 194–198, 200, 203  
     theoretical model of, 194–195  
 Civil War, 208, 213, 216, 228, 378, 379, 421  
     *see also* English Revolution  
 Clark, Cumberland, 342  
 Clarke, Danielle, 16, 21–22  
 Clarke, Elizabeth, 74, 253  
 class, 19, 132, 274, 346  
     absence of, 102  
 Claudian, 126  
 Coffin, Charles Monroe, 342–343, 344, 347  
 Coke, Edward, 378  
*Collectanea satis copiosa*, 373  
 colonial, 46, 51, 53, 175, 180, 183, 184, 185, 186, 380  
     space, 243  
 colonization, 4, 43, 46, 48–49, 51–53, 176, 183  
 Columbo, Realdo, 122  
 Columbus, Christopher, 413  
 commodity, 133–134, 148, 151, 399  
 commonwealth of learning, 7, 221, 222–223, 225, 230 *see also* public sphere  
 communications revolution, 7, 220, 228  
 Constable, Henry, 295–296  
     “To our blessed Lady”, 297, 298–299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306  
 Cooper, Anthony Ashley, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, 243–244, 245  
 Cooper, Bishop Thomas, 231

- Corbett, Richard, 299, 330  
*corpus Christi*, 197–198, 221, 360  
 cosmetics, 8, 60, 271, 272  
   anti-cosmetic invective, 357–358  
   and Elizabeth I, 356–357, 360  
   and eroticization, 364  
   and the female self, 360, 364  
   and the sacred, 357–358, 360–361  
   and self-creation, 353, 354–355, 357, 361, 364  
   and self-erasure, 357  
   and visual arts, 353, 355, 356, 357, 359, 360, 361–363, 364  
 Cotton, Robert, 379  
   *A Short View of the Long Life and Reign of King Henry III*, 378  
 counter-reformation, 303, 362  
   Laudian, 225  
 court, the, 6, 76, 105–107, 249–261, 270, 271, 357, 377  
   and allegory, 257  
   and drama, 251, 253, 260  
   and forms of subjectivity, 260  
   literary influence of, 252, 260  
   mobility in, 251–252  
   and poetry, 251, 253–254, 255, 257, 260  
   and relationship to theatricality, 253  
   and romance, 238, 240  
 courtliness, 257, 260  
   and social aspiration, 270  
 courtly love, 3, 103, 111, 242, 245, 258–259  
 courtship, 30–31, 260  
 Cranmer, Thomas  
   “Of Ceremonies”, 386–387  
 credit, 6, 149–154, 156–157  
 criticism  
   character, 90  
   critique and political alternative, 39, 62  
   feminist, 16–17, 62, 244  
   importance of, 5  
   New, 235, 246  
   new economic, 6, 147, 149–150  
   postcolonial, 185  
   practical, 117  
   queer, 40  
   and science, 341–346  
   secular, 383  
   and subject, 62, 384  
   textual, 326  
 Crockett, Clayton, 77  
 Cromwell, Oliver, 173, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 181, 183, 184, 185  
 Cultural Materialism, 7, 19–20, 103, 117, 132–133, 346  
   and archipelagic studies, 184–86  
 culture, 59, 66, 229, 355 *see also* agency;  
   court; printing; reading  
   Anglo-Celtic, 175  
   and body, 123  
   and bloodline, 47  
   and chorography, 412, 413  
   and change, 58, 63  
   classical, 58  
   contingency of values of, 57  
   cosmetic, 360, 363–364  
   of dissection, 120  
   early modern, 19, 22, 67, 358  
   early modern relationship to nature  
   of, 4, 43, 44–48, 49, 50, 52, 53, 165, 166  
   and figure of servant, 275  
   and genre, 235  
   governing, 62  
   historical, 371, 373, 377, 380  
   material, 325, 326, 375, 378, 379  
   and memory, 139, 210  
   and New Criticism, 346  
   and order, 45, 62  
   and pastoral, 29  
   a process, 44  
   queer, 30–31, 38, 120  
   and romance, 7  
   and ritual theory, 385  
   and savagery, 45  
   and, science, 341, 346–347, 349  
   and sensibility, 245  
   textual, 122  
   and things, 133  
 Cuninghame, William, 413  
 Cunningham, Andrew, 122–123, 124  
 d’Amelia, Piermatteo, 92  
 Daniel, George, 227

- Daniel, Samuel  
*The Civil Wars*, 375  
*Vision of the Twelve Goddesses*, 253
- Dante, Alighieri, 122, 236
- Darrigol, Olivier, 291
- Darwin, 162–163, 167–168
- Davenant, William  
*Britannia Triumphans*, 253
- Davidson, Donald, 342
- de Acosta, José, 374
- death, 37, 76, 77, 88, 89, 91, 110, 112, 139, 159, 169, 349
- de Cervantes, Miguel  
*Don Quixote*, 239, 405
- de Commynes, Philippe, 374
- deconstruction, 21–23 *see also* Derrida  
 and archipelagic studies, 7, 185  
 and desire, 87  
 and gender studies, 3  
 and metaphor, 284
- De Grazia, Margarita, 133, 134
- Dekker, Thomas  
*The Belman of London*, 328, 329
- Deleuze, Gilles, 8, 194
- della Francesca, Piero, 92, 94
- de Machlinia, William, 402
- de Montaigne, Michel, 9, 32, 72, 86, 111
- de Paredes, Alonso Victor, 408n
- Derrida, Jaques, 21, 62, 63, 71, 77, 95, 98, 185, 284  
 abyss, 95–96  
 hospitality, 87, 97  
 representation, 89, 193
- Descartes, René, 97, 288, 406
- de Scudéry, Madeleine, 246
- desire  
 and the abyss, 87, 88–91, 94–96  
 for desire, 3, 86–87  
 and figurative economy, 259, 260  
 and gender formation, 23–24  
 hegemony of heterosexual desire, 3, 36, 39  
 and language, 98n  
 and love, 3, 103, 389  
 and metaphor, 95  
 misrecognition of, 90  
 and narrative, 240, 243  
 Neoplatonic, 250  
 and the past, 37–39  
 policing of, 39  
 and representation, 86–98, 355, 364  
 same-sex, 30, 33, 37, 40n, 120  
 and science, 169  
 and self, 36, 87, 90  
 and transference, 108, 110
- de Thou, Jacques Auguste, 369, 375
- de Vere, Edward, Earl of Oxford, 402  
 “Wingde with desyre”, 258–259
- Devereux, Robert, Earl of Essex, 375
- Devil, 147–148, 152–157, 170, 179, 183, 195, 202, 339, 340, 393  
 as networker, 154  
 as organizing principle, 156
- Devon, 414, 415
- devotion, 8, 382–393 *see also* Psalms  
 anachronism in interpretation of, 382–383  
 and books, 207, 400, 406  
 intensity of, 388  
 meanings of, 384–385  
 multidirectional, 388  
 and mystery, 226  
 and phenomenology, 71, 72  
 poetry of, 259, 388–389  
 relational nature of, 389–393  
 and relationship between object and subject, 385  
 and Shakespeare’s late plays, 72  
 and sincerity, 385  
 and subjectivity, 384, 392–393  
 and submission, 382, 385, 392–393, 393n
- dialectical thinking, 8, 19–24, 87, 88, 121, 134, 192, 252, 256, 320n, 387, 393n
- di Credi, Lorenzo, 92
- Diggers and Levellers, 162
- disease, 118, 125, 290  
 melancholy, 326–327  
 as narrative, 123–124
- Dissolution of the Monasteries, 200, 354, 357, 373  
 and new knowledge, 413
- Dod, John and Robert Cleaver  
*A Godlie Forme of Householde Gouernment*, 269

- Dollimore, Jonathan, 117
- Donaldson, Ian, 270
- Donne, John, 118, 254, 259, 296–297, 298, 299, 338, 340, 348, 385, 391, 392
- “A Jeat [Jet] Ring sent”, 141
- “A Letanie”, 300, 301–302, 304
- “Batter my heart”, 389
- Bridgewater manuscript, 301
- Catholicism of, 296, 301, 302, 303, 304, 306
- and Constable, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 304, 305, 306
- and devotion, 385, 389–390, 392
- Devotions on Emergent Occasions*, 118, 122, 125, 290, 349, 389–390, 391
- Egerton manuscript, 297, 300
- Elegies*, 115
- “Good Friday”, 302–303, 304, 382
- Holy Sonnet, 14, 305, 340, 341, 389
- Huntington manuscript, 300, 301, 302, 303
- “Hymn to God, My God in My Sickness”, 340–341
- “If poisonous minerals” 389
- Ignatius His Conclave*, 342
- “La Corona”, 300, 305
- manuscript publication of, 300
- and modernity, 260
- and New Criticism, 342, 344
- O’Flahertie manuscript, 303–304
- “Oh, to vex me” 389
- “On the Crosse”, 300, 304
- and paradox, 341, 344, 348–349
- Pseudo-Martyr*, 324–325
- “Satyre IV”, 124
- and science studies, 347–348
- Songs and Sonnets*, 137, 304
- “The Canonization”, 259–260, 283, 344, 345
- “The Curse”, 259
- The First Anniversarie; Of the Progress of the Soul*, 342, 348
- “The Funerall”, 141
- “The Good Morrow”, 260, 261
- “The Lamentacions of Ieremy”, 300–301
- “The Prohibition”, 259
- “The Relic”, 137
- “The Relique”, 137–141
- “The Resurrection, Imperfect”, 304
- The Second Anniversarie; Of the Progress of the Soul*, 342
- “The Sun Rising”, 260–261
- “Upon the Translation”, 389
- “Valediction of my name in the window”, 141
- “Vppon the Annuntiation & Passion”, 301, 304
- “Witchcraft by a picture”, 141
- Doody, Margaret, 237, 242, 245
- Dorislaus, Isaac, 377, 378
- doubles and doubling, 59–61, 66
- Doueih, Milad, 122
- Dowden, Edward, 342
- drama
- and anatomy, 126
  - classical, 58
  - court, 251, 252
  - and female body, 119, 120
  - as fictive world, 266
  - historical, 375, 377
  - and incarnation, 115
  - medieval, 71, 77
  - as mode of thought, 67
  - pedagogical, 272
  - and personhood, 60, 66, 67
  - and political power, 249, 252–253, 260
  - post-secular, 73, 77, 78, 81
  - power of, 253
  - and public sphere, 75, 78, 81
  - religious, 198, 201
  - as resource for living, 4, 71, 81
  - and romance, 246
  - secular, 70
  - Shakespearean, 72, 81
  - and urban space, 198
  - and world, 164
- Drayton, Michael, 163, 165, 167, 319
- Poly-Olbion*, 160, 162, 164, 169, 376, 416, 419
- Du Bartas, Guillaume de Salluste, 406
- Dudley, Robert, Earl of Leicester, 372, 374
- Duffy, Eamon, 206, 208
- Dugdale, William, 209, 212, 379



- Eagleton, Terry, 393n
- ecology, 74, 98, 162–163 *see also*  
 environment  
 and anthropocentrism, 164  
 and Christian tradition, 168  
 and interdependence of being, 164–165  
 and Latour, 166, 168  
 proto-and pre-ecological, 162, 165, 167  
 and science, 168  
 and Serres, 131
- Eckhardt, Joshua, 8
- economy, 148 *see also* market  
 cash, 149, 154–157  
 credit, 149, 154  
 versus ecology, 162  
 experience of, 156  
 figurative, 259  
 household, 273  
 narrative, 369  
 profit, 134  
 and reputation, 149  
 of service, 109  
 social, 149, 156  
 of violence, 21
- Edelman, Lee, 35–36, 37, 39
- Edmondson, Clement  
*Portrait of a Lady, Probably Mrs Clement*  
*Edmondson*, 397
- Edward I, 195
- Edward II, 126
- Egan, Gabriel, 163–164
- Egerton, Frances, Countess of Bridgewater,  
 297, 300, 301, 303
- Egerton, Sir Thomas, 303
- Eilberg-Schwartz, Howard, 364
- Eliot, John, 378
- Eliot, T.S., 98
- Elizabeth I, 30, 51, 213, 216, 238, 251,  
 252–253, 315, 354, 368, 369, 415  
*see also* cosmetics  
 cenotaph of, 353  
 cult of, 354, 356, 357, 358, 359  
 as poet, 254, 257–258  
 as resource for female self-fashioning, 355  
 and Virgin Mary, 299, 301
- Elyot, Thomas, 372
- emblem, 292n
- embodiment, 4, 9, 115, 127n, 267, 285, 387,  
 399 *see also* body
- emotions, history of, 64–66
- engagement, 1–2
- Engels, 101, 184
- England, 173, 175, 177–185
- English Revolution, 175, 184 *see also*  
 Civil War
- Enlightenment, 74, 98, 134, 165, 168
- Enterline, Lynn, 24
- environment, 163, 165, 407
- environmental  
 anthropogenic damage, 159–161,  
 164, 169  
 art, 80, 81  
 care, 162, 163  
 injustice, 73
- environmentalism  
 versus anthropocentrism, 164, 168  
 origins of, 162
- environmentalist, proto-, 7, 160, 162, 163,  
 167, 169–170
- epic, 236, 237–238 *see also* romance
- epistemology  
 and chorography, 416  
 and crisis, 341–342  
 and desire, 97  
 and London, 6, 190–203  
 non-identity of the known,  
 97, 349  
 and paradox, 341, 349  
 and periodization, 46  
 and redemption, 225  
 and representation, 92, 97, 193,  
 203, 338
- Erasmus, Desiderius, 372, 397  
*De copia*, 416
- Erdeswicke, Sampson, 414
- Erickson, Robert A., 121
- eroticism  
 and courtly tradition, 106  
 and the heart, 123  
 and queer theory, 31, 35  
 and romance, 236, 242, 243, 244  
 and service, 3, 103, 108, 109, 111,  
 112, 258  
 and subjectivity, 36

- ethnicity *see* race
- Europe, 58, 151, 161, 222, 243, 282
- Evelyn, John, 165  
*Sylva*, 162
- Fabricius, Hieronymus, 122
- Feerick, Jean, 4
- Felski, Rita, 31
- femininity, 20, 353, 355, 356, 357,  
 363–364
- feminism, 3, 15–16  
 and art theory, 8, 355, 361–362  
 and bodies, 119  
 and cosmetics, 364  
 and gender studies, 17, 21–22  
 and household studies, 267  
 and New Historicism, 62–63  
 and post-secularism, 78  
 and romance, 244
- Ferguson, Arthur, 239
- feudalism, 101–102, 120, 148, 151
- Filmer, Robert, 379
- Fincham, Kenneth, 206, 208
- Fineman, Joel, 94–95
- Finney, Ross Lee  
*Still Are New Worlds*, 338–339
- Fish, Stanley, 326, 327
- Fletcher, Anthony, 18
- Fletcher, Phineas  
*The Purple Island*, 116
- Florio, John, 47
- Flynn, Dennis, 303
- Fontana, Lavinia, 354  
*Christ and the Samaritan Woman*,  
 361–363
- Ford, John, 102  
*'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, 111–113
- Forman, Simon, 133, 161
- Foucault, 20–21, 62, 63, 126–127n, 384  
 and pre-modern episteme, 46–47  
 and surveillance, 117, 123  
 and technologies of self, 132  
 “The Subject and Power”, 385
- Foxe, John, 214  
*Acts and Monuments*, 373
- friend  
 as another self, 32
- friendship, 245  
 and chastity, 34  
 cross-sex, 33  
 and heterosexual love, 32–35  
 and love, 103  
 and queer intimacies, 39  
 same-sex, 30, 119
- Freud, 21, 23, 64, 108, 118, 134  
 and displacement, 94  
 and doubling, 59  
 and uncanny, 97–98
- frontier, Anglo-Celtic, 175, 184
- full stop, the, 407
- Fumaroli, Marc, 400
- Fumerton, Patricia, 133
- Galen of Pergamon, 118, 119, 122, 123,  
 124, 125
- Galilei, Galileo, 225, 226, 290, 337, 338, 406
- Gallagher, Catherine, 129n, 133, 237
- Garber, Marjorie, 167
- Garner, Shirley Nelson, 15
- Geertz, Clifford, 133
- gender, 3, 15–25, 30, 346 *see also* feminism  
 and body, 119  
 and dialectic, 19–24  
 disappearance as category, 22–23  
 as discourse, 17–18  
 formation, 23–25, 354–356  
 and heart, 121  
 incoherence, 25  
 and identity, 24  
 and melancholy, 23–24  
 and romance, 244–245
- genre, 235–236, 238, 285–286, 420–422
- Gillies, John, 414
- Girard, René, 90, 91, 99n
- Giusti, Anna Maria, 400
- Gleyzon, François-Xavier, 92, 96, 98
- glossing, 317, 318–319, 320n
- Godwin, Francis, 375
- Goldberg, Jonathan, 95, 253
- Goldwell, Bishop James, 210
- Gordon, Andrew, 192
- Goulart, Simon, 374
- governance, 181–184, 221, 372, 378
- Gower, 241, 316

- Great Conduit, 195  
green awareness, 7, 162–163, 165, 169  
    and Christianity, 163, 167  
Greenblatt, Stephen, 70, 117–20, 132, 133,  
    260, 382–383, 384, 393n  
Greene, Robert, 238  
    *Greene's Groat's-worth of Wit*, 269  
Griffiths, Jane, 8  
Grimeston, Edward, 374  
Guattari, Felix, 8, 194  
Guerlac, Suzanne, 87  
Guibbory, Achsah, 207  
Guicciardini, Francesco, 369, 372, 374  
Guy-Bray, Stephen, 30
- H., I.  
    *This World's Folly*, 195  
Habermas, Jürgen, 58, 80, 220–221,  
    225–226, 267 *see also* public sphere  
    and culture, 229–230  
    and deliberative politics, 227  
    and family, 265–266  
    and feminism, 228  
    and post-secularism, 73–78, 80  
    theory of speech, 81  
    and transcendence, 226  
    and translation, 73–74, 76, 77, 79, 229  
Haeckel, Ernst, 162  
Hall, Bishop Joseph, 212  
Hall, Edward, 253  
    *The Union of the Two Noble and Illustre  
    Families of Lancastre & York*, 371  
handbook, 186  
Hannay, Margaret P., 38  
Haraway, Donna, 399, 404, 407  
    Cyborg Manifesto, 398  
Hardyng, John  
    *Chronicle*, 371  
Harley manuscript, 297, 306  
Harpfield, Nicholas, 374  
Harrison, William, 47, 251, 374, 421, 423  
    *Historical Description of the Island of  
    Britain*, 414  
Harrison, Timothy M., 347–348  
Hart, Bishop Walter, 214  
Harvey, Elizabeth D., 347–348  
Harvey, Gabriel, 327, 338  
Harvey, William, 121  
    *Exercitatio anatomica de motu cordis*,  
    122–123  
Hawkes, David, 148, 150, 151, 152  
Hayward, John  
    *The First Part of the Life and Raigne of  
    King Henry IV*, 375  
Haywood, Eliza, 246  
heart, 121–122, 391, 392  
Hegel, G.W.F., 20, 21, 103  
    and tragedy, 58  
Helgerson, Richard, 420–421, 422  
Heliodorus, 245, 246  
    *Aithiopika*, 241–243  
Henry 2, 48  
Henry 6, 369  
Henry 7, 316  
Henry 8, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 311,  
    316, 354, 357, 368, 369  
Henryson, Robert, 168  
heraldry, 215, 216  
Herbert, Bishop William, 208, 214  
Herbert, George, 124, 326, 390  
    “Denial”, 392  
    and devotion, 385, 390–392  
    “Dulnesse”, 124–125  
    “Jordan (1)” and “Jordan (2)”, 391  
    “Nature”, 391  
    “Prayer (1)”, 392  
    “Sepulchre”, 391  
    “Submission”, 392  
    “The Altar”, 207, 391  
    “The Church-floore”, 207, 217  
    “The Church-porch” 207–208, 215–216  
    *The Country Parson*, 208  
    “The Quiddity”, 392  
    “The Sinner”, 391  
    “The Temper” 392  
    *The Temple*, 390, 391, 392  
    “The Thanksgiving”, 391  
    “The Windows” 207, 217  
Herbert, William, 3rd Earl of Pembroke, 38  
Herodotus, 374  
Herrick, Robert, 207, 208, 217, 319  
    “The Hock-Cart”, 222  
Hertel, Ralph, 415–416  
heteronormativity, 3, 31–32

- and the Child, 35
- and the co-option of the future, 37
- and the co-option of the past, 39
- mechanisms and strategies of, 36–39
- Hezekiah, 125
- hierarchy, 87, 102, 104, 110–111, 388
  - aesthetic, 254
  - and chronicle history, 370
  - and church, 182–183
  - fluidity of, 192
  - and Great Chain of Being, 132, 163
  - and institutions, 167, 179, 222
  - and the nomadic, 194
- Higden, Ranulf
  - Polychronicon*, 370
- Hillman, David, 120, 129n
- Hiltner, Ken, 162
- Historicism *see also* New Historicism
  - and London, 192
  - “old”, 103
  - reinvigoration of, 63, 64
- historiography, 128n–129n, 220, 368–380
  - see also* “The Kings Castle”; past; Raleigh
  - and academia, 377
  - and antiquarianism, 214, 215, 216, 275, 378, 379, 380
  - archipelagic, 175
  - and causation, 372, 375, 377–378, 380
  - and chorography, 411, 412, 417
  - and chronicle tradition, 369, 370
  - diversification of, 376, 380
  - ecclesiastical, 70, 210, 211, 214, 372–373, 379, 387
  - humanist, 370, 371–372
  - ideological, 370, 376, 380
  - popularity of, 9, 369, 372, 373, 380
  - and print technology, 371, 379
  - resources for, 376
  - “scientific”, 369
- history, 160, 216, 217, 377–378
  - of analogy, 288
  - ancient, 374
  - archipelagic, 173, 175, 176
  - and art, 90–91
  - of body, 119, 121, 122, 123
  - of the book, 130, 325, 326, 399
  - and causation, 372
  - economic, 147, 150
  - of emotions, 66, 119
  - and the Fall, 160
  - feminist, 16–19, 62–63, 355
  - genealogical, 46, 132
  - of ideas, 59, 103, 132
  - Islamic, 380
  - Jewish, 380
  - legal, 378–379
  - medical, 124
  - natural, 422
  - politic, 375–376, 377–378, 380
  - of the production of space, 412
  - rage for, 380
  - of reading, 327, 333
  - of science, 170n, 347, 348, 416
  - sexual, 30, 31, 39, 242
  - and structures of power, 129n
- Hobbes, Thomas, 165, 329, 406
  - Leviathan*, 388
- Holinshed, Raphael
  - Chronicles*, 374, 414
- Holland, Philemon, 374
- Hollar, Wenceslaus, 209
- Holquist, Michael, 117
- Hooker, John, 414
- Hooke, Robert
  - Micrographia*, 406–407
- Horace, 1, 254, 317
- Hoskins, John, 284
- Homer
  - Iliad*, 238
  - Odyssey*, 239, 241
- Hopton, Arthur
  - Speculum Topographicum*, 413
- household, 7, 265–276 *see also* body
  - and binaries, 265
  - boundaries of, 270–271
  - and domestic advice manuals, 269
  - fictional, 266–267
  - gendered, 271, 276
  - Green, 163
  - and historical change, 265–266
  - pathology of, 272
  - and patriarchal authority, 266, 268–270, 273–75

- household (*cont'd*)  
 and privacy, 268–270, 271, 272  
 and property holding, 273  
 royal, 252, 353  
 and saturnalia, 272  
 and service, 101–102, 265, 272–276  
 as social space, 265, 267  
 and subjectivity, 266, 269  
 steward in, 275
- Howard, Elizabeth, 316, 317
- Howard, Henry, Earl of Northampton, 378
- Howard, Henry, Earl of Surrey, 254, 319
- Howard, Jean, 193
- Howell, James, 379
- Huet, Pierre-Daniel, 237
- humanism, 18, 111, 136, 222, 371–372  
 and body, 115  
 and chronicle history, 370  
 and *imitatio*, 255, 256, 327  
 liberal, 117, 136  
 and monarch, 251, 255  
 and romance, 238
- humanist, 76, 80, 103, 115, 375, 397  
 commonplacings, 408n  
 copiousness, 416  
 historians, 371–372, 374  
*res literaria*, 221  
 subject, 132–133, 384
- humors, theory of, 46, 64, 66, 116, 118,  
 124, 125  
 and Galen, 119, 122
- Hutson, Lorna, 99n
- Hyde, Edward, Earl of Clarendon,  
 227–228, 369
- Ice Age, Little, 161
- iconoclasm, 197, 206, 207, 209, 356–358  
 and female body, 357
- iconography, 60, 91, 353, 363, 400, 406, 407
- identity, 61–67  
 archipelagic, 6, 175  
 authorial, 36  
 and authority, 118, 382, 384–385  
 and body, 24, 118  
 confessional, 354  
 and culture, 46, 48–49  
 and doubling, 60  
 female, 359, 363, 364  
 and gender, 24–25  
 and household, 265, 267  
 and identification, 23–25, 31  
 and incest, 112  
 instability of, 87–88, 91  
 and metaphor, 9, 283, 291  
 of Nature, 50  
 performative, 8, 363, 364  
 personal, 105, 108  
 public, 80  
 and race, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48–49, 53, 243  
 and Reformation, 413  
 regal, 61  
 regional, 333, 375, 414, 415, 420  
 relational, 57, 66  
 and representation, 90, 96, 98n  
 and service, 105–106, 108  
 sexual, 30, 120  
 and things, 139
- ideology, 18, 22
- Illyricus, Matthias Flacius, 373
- imagination, 66, 228, 241, 244, 284, 289,  
 342, 343, 418, 423
- imbrication  
 of culture, 48  
 of space, 195  
 of time, 140
- incest, 23  
 and endogamy, 106, 111–112
- individual, 57–58, 62, 63, 228–229  
 and Actor-Network Theory, 267  
 and autonomy, 383  
 and body, 118, 125  
 and devotion, 386–388, 392  
 and early-modern period, 57–58  
 and gender, 18, 20  
 and mercantile capitalism, 102  
 and poetry, 254, 260  
 and romance, 236, 239
- Ingold, Tim, 401, 403  
 SPIDER, 398, 399
- Inns of Court, 75
- Inquisition, Spanish, 182, 185
- interiority, 63–64, 66, 217, 266, 355, 357,  
 359, 360, 388 *see also* subjectivity
- interpellation, 17, 393n

- intertextuality, 282, 312  
 Ireland, 7, 43, 48–51, 52, 173–186, 258, 374  
 Irish, the, 43, 48–51, 53, 173–186  
     and Rising of, 1641, 175, 180, 181, 183  
 Iser, Wolfgang, 326, 327  
 Isidore of Seville, 44  
 Islam, 75, 243  
  
 Jager, Eric, 122  
 Jakobson, Roman, 94  
 James I, 10, 176, 185, 249, 376, 378, 421  
     and the Book of Sports, 225  
     poet, 254  
 Jameson, Frederic, 236  
 Jardine, Alice, 21  
 Jewel, John, 373  
 Johnson, Mark, 283  
 Jones, Ann Rosalind, 19, 134  
 Jones, Michael, 173, 177–179, 181, 183  
 Jonson, Ben, 124, 244, 254, 319  
     *Bartholomew Fair*, 119, 126,  
         198–203, 269  
     *Cynthia's Revels*, 271  
     *Epicoene*, 199, 266, 267, 268–272,  
         273, 276  
     manuscript collection of, 300  
     “Ode. To Himself”, 271–272  
     “On the Famous Voyage”, 116  
     *Poetaster*, 270  
     and politic history, 375  
     *Sejanus*, 116–117, 120, 126  
     and Spenser, 239  
     *The Alchemist*, 199, 269  
     *The Masque of Beauty*, 249–251, 252,  
         253, 261  
     *The Masque of Blackness*, 249  
 Joyce, James  
     *Ulysses*, 98  
 Judaism, 71, 73, 74, 380  
  
 Kant, Immanuel, 97  
 Kantorowicz, Ernst, 71, 221–222  
 Kastan, David, 72  
 Keeble, N. H., 175, 184, 185  
 Kelly-Gadol, Joan, 17  
 Kendrick, T.D., 212–15  
 Kent, 411, 417, 418, 422  
  
 Kepler, Johannes, 290–292, 338  
     *Optics*, 290–291  
 Kermode, Frank, 95  
 Keynes, John Maynard, 154  
 kind, 46, 47  
 kingship, 221–222  
 Kierkegaard, Søren, 72  
 Klein, Bernhard, 421  
 Knapp, Jeffrey, 70, 75–76  
 Knight, Jeffrey Todd, 297  
 Knolles, Richard  
     *Generall History of the Turkes*, 376  
 Knox, John, 183  
 Kopytoff, Igor, 133  
 Kristeva, Julia, 21, 96, 98n, 282  
 Kuhn, Thomas, 63, 170n  
  
 Lacan, Jacques, 22, 24, 62, 103  
     graphs of desire, 88–89  
     “real”, 88, 94, 95, 96  
     symptom, 94  
 Lake, Peter, 221, 228  
 Lakoff, George, 283  
 Lambarde, William, 417, 423  
     *A Perambulation of Kent*, 411, 415,  
         418–419, 421, 422, 423  
     *Dictionarium Angliae Topographicum et  
         Historicum*, 414–415  
 Landreth, David, 150–151  
 Lanyer, Amelia, 353, 362, 363, 364  
     *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, 354, 358–361  
 Laplanche, Jean, 24  
 Laqueur, Thomas, 118–119  
 Larkin, Philip, 215  
 Lash, Scott, 166  
 Laslett, Peter, 102  
 Latour, Bruno, 45–47, 137, 346, 405  
     and actor networks, 135–136, 267, 337,  
         398, 399, 401  
     and black-boxing, 400  
     and ecological issues, 166  
     and modern constitution, 46, 165–167  
     and myth of Great Divide, 45, 349  
     and nature-cultures, 45  
     and Parliament of Things, 168  
     and transmission, 137–138  
 Lattou, John, 402

- Laud, William, 207, 217, 225, 226
- Lee, John, 3
- Lefebvre, Henri, 191, 192, 193, 195, 198, 266–267, 412
- Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, 406
- Leinwald, Theodore, 151
- Leland, John, 215, 216, 371, 373, 420
- Leopold, Aldo, 167
- Levinas, Emmanuel, 71
- Levy, Fritz  
*Tudor Historical Thought*, 412
- Lewalski, Barbara, 29, 306
- Lewis, C.S., 15
- libro aperto*, 397, 398, 399, 400–402, 406
- life  
 collective, 221, 224, 225  
 creaturely, 72, 78–80  
 and disease, 123, 125  
 earthly, 45  
 economic, 149, 151, 152  
 family, 107, 265  
 and heart, 121  
 human and non-human, 46, 47, 50, 163, 317  
 imaginary modes of, 29  
 inner, 59  
 intimate, 31, 32  
 and metaphor, 282  
 modern, 165  
 moral, 57, 59, 76  
 and natural selection, 162  
 of the particular, 210, 211  
 private, 267  
 public, 80, 220, 223, 243, 268, 270, 272  
 religious, 71, 73, 74, 75, 389  
 and romance, 239  
 social, 327  
 and space, 191, 192  
 of things, 130, 133  
 and time, 139  
 urban, 198, 200, 268, 272
- linguistics, 62, 63, 95
- Lippi, Filippo, 94
- Lipsius, Justus, 374
- Lister, Matthew, 38
- literature and science, 346–348
- liturgy, 81, 386–388
- Livy, 374
- locus amoenus*, 29, 32–33
- London, early modern, 6, 190–203, 415  
*see also* city  
 “Agas” map of, 203  
 and crowds, 194  
 desacralization of, 197, 198, 200  
 epistemologies of, 192–203  
 and masque, 250  
 as nomadic theater, 198, 202  
 and romance, 238  
 and urban writing, 192
- Loomba, Ania, 44
- Lorenzetti, Ambrogio  
 Annunciation, 92–95, 97
- love, 3, 29–40, 103 *see also* courtly love;  
 service  
 and chastity, 34, 242  
 and crisis, 32–34, 36–39  
 and the future, 36  
 and God, 390, 391  
 and heart, 121–122  
 heterosexual, 31–36, 260  
 and Neoplatonism, 250  
 queer, 33, 38  
 and rejection, 34  
 and reproduction, 32  
 and romance, 236, 237, 238, 244  
 and subjecthood, 36, 260, 261  
 and theological virtues, 79  
 and war, 242
- Love, Harold, 295, 298
- Lovejoy, A.O., 117, 132, 163
- Lovelock, James, 163–164
- Lukac, Georg, 90
- Lund, Mary, 8, 329, 331
- Lupton, Julia, 4, 5, 6, 48, 77
- Luther, Martin, 71, 227
- Lydgate, John, 311, 316
- Lydiat, Thomas, 376
- M., I., 112
- MacDonald, Joyce Green, 30–31
- Machiavelli, Niccolò, 369, 372, 374
- MacIntyre, Alasdair, 59
- Magdalen, Mary, 138, 140

- Maley, Willy, 6–7, 10, 43, 49
- Manley, Lawrence, 192, 197
- Marcellinus, Ammianus, 374
- Marchitello, Howard, 8
- Mardock, James, 199
- margins and marginality, 6, 8, 16, 30, 185, 242, 254, 319, 325, 327, 328, 376  
*see also* glossing
- Maria, Henrietta, 253
- market, 6, 147–157 *see also* criticism,  
 new economic; economy;  
 Nashe  
 and economic history, 147, 150  
 and fame, 152–154  
 and marketplace, 148  
 multiplicity of, 156  
 and obligations, 157
- Marlowe, Christopher, 117, 338  
*Edward The Second*, 126  
 and politic history, 375  
*Tamburlaine The Great*, 118
- Marlowe, Christopher and collaborator  
*Dr. Faustus*, 115
- marriage, 30, 35, 38, 110, 236, 265, 269  
 same-sex, 31
- Marriot, John, 304, 305, 306
- Martin, John Jeffries, 393n
- Martin Marprelate, 230–231
- Marvell, Andrew, 162
- Marx, 6, 20, 21, 62, 63, 101, 129n, 134, 147–148, 151  
*Eighteenth Brumaire*, 56  
 Marxism, 22, 102, 134, 184, 383, 412
- masque, 249–250, 253 *see also*  
 authority  
 absolutist ideology, 249–250, 253  
 circulation of, 253
- Massinger, Philip  
*A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, 275  
*The Renegado*, 243
- Massys, Quentin  
*Portrait of Peter Gillis*, 397
- Masten, Jeffrey, 120
- matter, 3–4, 88, 135, 136, 137, 148, 285, 398  
*see also* things  
 and Donne, 137–141, 349  
 and new materialism, 131  
 and publication, 295, 402
- Matthieu, Pierre, 374
- Mayhew, Robert, 413
- May, Steven, 258, 303
- May, Thomas, 375
- Mazzeo, Joseph A., 117
- Mazzio, Carla, 120, 129n
- McColley, Diane Kelsey, 162, 163
- McDowell, Nick, 175, 184, 185, 186
- McKitterick, David, 297
- McLaren, Margaret, 30
- McLuhan, Marshall, 92
- McRae, Andrew, 421
- men, 17 *see also* gender  
 and desire, 86  
 masterless, 149, 275  
 men's history, 19–20  
 public, 223, 225  
 and race, 47, 48  
 and same-sex desire, 30, 119
- Mendyk, Stan, 420
- Melchoir-Bonnet, Sabine, 363
- Melville, Herman, 72
- metaphor, 9, 95, 281–292 *see also* allegory;  
 book; public sphere  
 and analogy, 281, 290–292  
 and body, 116–117, 121, 124  
 and chorography, 418–419, 422  
 and city, 193  
 and collective life, 221, 227  
 creativity of, 281, 284  
 and difference, 282–283, 290–292, 348  
 and translation, 281–282  
 and woman, 20  
 word-based definition, 284
- method, scientific, 123, 163, 164, 165, 166, 168, 288, 343–344, 346
- metonymy, 92–94, 95, 282
- Meyer-Lee, Robert, 311
- microscope, 406–407
- Middlesex, 415, 416, 421
- Middleton, Thomas, 102  
*A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, 119, 126
- Middleton, Thomas and William Rowley  
*The Changeling*, 6, 101, 108–111



- Miélot, Jean, 401
- Milton, John, 121, 162, 163, 167, 170, 173, 228, 290, 292, 326, 338  
*Areopagitica*, 221–227, 229, 388  
 and Bacon, 224–225  
*Eikonoklastes*, 388  
*History of Britain*, 184, 378  
 imperialism of, 183–185  
 and liturgy, 388  
*Observations upon the Articles of Peace with the Irish Rebels*, 173, 175, 176, 177, 179, 180–184, 185, 186  
*Of Reformation*, 184  
 “On the New Forcers of Conscience under the Long Parliament”, 185  
*Paradise Lost*, 159–160, 164, 169, 183, 185, 223, 326, 338–340, 341, 393  
*The Readie and Easie Way to Esbablish a Free Commonwealth*, 183
- Miracles de Notre Dame*, 401
- misogyny, 88, 106
- Mitchell, W.T.J., 98n
- modernity, 3, 73, 76, 122, 170n  
 and nature, 44  
 and premoderns, 45–46  
 and representation, 97–98  
 and secularization, 74  
 and Shakespeare, 98n  
 and things, 134
- Modino, De<sup>2</sup> Luzzi, 122
- monarchy, 178, 179, 183–184, 185, 186, 227, 358, 368, 378, 379 *see also*  
 Book of Common Prayer; masque  
 and chorography, 420–421
- monasteries, 215, 354, 357, 373, 379, 413
- money *see* cash
- Monmouth, Geoffrey of  
*Historiae Regum Britanniae*, 370
- monstrousness, 3, 89, 96–98, 203, 270
- Montague, Bishop Richard, 210
- More, Anne, 303
- More, George, 303
- More, Henry  
*A Platonick Song of the Soul*, 338
- More, Sir Thomas, 275, 382, 383  
*History of King Richard III*, 371  
*Utopia*, 222
- Morton, Timothy, 96, 97, 136, 137
- Moxon, Joseph  
*Mechanick Exercises on the Whole Art of Printing*, 399, 403–405, 406
- Muir, John, 167
- Mulcaster, Richard, 414
- Muldrew, Craig, 148, 149, 150, 152, 154
- Munday, Anthony, 238
- Munro, Ian, 6
- Murry, John Middleton, 344
- Muslim, 74, 77–78, 248, 380
- Myers, Anne, 6, 208, 213
- mystery cycles, the, 70
- Nashe, Thomas, 152–157  
 multiplicity of voice, 156  
*Pierce Penilesse*, 150, 152–153, 155–156, 157  
*Terrors of the Night*, 147–148, 150, 152, 153–155, 156, 157
- natural world, 7, 47, 53, 159, 160, 162, 163, 164, 165, 407
- natural theology, 167, 168
- nature, 7, 49–53, 64, 74, 80, 140, 159–170, 349 *see also* race  
 and culture, 43–48
- Neill, Michael, 102, 107–108
- New Bibliography, 16
- New Criticism, 235, 337, 342, 344  
 and close reading, 345–346  
 and science, 343  
 and valuation of unity, 344, 345
- New English, the, 43, 48, 52–53
- New historicism, 7, 19–20, 22–23, 103, 117, 132–133, 420–421  
 anecdotal, 133  
 and archipelagic studies, 185  
 and cultural context, 346  
 and devotion, 383  
 and religion, 71, 382, 384  
 and subversion, 21  
 synchronic, 98n
- new materialism, 131, 136
- new science, 168, 288, 342–343, 348
- Newton, Sir Isaac, 337
- New World, 183, 243, 348
- Ni, Zhange, 73

- Nicks, Bishop Richard, 214
- Nicolson, Marjorie Hope  
*The Breaking of the Circle*, 339–340, 341, 342
- Nietzsche, 21
- nomadology, 6, 194, 195, 198, 201, 202, 203
- Norden, John  
*Specvlvm Britanniae. The first parte An  
historicall, & chorographicall  
discription of Middlesex*, 415, 416,  
421, 422
- Norwich, 209–213, 216  
cathedral, 209–214, 216–217
- Nuti, Lucia, 418
- objects *see* things
- Oedipus complex, 23
- Old English, the, 43, 48–53
- Olwig, Kenneth, 418
- Oppenheimer, J. Robert, 340
- Ortelius, Abraham, 375
- Ovid, 315, 317
- Owen, George, of Henllys, 414, 417, 422
- Paleotti, Gabriele, 363
- Paley, William, 167
- Panofsky, Erwin, 92, 94
- paratext, 315, 318, 325 *see also* glossing
- Parker, Archbishop Matthew, 373, 374, 379
- Parker, Patricia, 75–76, 238
- Parkhurst, William, 300
- Parliament, 173, 176–177, 178–179, 183,  
184, 185, 221, 223, 227  
and Book of Common Prayer, 387–389  
and common law, 378–380
- Parry, Blanche  
cenotaph, 353–355
- Parry, Graham, 213
- passions, ontology of, 65–66
- past, 3, 17, 413, 417  
authority of, 369, 371, 372, 380  
and New Historicism, 133  
and present, 9, 31, 37–40, 64, 71, 192,  
224, 368–380  
size of, 377
- Paster, Gail Kern, 64, 119, 124
- pastoral, 29–30, 52, 312, 314  
and same-sex desire, 30, 33, 39
- patriarchy, 7, 18, 20, 30, 222, 266–268,  
272–274, 276, 364
- patronage, 152, 222, 251, 252, 254, 255,  
316, 319, 333, 374, 401, 422
- Patterson, Annabel, 251, 314
- Paz, Octavio, 97
- Pelling, Margaret, 123
- Pembrokeshire, 414
- Perdita Project*, 25n
- personhood, 3, 56–67 *see also* agency;  
choice; individual; self; subjectivity  
corporate, 222  
hegemonic power, 385  
historical development of, 57–58,  
62–63, 67  
humoral, 64–66  
material, 59, 61, 64, 66  
multi-dimensional, 3, 66  
relational, 57, 59, 61, 66  
reflective, 59–60, 61, 63, 66  
self-authored, 56–57  
vocabulary of, 62
- Petrarch, 255, 259, 261, 310, 314, 384
- Petyt, William, 379
- phenomenology, 71, 80
- Phillippy, Patricia, 8
- Picciotto, Joanna, 7, 228
- Pietz, William, 134, 135, 137
- Pinchot, Gifford, 167
- Pincus, Steven, 221, 228
- Pindar, 338, 339
- plantation *see* colonization
- Platter, Thomas, 357
- Plato, 163, 195, 286  
Neoplatonic, 18, 250
- Plautus, 75
- Pliny, 374
- Plotinus, 163
- Plutarch, 269
- Pocock, John, 175, 184
- poetics, 254, 316, 319  
ambient, 96  
godly, 389  
of knowledge, 341, 344
- Protestant, 306
- redemptive, 362
- vernacular, 310

- poetry  
 and court, 251, 254–255, 257, 259–261, 315  
 devotional, 388–392  
 historical, 375  
 and logic, 284  
 as making, 257–258, 282  
 and the post-secular, 81  
 and science, 8, 341–349
- politics, 98n  
 archipelagic, 6, 175, 184  
 chorographic, 8, 420–422  
 and close reading, 345  
 deliberative, 227  
 gender, 15  
 green, 7, 169  
 gay and lesbian, 3, 31, 32, 35, 36, 39  
 and historiography, 9, 375  
 and religion, 74  
 and science, 165  
 and things
- Polybius, 372, 374  
 Pope John XXII, 186  
 Popper, Nicholas, 8–9  
 population, 149, 163 *see also* race  
 of London, 192, 197  
 Porter, Roy, 123, 384  
 Post, Jonathan F.S., 208, 210, 211  
 post-secularism, 74–82  
 power relations, 19–21, 260, 384, 385  
 pre-moderns, 45–46, 165  
 Presbytery, Belfast, 173, 179–180, 181–183, 185  
 prescription, 17–18, 226  
 printing *see also* book  
 and court culture, 251, 252  
 culture of, 220, 221, 297  
 and manuscripts, 295–297  
 physicality of, 403–405  
 and profit, 402  
 and understanding, 408  
 printing house, 399, 406  
 Protestantism, 35, 71–72, 306  
 and intercession, 301–303, 305  
 and interpretation, 386–387, 408n  
 and marriage, 35  
 and “Piers”, 311–312  
 polemic of, 226  
 and Reformation, 224  
 and theatricality, 71–72  
 and visual art, 357–358, 362  
 Prynne, William, 378, 379  
 Psalms, 388  
 Ptolemy, Claudius, 414, 416, 418, 422  
*Geography*, 413  
 publication, 8, 295–307 *see also* printing  
 and newsbook, 220, 231  
 and patrons, 402  
 and public, 223  
 public sphere, 7, 58, 73–76, 78, 220, 221, 226, 228, 230, 267  
 and court, 252  
 and impersonality, 229  
 and individual, 58  
 and intimate publics, 267  
 Milton’s definition, 223–224  
 of print, 252  
 and reason, 226, 229–230  
 and worship, 387  
 public theater, 70, 76, 81  
 as a nomadic theater, 194–195, 198, 201–203  
 as a theater of the incommensurable, 87–91  
 public world *see also* public sphere  
 and discovery, 223  
 and private world, 107, 223, 224, 227, 265, 270, 388  
 and sincerity, 57  
 and worship, 385–387, 388, 400  
 Pulter, 16  
 Puttenham, George, 284, 319  
 and Elizabeth I, 254, 257–258  
*The Art of English Poesy*, 29, 252, 257, 283, 320n  
 queerness, 32, 35 *see also* theory, queer  
 as figure of death, 37  
 and heterosexuality, 37–39  
 Quilligan, Maureen, 133–34  
 race, 43–53, 243, 250  
 Raleigh, Walter  
*History of the World*, 376–377

- Ransom, John Crowe, 342, 343, 344, 346, 347
- Rappaport, Roy, 385
- reader, 16, 97, 372, 379, 399, 407 *see also*  
 book  
 actual, 327–329  
 female, 244, 245  
 and glossing, 317, 318, 319  
 humanist, 370  
 implied, 326–327  
 and manuscript, 137  
 and New Criticism, 343–344  
 relationship with authors, 319, 320n, 324–325, 326–327
- reading, 8, 324–333 *see also*  
 book  
 by authors, 319–320  
 close, 345–346  
 effects of, 329  
 feminine, 360  
 Freudian, 59  
 heterocentric, 31  
 and Latour, 137–138  
 materialist, 96  
 methodologies of study of, 326  
 and misreading, 238  
 and pleasure, 237  
 queer, 32  
 reparative, 35, 37, 39  
 romance, 245  
 strategies for, 333
- realism, 94, 236
- Reformation, 179, 216, 226, 310, 356, 368, 372  
 and churches, 206, 209  
 and controversies, 207, 208  
 and counter-reformation, 225  
 and iconoclasm, 209, 362  
 and identity, 76, 353, 386, 413  
 justification of, 372–375  
*Of Reformation*, 184  
 and reformation of, 224  
 and the Virgin Mary, 303
- Reid, Lindsay Ann, 405
- relics, 137, 139–141
- religion, 4, 8, 70–81, 226 *see also*  
 post-secularism  
 and abjection, 96  
 anthropocentric, 163  
 religious turn, 70–71, 383–384  
 and self, 63, 382–383
- Renaissance *see also* body; chorography;  
 historiography; world picture  
 aesthetics, 91–94  
 anatomical, 115–116  
 and books, 396–397, 399, 407  
 collecting, 408n  
 conception of metaphor, 284  
 desire, 87  
 dynamic culture of, 355  
 episteme, 46  
 logic, 292n  
 mimesis, 3, 87–98  
 self-fashioning, 382–385, 393n  
 and things, 133–137
- representation, 353–364 *see also* cosmetics;  
 desire; epistemology; identity;  
 modernity
- Republic, English, 182–185
- republic of letters, 221, 222–223  
 and commonwealth of learning, 223
- Reynolds, Catherine, 403
- rhetoric, 257, 281, 282, 290, 292n  
 and anatomical sciences, 115  
 of chorography, 415–416  
 and historiography, 369  
 and New Historicism, 133  
 of presence, 319  
 Protestant, 224  
 Renaissance rhetorics, 281–284  
 and revelation, 203  
 of similitude, 9, 281–292  
 and writing, 327
- Rich, Penelope, 38
- Richards, I.A., 117, 343
- Richards, Jennifer, 327, 333
- Richardson, Samuel, 121  
*Pamela*, 236–237
- Ricoeur, Paul, 283
- Righter, Anne, 67
- Risdon, Tristram, 414
- Robinson, Benedict, 7, 243, 244
- Rodman, John, 167
- roles, 17–19, 24, 66, 67, 266, 273, 310

- Romance, 7, 235–246, 287  
 critical distrust of, 235  
 definitions of, 235–239  
 and epic, 238  
 global reach of, 242–243  
 and postcolonialism, 242–244  
 and reading, 245  
 and realism, 236
- Rome, 79, 116, 183–184, 226, 282, 382, 388, 414
- Rosendale, Timothy, 8, 387
- Rowe, Katherine, 121
- Rowse, A.L., 413–414
- royalism and royalists, 184, 185, 217, 227, 378, 379
- Royle, Nicholas, 97
- Rufinus, 126
- Rushworth, John, 379
- Rycaut, Paul  
*Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, 380
- Ryle, Simon, 3, 6, 93, 96
- Sacraments, 141
- Saint Augustine, 285, 383
- Saint Paul's Cathedral, 195, 209, 214, 379
- Sallust, 374
- Sander, Nicholas, 354, 356, 374
- Sandlin, John, 209, 213
- Satan *see* Devil
- Saussure, Ferdinand de, 62
- Sawday, Jonathan, 116–117, 121
- Scarry, Elaine, 118, 125
- Schalkwyk, David, 3, 6
- Schmitt, Carl, 71
- Schoenfeldt, Michael C., 64, 124
- Schreyer, Kurt, 70, 71
- Schurink, Fred, 327, 333
- Schwarz, Kathryn, 24
- science studies, 8, 337–349  
 and Donne, 339, 341–349  
 science as social practice, 346–348
- Scientific Revolution, 122
- Scotland, 7, 173, 177, 179, 180, 183, 185
- Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky, 22, 23, 35
- Seigel, Jerrold, 59–60, 61–62, 63, 66, 67
- Selcer, Daniel, 399, 406
- Selden, John, 378, 379–380
- self, 24, 32, 36, 38, 57, 59, 61, 63–64, 122, 314, 364, 387 *see also* agency; authorship; body; identity; personhood; subjectivity  
 and consciousness, 59–61, 67, 359  
 devotional, 384–392  
 difficulty in definition of, 58–59  
 discovery, 239, 244  
 dramatic grammar of, 65–67  
 fashioning, 17, 59, 95, 117–118, 253, 258, 320, 355, 356, 358, 360, 361, 363, 382–383, 392–393  
 legibility of, 3, 36, 61, 67  
 permeability of, 64–65  
 sovereignty of, 21, 22, 24, 36, 56, 87, 98n, 121, 132, 255, 260, 261, 311, 364, 384, 389, 393n
- Selleck, Nancy, 125
- Seneca, 269, 328
- sentiment, 245
- Serres, Michel, 135, 137, 337  
 and Lucretius, 131
- service, 3, 101–113, 311, 312, 316 *see also* courtly love  
 and authority, 274  
 as curse, 103–104, 108, 111, 272, 275  
 and desire, 108–109, 111  
 and love, 102, 106–107, 111, 112  
 and reciprocity, 103, 104, 107, 108  
 and social world, 101, 102, 104–106, 107, 109, 111, 272
- Shakespeare, William, 3, 5, 10, 70, 124, 163, 164, 167, 284  
*All's Well That Ends Well*, 275  
*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 71, 96, 140, 160–161, 164, 169  
*As You Like It*, 86–87  
*Coriolanus*, 56–57  
*Cymbeline*, 78, 79–80  
*Hamlet*, 57–58, 59–62, 63, 66, 67, 88, 97, 115, 122, 124  
*Henry V*, 45  
*King Lear*, 72, 77, 78, 79, 90, 91–97, 101, 102, 113, 118, 124  
*Macbeth*, 71, 76–77, 78, 86–87  
*Measure for Measure*, 75, 78, 97  
*1 Henry IV*, 64, 65, 66–67, 126, 270

- Othello*, 77, 87–91, 93, 94, 96, 97, 101, 102, 103–104, 108, 112, 113, 243, 244
- Pericles*, 78–79, 81, 241
- and politic history, 375
- and the post-secular, 4, 73–81
- Rape of Lucrece*, 90
- and religion, 71–73
- Romeo and Juliet*, 38, 78
- Shakespeare's Sonnets*, 61, 115
- The Comedy of Errors*, 75–76, 78
- The Merchant of Venice*, 75, 77–78, 120
- The Tempest*, 77
- Titus Andronicus*, 124
- Twelfth Night*, 75, 101, 104–105, 106, 107, 275
- Two Gentlemen of Verona*, 90
- Shapiro, Barbara, 416
- Shell, Alison, 72, 73, 74–75
- Shohet, Lauren, 6
- Shrank, Cathy, 319
- Sidney, Mary
- Tragedy of Antonie*, 38
- Sidney, Mary and Sir Philip Sidney, 388–389
- Psalter, 389
- Sidney, Sir Philip, 38, 168, 254, 284, 319
- Arcadia*, 24
- Astrophil and Stella*, 38
- Old Arcadia*, 238, 242–246
- The Defence of Poesy*, 29, 40n, 320n
- Sidneys, 30
- Signorelli, Luca
- Holy Family*, 400
- sincerity, 57–58
- Singer, Peter, 167
- Skelton, John, 310–311 *see also* authorship
- Collyn Clout*, 311, 312, 313
- A Garlande of Laurell*, 316–318
- and influence on Spenser, 310–319
- laureateship, 318
- A Replycacion*, 311, 314, 315
- Speke Parrot*, 311, 313, 314
- skepticism, 87, 89, 103, 348
- skull, 60–61, 66, 396, 397
- Slights, William, 4, 269, 319
- Smith, Adam, 245
- Smith, Bruce, 22, 120
- Smith, Helen, 9
- Smith, Henry
- A Preparative to Marriage*, 269
- Smith, Matthew, 71
- Solemn League and Covenant, 179
- Sophocles
- Antigone*, 58
- Southwell, Robert, 75
- space, 2, 64, 80, 92, 98, 140, 217, 400 *see also* chorography; church; household; Lefebvre; nomadology; public sphere
- colonial, 243
- court, 251
- and devotion, 8, 74
- epistemologies of, 6, 46, 97, 192–203
- fictional, 61, 240, 241
- homoerotic, 30, 37
- interior, 57, 59, 66, 67, 125
- and modernity, 97
- perspectival, 92–96, 136
- as social production, 66, 79, 80, 191–192, 267, 272, 273, 412
- spatial turn, 8, 412, 422
- striation and smoothing of, 194, 195, 197, 198, 200, 201
- theatrical, 60, 66, 79, 191, 193–195, 198
- and things, 135, 141, 166
- urban, 190–203
- Spelman, Henry, 379
- Spencer, Miles, 211–212
- Spenser, Edmund, 43, 45, 117, 239, 245, 254, 420 *see also* Skelton
- A View of the Present State of Ireland*, 43, 48–49, 51–52
- and Marot, 314
- “Mutability Cantos”, 50–51
- and race, 46, 48, 49–53
- Spenserian stanza, 292n
- The Faerie Queene*, 48, 50, 238, 240–241, 258, 286–288
- The Shepheardes Calendar*, 311–316, 318, 319
- Sprengnether, Madelon, 15
- Staffordshire, 414
- Stallybrass, Peter, 133–134, 402

- Stanihurst, Richard, 374  
 Stanford, Henry, 297  
 State, British, 6, 7, 175, 184, 185, 186  
 Stationers' Company, 295, 296  
 Stengers, Isabelle, 132  
 Stow, John  
     *Annales of England*, 374  
     *A Summarie of Englyshe Chronicles*, 374  
     *Survey of London*, 192, 195, 197–198,  
         200, 203, 214, 375  
 Strier, Richard, 23  
 subjectivity, 2, 63, 66, 97 *see also* agency;  
     cosmetics; court; devotion;  
     household; individual;  
     interiority; monstrosity;  
     personhood; self  
     and abjection, 96  
     female, 357, 364  
     and identification with Christ, 359  
     as ideological product, 384  
     Lacanian, 88–89  
     and liberal humanism, 117, 132, 133  
     and poetic sensibility, 254, 260  
     as point of perspective, 92–94  
     and self-annihilation, 382  
     and self-staging, 66–67  
     and things, 135  
     and tragedy, 58  
 sublime, Kantian, 98  
 submission, 8, 250, 254, 256, 265, 274, 382  
     *see also* devotion  
 Suetonius, 374  
 Swetnam, Joseph, 88  
  
 Tacitus, 126, 374, 375, 377  
 Tate, Allen, 342  
 Taubes, Jacob, 71  
 Taussig, Michael, 134, 135  
 Taylor, Charles, 59, 63–64, 73–74, 76–78,  
     80–81  
 Taylor, John, 405–406  
 Taylor, Thomas  
     *A Glass for Gentlewomen*, 357  
 text, 16, 191 *see also* authorship; book;  
     glossing; intertextuality; *libro*  
     *aperto*; paratext; publication;  
     reading  
     architectural, 215  
     and close reading, 344–346  
     and genre, 236–239  
     and margins, 185  
     and media, 137  
     multivocal nature of, 175  
     sexualizing of, 120  
     and space, 192, 193, 208  
     as thing, 136–138, 140–141  
     uncontrolability of, 251  
     “The Kings Castle”, 368, 369, 370, 372,  
         373–374, 376, 377, 379, 380  
     theory, 1–2, 71 *see also* city; cosmetics;  
         criticism; Cultural Materialism;  
         Deconstruction; feminism; Freud;  
         humors; Lacan; Latour; Marx; New  
         Criticism; New Historicism;  
         nomadology; poetics; self,  
         sovereignty of; space  
     actor-network, 267, 337, 398  
     art, 8  
     biblical, 121  
     body, 119, 123  
     cognitive, 347  
     and competencies, 2, 3  
     feminist, 3, 16–17, 119, 121  
     high, 117, 346  
     post-secular, 73  
     queer, 3, 22–23, 31–32, 119  
         and utopianism, 32, 35, 39  
     reader-response, 326  
     ritual, 385  
     and shared spaces, 4–5  
     and surveillance, 117  
     thing, 130, 133  
     things, 3–4, 8, 61, 130–141, 349  
         and antiquarianism, 213  
         fetishism of, 134  
         and material textualities, 355  
         and objects, 131  
         order of, 126–127n  
         parliament of, 168  
         and self, 64  
         and subjects, 9, 133–134, 165, 166  
         thingliness, 140  
         and time, 135–137  
 Thomas, Keith, 161–162

- Thucydides, 372  
 Tillyard, E.M.W., 132, 163  
 time, 31, 35, 49–50, 74, 95, 166–167, 169, 340, 414  
     polytemporality, 10, 135–137, 139–43, 349  
 tradition, 7, 221–222, 254, 260, 319  
 transgression, 87  
 Traub, Valery, 120  
 travel *see* chorography  
 Trevisan, Sara, 164, 165, 169  
 Trilling, Lionel, 57–58, 59, 63  
 Trull, Mary, 7  
 truth, 78, 168, 223–224, 226, 227, 229  
     *see also* analogy  
     chorographic, 416  
     the culture of fact, 416  
     devotional, 386, 388  
     and government, 227  
     and heart, 121  
     religious, 71, 363  
     scientific, 167, 344, 347  
     and sincerity, 57  
 Turner, Henry, 414  
 Turner, James Grantham, 18  
 Tyacke, Nicholas, 206, 208  
 Tyndale, William, 382, 383  
  
 Ulster, 173, 183, 185  
  
 Valla, Lorenzo, 372  
 Van Dyke,Carolynn, 285–286  
 Van Helmont, Johannes Baptista, 124  
 Veneziano, 92  
 Venice, 78, 191, 198  
 ventriloquism, 24  
 Venus, 30–39  
 Vergil, Polydore  
     *Anglica Historia*, 371  
 Vesalius, Andreas, 115–116, 122  
     *De Humani Corporis Fabrica*, 403  
 Verstegan, Richard  
     *A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence*, 375  
 Villiers, George, Duke of Buckingham,  
     377, 378  
 Vinaver, Eugène, 240  
 Vincent, Augustine, 215  
  
 Vine, Angus, 8, 416, 418  
 Virgil, 52, 238, 312, 314, 317, 318  
     *Aeneid*, 235  
 Viterbo, Annius of, 374  
 von Eschenbach, Wolfram  
     *Parzival*, 243  
  
 Wakelin, Daniel, 401, 403, 405  
 Waldron, Jennifer, 71  
 Wales, 7, 175, 419  
 Wall, Wendy, 20–21  
 Waller, Gary, 17, 251  
 Waller, Marguerite, 21  
 Walsham, Alexandra, 417  
 Walton, Izaak, 390  
 Warburg, Aby, 92, 97  
 Warner, Michael, 267  
 Warton, Thomas, 243  
 Watson, Robert, 162  
 Weber, Samuel, 193, 195  
 Webster, John, 102  
     *The Duchess of Malfi*, 101, 104–108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 118, 275–276  
     *The White Devil*, 115  
 Weever, John, 209, 215, 216  
 Wells, Susan, 107  
 Wentworth, Thomas, Earl of  
     Strafford, 186  
 West Cheap Cross, 195  
 Westcote, Thomas  
     *A View of Devonshire*, 415, 417, 419  
 Wheare, Degory, 377  
 Whitehall, 249–250, 251, 252, 372  
 Whitelocke, Bulstrode, 228  
 Wiesner, Merry, 19  
 Wilkins, George, 238, 241  
 William of Malmesbury, 214  
 Williams, Raymond, 44–45, 46, 65  
 Wilson, Richard, 72, 73, 79  
 Winstanley, Gerrard, 227, 228  
 Wither, George, 319, 419  
 Wittgenstein, Ludwig, 58–59, 61  
 Wolsey, Cardinal Thomas, 311, 313, 314  
 women's movement, 15  
 Wood, Andy, 221  
 Woodbridge, Linda, 15  
 Woolf, Daniel R., 369



- Woolf, Virginia, 132
- world picture, 133, 135
- Anglocentric, 184
  - Elizabethan, 132
  - non-anthropocentric, 136
- Wroth, Lady Mary, 246, 254
- Love's Victory*, 29–40
  - Love's Victory*, irony of title of, 32, 39
  - and William Herbert, 38
- Wroth, Robert, 38
- Wyatt, Sir Thomas, 117, 254, 319
- "Mine own John Poyntz", 254–255
  - "They Flee from Me", 256–257
  - "Whoso list to hunt", 255–256
- Yates, Julian, 3–4, 8
- York, Margaret of
- Les Visions du chevalier Tondal*, 401
- Žižek, Slavoj, 88, 90