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"Old fools are babes again": Shifting Perceptions of Folly and Childishness from Mankind *to Jonson*

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It always strikes me as a tender moment, despite all our forms of better knowledge, when Mischief comforts his three subordinate Vices for the pain inflicted on them by Mankind:

> For with his spade, that was hys wepyn,
> New-G[u]ise, Nowad[ays, and] Nought hath [he] all to-betyn—
> I have grett pité to se them wepyn.
> Will ye list? I here them crye. *Clamant.*
> . . . . . .
> Alasse, alasse, cum hether! I shall be yowr borow.
> Alac[k], alac[k]! *Ven[e], ven[e]!* Cum hethere, with sorowe!
> Pesse, fayer babys! Ye shall have a nappyll—tomorow! (*Mankind*, ll. 421-28)

Of course, I always hear that probable pause before "tomorrow" (recognised in this text by the editor's punctuation) as a sly reminder that devils make poor promise-keepers, while there is crude humour in New-Guise's injured "privité" (l. 429) and something more sinister lurking in the droll remedy that Mischief offers Nowadays: "I shall helpe the[e] of thy peyn: / I shall smitt[e] of[f] thy hede and sett it on again" (ll. 434-35). We are never allowed to forget that the venerable principle of the falling-out among thieves applies to devils, too (if it does not, indeed, originate with them). Still, the baby-talk ("fayer babe, ba me!" [l. 430], "Sely darlinge,

ven[e], ven[e]!" [l. 433]) and the physical action that goes with it foster a sympathetic counterpoint to condemnation, somewhat on the principle that even tarantulas have doting mothers. No doubt more pertinent, though in the register of folly entirely, or almost entirely, shorn of menace, is the picture of a "tender ass" (Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, IV.i.25[1]) charming a susceptible Fairy Queen into dotage that mobilises a moment of domestic intimacy; as her minions rally to her bidding, the exotic thrill of Titania's bower fades, however precariously, into the homely harmony of a mortal household:

> *Titania*. What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love?
> *Bottom*. I have a reasonable good ear in music. Let's have the tongs and the bones. (27-29)

Bottom and Titania are by definition poised, for an instant, between reality and dream, and on the comic margins, but we find more substantial—usually sharper-edged—versions of grotesque tenderness striking a sympathetic chord throughout the representations of folly on the late-medieval and early modern stage, so the phenomenon arguably calls for formal recognition and exploration. The present essay will necessarily settle for a few highly selective, but I believe telling, examples. We are dealing essentially with two closely interrelated notions. The first is that folly draws fools (or figures of foolish evil) together—as, after all, on the *Narrenschiff*: hence the creation of quasi-familial bonds. The second is that it entails a regression from maturity, a reversion to childish behaviour and postures that, however winning in a superficial way, imply a degradation of full humanity. Obviously, such forms of denigration are highly functional morally, according to the usual double didacticism of the period's drama: while the image exposed is more-or-less crassly negative, it can also be seductively amusing, and, especially when it attracts laughter with an undertone of sympathy, even empathy, it implicates the audience in a mirroring effect. The brood of folly expands exponentially in the reflection.

An often-depicted iconographical joke embeds and abets this process: the representation of two fools (or "loggerheads" or asses) with the caption expressed or implied of "We Three", sometimes with a mirror held up to the spectator. The device was accessible enough for Feste to use it as an introduction to the fraternity, to which he lends his own acknowledged folly, comprising Toby Belch and Andrew Aguecheek: "How now, my hearts? Did you never see

1 Shakespeare's works are cited from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, ed. Evans, Tobin *et al*.

the picture of 'we three'" (Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, II.iii.16-17).[2] The virtual anti-masque of their antics, which of course enfold further participants, illustrates the formation by contagion of an inverted mirror-image of a decorous household—Folly's family indeed, which will receive chastisement, even if the titular head of that family retains his liberty. He remains free, if not quite to spread his quality throughout the world, at least to catalyse its collective manifestations, to pinpoint its component households. So Feste insinuates to Cesario-Viola:

> Foolery, sir, does walk about the orb like the sun, it shines every where. I would be sorry, sir, but the fool should be as oft with your master as with my mistress. I think I saw your wisdom there. (III.i.38-41)

The convoking of fools is neatly epitomised in the stage-action probably cued by Jaques' song in *As You Like It*, with the difference that the would-be conjurer who occupies the very centre of the circle, like the spectator in "We Three", does not appear to count himself within it (being woefully ignorant of Derrida's post-structuralist critique of such foolish illusion):

> If it do come to pass
> That any man turn ass,
> Leaving his wealth and ease
> A stubborn will to please,
> Ducdame, ducdame, ducdame!
> Here shall he see
> Gross fools as he,
> And if he will come to me.
> *Amiens.* What's that "ducdame"?
> *Jaques.* 'Tis a Greek invocation to call fools into a circle. (Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, II.v.50-60)

(By the way, has it been proposed—almost certainly, but I have not seen the suggestion—that the elusive "ducdame", however extravagantly Hellenistic, or Welshified, its pronunciation, would in any case have echoed with "dukedom"? Jaques will desert the Duke, after all, when the latter recovers his.)

Mirrors make their way on stage in connection with foolish ways beginning at least as early as John Redford's *Wit and Science* (1530-48), a play which also identifies the protagonist's eventual attainment of maturity with his incorpora-

2 Still useful is the gloss on II.iii.20 by Furness in the New Variorum ed. (p. 17). The famous image entitled "We Three Loggerheads" (held by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust) is available online at <http://artuk.org/discover/artworks/we-three-loggerheads-54233#> (accessed 25 May 2016).

tion into a proper well-regulated family. Before this, his alienation is marked by his acquisition of a most improper one, as he becomes the likeness and virtual brother of Ignorance, foster-child of Idleness. Such are the relations implicitly put in place as Idleness drives off Honest Recreation from the sleeping (and snoring) Wit, puts her "marke" (l. 432) on him by blackening his face, and whistles the fool Ingnorance onstage (against his mother's will) for his naming lesson. The latter episode, beneath its surface of mere farce, focuses the key question of identity. Idleness marks both characters linguistically as her symbolic offspring, asking one, "How, Wit, awake! How doth my babey?" (l. 427), and introducing the other as "my boye" (l. 440). Having won Ingnorance's assent to the question, "Is he not a foole as well as thow?" (l. 581), Idleness proceeds to the exchanging of their coats—"won[e] foole keepe another! / Geve me this, and take thow that brother" (ll. 582-83)—then to the thorough conjuring of her "deere … unto a starke foole" (ll. 586, 591), so that he appears to Experience as "Ingnorance, or his likeness" (l. 719). Wit's degradation thus entails forms of familiarisation by association, and by the point where the glass of Reason reflects that likeness to him, rather than the image of his true portrait, the stage business evokes the established pattern of two fools in search of a third. This is what gives an ironic edge to his dissociation of his degraded features from those of the spectators, as they are invited to contemplate at once their own no-doubt laughing faces and their presumably superior moral position:

> How looke ther facis heere rownd abowte?
> [*He holds the mirror up to the audience.*]
> All faire and cleere, they, ev'rychone;
> And I, by the mas, a foole alone—
> Deck't, by Goges bones, like a very asse!
> Ingnorance' cote, hoode, eares—ye[a], by the masse! (ll. 808-12)

Redford's use of the mirror-device here suggests that the presence of spectators to supply a missing third term to the staging of "We Two" may be a standard part of the joke when fools are drawn together in the early modern theatre, as they often are. In *Clyomon and Clamydes* (*c.* 1570), two cowards, the Vice Subtle Shift (disguised as Knowledge) and Bryan sans foy (an enchanter), make common cause; Shift takes the audience into his confidence, speaking of Bryan:

> Gogs bloud was euer seene such a iolt-headed villaine as he,
> To be so afraid of such a faint-hart knaue as I am to see?
> Of the fraternitie, quoth you? birlady its a notable brood. (627-29)

But such confidence hardly carries very far, given its source: the complicity of Vice-figures with the audience is always double-edged, and the dangerous outward edge tends to prevail when the proliferation of vices is evoked. For where does it stop? The assurance that the degraded and the ridiculous are isolated on stage is contradicted by the evidence that they spawn a "notable brood".

There is little, if any, tenderness in all this, given the minimal emotional stakes attached to clowns and allegorical types, although Redford's have their deeper moments. In any case, similar mechanisms produce very different effects in, say, *King Lear*, where they tend to be under-recognised by criticism, despite the play's insistent reshuffling of the players along familial lines. To begin with the formal embodiment of folly, the Fool's initial position in the royal household presumes the sort of oblique and precarious integration, but integration nonetheless, that is suggested by the well-known portrait of Henry VIII's family including Will Somers. The oblique position of the Fool in *King Lear* is figured onstage by his introduction after that household has begun the first of several successive and futile attempts to forestall its disintegration, and by his particular link with the key member of the family as it was:

> *Lear*. … But where's my Fool? I have not seen him this two days.
> *Knight*. Since my young lady's going into France, sir, the Fool hath much pin'd away.
> *Lear*. No more of that, I have noted it well. (I.iv.71-75)

From my point of view here, which I hope may enable us to hear some very well-known speeches with new ears, the subsequent functioning of the Fool gains force from both the tradition of folly's familiarisation—insistently recalled by the epithets of "boy" and "nuncle"—and from a succession of mirror-games. Fundamental to the dynamic are the Fool's notorious demonstrations of Lear's (self)-degradation to his own childish level, following his inversion of the family hierarchy; the inevitable starting point is the proliferation of the "brood", already signalled by the Fool's complaint that "great men" and "ladies" (I.iv.152, 154) are giving him competition:

"Fools had ne'er less grace in a year,
For wise men are grown foppish,
And know not how their wits to wear,
Their manners are so apish."
Lear. When were you wont to be so full of songs, sirrah?
Fool. I have used it, nuncle, e'er since thou mad'st thy daughters thy mothers. For when thou gav'st them the rod and put'st down thine own breeches,
[*Sings*.] "Then they for sudden joy did weep,
And I for sorrow sung,
That such a king should play bo-peep
And go the fools among." (166-78)

This makes a resounding follow-up to Goneril's self-interested affirmation that "Old fools are babes again, and must be us'd / With checks as flatteries, when they are seen abus'd" (I.iii.19-20).

As for the "We Three" effect, it is all but explicitly put in place by the stage business by which the Fool—talking down to Lear as "my boy" (I.iv.137)—shows him the "difference between a bitter fool and a sweet one" (137-38):

That lord that counsell'd thee
To give away thy land,
Come place him here by me,
Do thou for him stand.
The sweet and bitter fool
Will presently appear:
The one in motley here,
The other found out there. (140-47)

The next scene serves to complete the tableau by making it dynamic. After a reminder of the essential structure of the spectacle ("thou wouldst make a good Fool" [I.v.38]), the Fool draws in the audience through direct address: "She that's a maid now, and laughs at my departure, / Shall not be a maid long, unless things be cut shorter" (51-52). The obvious obscenity targeting the silly young girls who are amused by his antics arguably carries universal admonitory weight, for spectators are likely, I suspect, to have registered a resonance with the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins (Matt. 25: 1-13)—another case of associative extension. Shortly afterwards, the Fool gives the striking image of Kent in the stocks, which makes of Lear an outraged spectator, concluding his lesson on the fidelity of fools, as opposed to knaves, with a backhanded compliment associating the king's two loyal followers:

Kent. Where learnt you this, Fool?
Fool. Not i' th' stocks, fool. (II.iv.86-87)

Thereafter, the tableaux representing fools multiply and compound—with the addition of Poor Tom, with Lear's arraignment of Goneril and Regan before the Fool as judge, and with the pathetic spectacle, interpellating Edgar as witness, of the key figures of blind and mad folly reunited. The cumulative effect is to tip the balance of sympathy decisively in favour of associative folly, not just inverting the moral paradigm inherited from the earlier drama, but actually causing the most profound, because ambivalent, tragedy to emerge from it. For it is arguably the perception of this inversion that guarantees the impact of the widely perceived paradigm of Christian folly, redemptive suffering, but that also keeps the latter from being the whole story.

The inversion is the more apparent because it is counterpointed by the degrading association formed among the play's worldly wise characters—Goneril and Regan, plus, of course, Edmund. They may finally fulfil the Fool's prediction about "knaves" in a way that illustrates a "falling out among thieves". But before arriving at that self-destructive destination, they are drawn together through forms of behaviour associated with vice and folly, though in subtly psychologised ways that at least sporadically attract the spectator's comprehension verging on sympathy. Edmund's pitiless plotting in itself is redolent of Vice-figures, as has been much discussed, but less often noted is the pitiful folly of his enterprise, especially as it entails a childish and futile plea, beyond what he is willing to acknowledge, for the affectionate recognition of his father; his self-wounding becomes emblematic in this regard: "Look, sir, I bleed" (II.i.40). A similar dimension lurks in the ambivalent and unstable alliance of Goneril and Regan, conditioned and catalysed as it is by their father's preference for Cordelia: "He always lov'd our sister most" (I.ii.290). It is the latter who, having been the onstage spectator of the childish jealousy enacted in their love-speaking—a spectacle then sealed by their rebukes of her disobedience—refuses to be drawn into the foolish tableau of "We Three":

I know you what you are,
And like a sister am most loath to call
Your faults as they are named. (269-71)

But it is above all the enactment of their emotional frustrations and jealousies through sexual entanglement that divorces Edmund, Goneril and

Regan from their respective families and forms them into a parodic one, which implodes. The sisters' epitaph, as delivered by Edmond, pushes as far towards pathos as possible folly's capacity for self-delusion:

> Yet Edmund was belov'd!
> The one the other poison'd for my sake,
> And after slew herself. (V.iii.240-42)

The effect is the more striking because he now associates his being, and non-being, with them—"all three now marry in an instant" (229)—whereas he had prided himself on remaining aloof as a mere spectator, gazing down at two fools for love:

> To both these sisters I have sworn my love;
> Each jealous of the other, as the stung
> Are of the adder. Which of them shall I take?
> Both? one? or neither? (IV.vii.55-58)

In fact, it is apparent that Goneril and Regan have become the key to his legitimacy, willy-nilly, and as more than the new-made Earl of Gloucester ("Yet Edmund was belov'd !"). As for the sisters themselves, the wilful degradation of their lofty rank and precious dignity that they incur in quarrelling like schoolgirls over a flashy young man virtually turns Goneril's words back on both of them: it now appears that "old babes are fools again".

It would be possible to extend this survey of associative folly to numerous later texts that flaunt their roots in medieval dramatic tradition. On the tragic side, *The Changeling*, by Thomas Middleton and William Rowley, comes most immediately, and insistently, to mind, with its concluding (de)formation of an infernal family, Beatrice and DeFlores, to which Vermandero admits belonging—"We are all [in hell], it circumscribes here" (V.iii.164)—but from which Alsemero distances himself in terms that purport, more or less convincingly, to recreate a proper one: "Sir, you have yet a son's duty living, / Please you, accept it" (216-17). In the Jacobean and Caroline drama, in fact, it seems to be tragedy and tragicomedy that take most readily to exploiting the potential of this set of devices to combine, as in the early drama, ironic humour with deadly spiritual menace.

By contrast, I would like to close this cursory survey with an afterword underscoring the primordial importance in Ben Jonson's comedies of folly as a

quasi-familial and childish affair. Without such precedents in precursor dramaturgy, which his active moral professions regularly throw into meta-dramatic relief, Jonson would not have been able to count on audiences to read the theatrical shorthand behind his complex and shifting patterns of gulls, gullers and gullers gulled. From the opening fart (threatened or delivered) with which *The Alchemist* introduces the "venture tripartite" (I.1.135)—for Doll makes an apt *common* denominator even as she appeals for peace in their "republic" (110)—to the serious funny business of Volpone's multiply deformed household (which purports to have its complement of three without him), to the noisiness plaguing Morose in *Epicoene* and the piggishness pervading *Bartholomew Fair*, both denizens and outsiders—all these gambits (and more) evoke the infantile. In turn, they form part, if not the core, of the raw material that fuels the quasi-familial formation, deformation and reformation constituting the essential mechanisms of the comic action.

That action, in several Jonsonian cases, may be visualised as a ripple effect, spreading folly outward through a series of concentric circles (or, as the French perhaps better expresses it, *con-centriques*). Its ultimate destination, is, of course, the audience, implicitly or explicitly— the latter notably in *The Alchemist*, where the ill-gotten gains are to be shared out (if the audience is gullible enough to be drawn into the illusion). By such means, the foolish community expands exponentially, indeed infinitely, as Ecclesiastes (I: 15) would have it, not to mention Erasmus's *stultitia*. So much is hardly news. But the effect gains impact from what is arguably a technical innovation on Jonson's part: his creation, through dynamic character groupings, degroupings and regroupings, of a meta-allegorical mise-en-abyme, a triangular structure comprising the very principles of gulling, of being gulled and of observing both with censorious, amused and self-deluding detachment. Characters define that structure by coming and going, changing places, gaining and losing within it. The result amounts to the tableau of "We Three" writ large, and with the spectator "always already" inscribed within its changefulness, complicit despite himself. For Jonson, unlike Jaques, and probably through more truly melancholic spectacles, had obviously read his Derrida.

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Laughter and Sin: Vice Families in Tudor Interludes

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From New Guise, Nowadays and Nought in the late fifteenth-century *Mankind*, to Falset, Flattery and Dissait in David Lyndsay's *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* (1552-54); from John Skelton's quartet of courtly vices in *Magnyfycence* (*c.* 1515) to Temerity, Inconsideration and Precipitation in William Wager's *Enough Is as Good as a Feast* (*c.* 1565), interludes are full of gangs of comic vices. Vices, like the fools with whom they are often associated, seem to thrive in groups. The dramatisation of the group and the inter-relations within it often forms a deliberate and significant element of their theatrical presence, with the close bonds between them, whether co-operative or fractious, often key to their dramatic roles and performed personae. The vice-family is sometimes biological, drawing on notions of kinship and portraying the vices as brothers, parents and children; but at least as often it appears to be conceived in terms of the household, the central familial and social unit of medieval and Tudor times. Whatever the basis of the group, Ill Report's effusion to Voluptuousness and Sensuality in Thomas Garter's interlude of *Virtuous and Godly Susanna* (1578) is typical of the way that playwrights emphasise the close, if often quarrelsome, familial ties between its members:

> Thou louest me, and thou louest me, and I loue thee, and I loue thee,
> And is not Ill Reporte, Voluptuousnesse, and Sensualitie,
> A glorious and blessed trinitie, a pestelence on you both. (sig. Ci^{v})

The plays seem almost as familiar with the trope of a "vice-family" as they are with the ambivalently theatrical individual figure of the Vice himself.

A range of different impulses and traditions seems to feed into what became this stage motif of the vice-family. It is very likely, for example, to have some relation to earlier medieval schematic representations of sins, like virtues, as related to each other. Branches of sin were often represented in family trees, asserting direct kinship, while various of the schema of the Seven Deadly Sins also suggest that vices are inherently familially linked.[1] As Chaucer's Parson explains of the Seven Deadly Sins,

> Alle they renne in o lees [leash], but in diverse manneres. … [T]hey been chief and sprynge of alle othere synnes. … [O]f this roote spryngen certain braunches. … And everych of thise chief synnes hath his braunches and his twigges. (ll. 386-89)

The family tree model asserts the inevitable indivisibility of sin. Each leads to another, generates and is generated by the others, assaulting in their multiplicity the coherence of the human soul and the individual's ethical identity.

This kind of diagrammatic understanding certainly involves a strong theoretical notion of family via the family tree: a sense of kinship and connection, of cause and derivation; but it cannot account for the lively and comically abusive human intimacy that generally characterises the stage presence of the groups of dramatic vices. This is more likely to be related to popular traditions around the influential topos of the Ship of Fools, which present companies of festive sinners in riotous and disordered companionship.[2] While similarly schematising and categorising relationships between different branches of foolish

1 For images of family trees of vices, see, e.g., the twelfth-century *Liber Floridus* of Lambertus a S. Audomaro, Ghent University Library MS 1121, fols. 231^{v}-32^{r}: <http://adore.ugent.be/OpenURL/app?type=carousel&id=archive.ugent.be:018970A2-B1E8-11DF-A2E0-A70579F64438> (image 241); and *Speculum theologiae*, Beinecke MS 416, fol. 4^{r}: <http://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3432531?image_id=1063685> (both accessed 9 May 2016). For further representations, see Bloomfield.

2 For an illustration of this topos, see Hieronymus Bosch's late fifteenth-century painting *The Ship of Fools* in the Louvre, Paris: <http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/ship-fools-or-satire-debauched-revelers> (accessed 9 May 2016).

vice, the Ship tradition sets out to represent readers and viewers to themselves in more entertainingly direct and representational, even dramatic, mode. Alexander Barclay, the English translator of Sebastian Brant's original *Narrenschiff*, foreshadows Hamlet's advice to the players in pointing out:

> This our Booke representeth vnto the eyes of the Readers the states and conditions of men, so that euery man may behold within the same the course of his life and his misgouerned maners, as he shoulde beholde the shadowe of the figure of his visage within a bright Myrrour. (Brant, sig. ¶¶ v^{r})

The interludes' characterisation of the vices as authentically colloquial, squabbling and comic family groups makes theatrical play of these various traditions. While serious theoretical ideas of inter-related sins underlie the structure of many of the plays, the dramatisation of these ideas tends towards comically recognisable families of Folly. The laughable vices of the interlude stage are as likely to present the follies that tempt to sin as the sins themselves, even though they often convey a sense that there are strong connections between slight follies and serious sins. New Guise, Nowadays and Nought are agents of Mischief and ultimately despair; Wantonnes, Placebo and Solace lead to Falset, Flatterie and Dissait.

The intimate family nature of the vice-groups is plainly connected to the patterns of ideas and the various ethical, political or spiritual allegories the interludes present. The quartet of courtly vices in Skelton's *Magnyfycence*, for example, dramatise not only the complex range of interconnecting political dangers that may covertly abuse a ruler—deceptive countenance, secret collusion and furtive fraud—but also the confusing environment of the court, in which true qualities are constantly concealed and deceptions hard to penetrate. In the anonymous *Interlude of Youth* (*c.* 1532) the three vices' close association with each other charts the developing psychological and ethical progression of the youthful protagonist from careless Riot, to self-centred Pride, to irresistible Lechery, enacting the particular vulnerabilities of the young man. Idleness and Incontinence in William Wager's *The Longer Thou Livest* (1569) debate over whether they are parent and child, or equal companions, as they examine the relationship of their qualities (sig. Cii^{r}).

Subtler cues to recognising ideas of moral and spiritual inter-relationship can be seen in the repeated swearing by the Trinity that accompanies meetings of vice-families. Like Ill Report in *Virtuous and Godly Susanna*, quoted above, vice-

groups in the *Thrie Estaitis*, *Enough Is as Good as a Feast*, and *The Tide Tarrieth No Man* all invoke or allude to the Trinity as they define their association, signalling an unholy alliance in reflective opposition to divinity. George Wapull's *The Tide Tarrieth No Man* (1576) provides a gloss on this characteristic oath. Hurting Help declares to his colleagues Painted Profit and Fained Furtherance: "Nay syrs you two shall not go alone, / For I doe meane to beare you company, / And so shall we be euen a whole trinity" (sigs. Bi^{v}-Bii^{r}). This is then picked up in a jesting tale by the Vice, Courage, who compares the vices' trinity to "the trinity of late" that appeared in a farcical story of domestic violence, concluding:

> … in fyne, these three began to agree,
> And knit them selues up in one trinity.
> And after they loued like brother and brother,
> For very loue, they did kill one another. (sig. Bii^{r})

Courage's playful nonsense obliquely reinforces the spiritual implications of the casual allusion, suggesting that sharp spectators may well have recognised the parodic intent of the other vice-family Trinity references.[3] In this paper, however, I would like to concentrate not so much on this kind of play of ideas as on the theatrical and performance use made of the vices' family relationships. The comic vice-groups have a particular stage-presence, which generates laughter in particular ways. By exploring their theatrical strategies, we may be able to understand something more about the purpose of this laughter: whether it operates as an end in itself, designed purely to hold the spectators' pleasurable attention, or works to shape the audience's understanding of some moral purpose. If it does contribute to the meanings audiences take from the plays, can we establish how this effect is achieved?

The foolish vice-groups are often explicit about their family relationships, whether within their own group, between themselves and the Vice (who is generally both one of and yet apart from the rest of the group he dominates), or even with the Devil himself. The forging together of a close association between them is often a part of the vices' first appearance, establishing them for the audi-

3 See, e.g., Lyndsay, *Thrie Estaitis,* ll. 639-40, cited below, and William Wager, *Enough Is as Good* (the Vice Covetous to Temerity, Inconsideration and Precipitation): "I reioice to see you, I swere by the Trinitie" (sig. Biii^{r}).

ence at first encounter as intimately connected. So in *Magnyfycence*, Counterfeit Countenance asks Crafty Conveyance and Fansy:

> *Counterfet C.* Why, shall we dwell togyder all thre?
> *Crafty Con.* Why, man, it were too great a wonder
> That we thre galauntes sholde be longe asunder.
> *Counterfet C.* For Cockys harte, gyve me thy hande! (Skelton, ll. 509-12)

Similarly, when Falset, Flatterie and Dissait enter in the *Thrie Estaitis,* they assert their close friendship:

> *Flatterie.* Quhy, Falset, brother, knawis thou not me?
> Am I nocht thy brother, Flattrie?
> *Falset.* Now welcome, be the Trinitie:
> This meitting cums for gude.
> Now let me bresse the in my armis:
> Quhen freinds meits, harts warmis. (Lyndsay, ll. 637-42)

Only then is this followed by a more formal moral statement of their association:

> *Dissait.* I pray yow as my brother,
> That we ilk ane be trew to uther.
> I mak ane vow with all my hart,
> In gude and evill to tak your part. (ll. 702-5)

One striking feature of these introductory scenes is that they script an action of physical engagement between the vices, as well as verbal exchange. "Gyve me thy hande", "let me bresse the in my armis" present tacit stage directions that are echoed in almost all the first encounters of vice-groups: "Geue me your handes also I pray you one by one" (Infidelity in Lewis Wager, *The Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene*, sig. Biii^{r}); "*And shake handes.* Then geue me thy hand if thou be content. / Now are we friendes, as at first we were" (Courage in Wapull, *Tide*, sig. Aiv^{v}). Visible staging of tactile togetherness by embracing or clasping hands reinforces, or even outweighs, the theatrical effect of the dialogue. A similar effect of co-operative unity may be staged through the songs in which the groups of vices often join. In the anonymous *Godly Quene Hester* (written *c.* 1527), *Respublica* (1554), Lewis Wager's *Marie Magdalene* (1566), *The Trial of Treasure* (1567), William Wager's *The Longer Thou Livest* (1569), Ulpian Fulwell's *Like Will to Like* (1568), and Wapull's *The Tide Tarrieth No Man* (1576), the groups of vices all cement

their association by singing together. Sometimes their songs are invented, relating directly to their characters or actions, sometimes pre-existing popular compositions; but at least as important as the words they sing is the effect of joining in harmony or unison, in part-songs or burdens, which perform theatrically, rather than merely verbally, their interaction and common purposes.[4] It seems that the vices are meant to be understood in groups rather than individually.

The Vice himself often, though not always, joins in these embraces and songs, and the relationship between him and the rest of the vice-group is similarly very often couched in directly familial terms: in *Respublica* (often attributed to Nicholas Udall) the Vice, Avarice, is addressed as the "Fownder and chief maister" (l. 173) of the other three vices. This firmly ensconces him as the head of household, the social rather than biological family leader who, as Caxton records in *The Book callid Caton* (1481), "oughtest to haue the cure and the gouernement of thy famylle or seruauntes / For thou arte called fader of thy seruaunte" (sig. Avii^{v}). In *Mankind*, Mischief speaks to the vices as his "fayer babys" (l. 427), setting up a more intimate family relationship. The Devil, when he appears in the later interludes, often presents himself as the father of the Vice, as in R. Wever's *Lusty Juventus* (*c.* 1550) ("I am thyne owne father Sathan" [sig. Biii^{r}]), sometimes even, as in *Virtuous and Godly Susanna*, being disrespectfully addressed and referred to as "Dad" (e.g., at sig. Aiii^{r}).

Establishing these family groups immediately sets up an intimate interconnection between the qualities they represent, physically and visually making the moral point about the indivisibility of sinful folly. But equally interesting is the way the groups are subsequently developed in performance: the theatrical presence and characterisation of the group will inevitably work to shape audience attitudes to these vices and the roles they occupy in their plays. There was, of course, an embedded and long-standing tradition of presenting vice characters in late medieval and Tudor drama as comic, and the interludes often use the notion of the family to make a particular contribution to provoking that laughter. Closely interacting groups can easily become the foundation for a variety of comic routines: physical tropes, wordplay and sparring interaction. But some interludes play explicitly on the intimate relationships and colloquial language of domestic family life, and especially of childhood, to prompt audience laughter.

4 See Happé, *Song*.

We find a number of plays in which the vices behave, or are parodically treated, as infants or children for comic effect. This can easily arise as a form of regression within a family unit, and has the effect not only of reinforcing the close bonds between the characters, but of satirically infantilising the potentially threatening adult vices. Presenting adults as children (and vice-versa) is an enduring source of laughter which may have no explicit moral or political intent. But it remains a familiar satirical technique still evident in, for example, political cartoons which reduce the powerful to helpless babies in order to undermine their status and diminish the threat that they pose. This seems to be the effect when Mischief, in *Mankind*, pets New Guise, Nowadays and Nought after their initial defeat by the protagonist, re-casting the aggressive vices as big babies:

> Alac, alac! Ven, ven! Cum hethere wyth sorowe!
> Pesse fayer babys, ye shall have a nappyll to-morow!
> Why grete ye so, why? (ll. 426-28)

The wailing vices are comically diminished in the spectators' view; but the consequent underplaying of the threat they present encourages the audience to dismiss the seriousness of their attack, luring the spectators, like Mankind himself, into a false sense of moral security.

In *Virtuous and Godly Susanna*, Ill Report reverses this process; as the hideous Satan speaks to his son with grotesquely paradoxical tenderness, the Vice insults him by turning him into an ineffectual father while casting himself as a naughty child:

> *Deuill.* O louing Boy, and dayntie Chylde,
> As euer thou didst me good,
> Let me now craue thy good aduyce …
> *Ill Report.* How say you now my maysters all,
> Thinke you my Dads not light …
> You neuer saw such a one behynde,
> As my Dad is before.
> But Dad what would you haue me to doe herein. (Garter, sig. Aiii^{r})

"Dad" at this time was a word specifically associated with infants, often identified as one of the first words a child will speak. Thomas Elyot's 1542 dictionary *Bibliotheca Eliotae* defines *Papas* as "a father, as chylderne do call dadde" (s.v. "*Papas*"), while Robert Greene's pastoral romance *Pandosto* (1588) describes the upbringing

of the abandoned infant Fawnia in these terms: "The shepheard euery night at his comming home, would sing and daunce it on his knee, and prattle, that in a short time it began to speake and call him Dad" (sig. Di^{r}). In infants the term is characterised as endearing, as shown in Thomas Wilson's example of a rhetorical persuasion to parenthood in *The Arte of Rhetorique* (1553): "you shall haue a pretie litle boye, runnyng vp and doune youre house … suche a one as shall call you dad, with his swete lispyng words" (fol. 31^{r}). But when the term is used between a father and adult offspring it is clearly understood as diminishing to the status of the parent, dismissing him as foolishly weak or fond. So in *Kind-harts Dream*, Henry Chettle describes the indulgent father of riotous young men: "While they are in the ruffe of ribaudrie … the olde ale-knight their dad breakes out into admiration" (sig. Cii^{r}). Ill Report's words implicitly present himself as such an arrogantly uncontrolled son, the Devil as a foolishly doting father.[5] In these kinds of exchanges, the use of vernacular baby-talk caricatures and diminishes all the vices, making them less overtly threatening, if in fact more insidious.

Such infantile terms, however ironically used, draw on the affectionate intimacy of early family experience. Alternatively, many interludes use the bickering and squabbling of domestic family life to mock the closeness of the bonds between the vices. Having made family bonds, the vice-groups then frequently fall out with each other, insult, mock and attack each other for little obvious reason. These moments, too, are crafted to allude to childish interaction. In *Magnyfycence*, Crafty Conveyance and Cloked Collusion fall into a brawling squabble at the very moment of their success:

> *Cloked Coll.* By the Messe, I shall cleve thy heed to the waste.
> *Crafty Con.* Ye[a], wylte thou clenly cleve me in the clyfte with thy nose?
> *Cloked Coll.* I shall thrust in the[e] my dagger.
> *Crafty Coll.* Thorowe the legge in to the hose.
> *Cloked Coll.* Nay, horson, here is my glove; take it up an thou dare.
> *Crafty Con.* Torde! Thou arte good to be a man of warre! (Skelton, ll. 2173-77)

Avarice in *Respublica* similarly goads on his childishly squabbling vices:

5 These connotations clearly continue to be familiar in later drama with Feste's disrespectful reference to the Devil: "Pare your nails, dad" (Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, IV.ii.103); or the bastard Spurio's flippant response to his father's gruesome death in Middleton's *The Revenger's Tragedy*: "Old dad dead?" (V.i.116).

Avar. I wolde have a bone here rather then a grote
to make thes Snarling curres gnawe owte eache others throte. (ll. 311-12)

Supposed group loyalty is turned upside-down, but in ways that persuasively echo the recognisable and familiar underside of quarrelling siblings. These encounters suggest that both the initial bonding and the subsequent falling-out of the vice-groups are expressed primarily through tactile and physical gesture, through hugging and fighting, rather than through discussion or debate.

All these strategies allow the idea of family to be used to provoke laughter, without explicitly addressing the moral ills or the individual characters of vices. A play's allegory may well define these characters as dangerous, but we are encouraged to laugh at them in ways that diminish and infantilise them by drawing on familiar experiences of family and of childishness, setting us in a place of imagined safety. This kind of laughter seems initially innocent; in the first moment of the joke, we are not forced to think about what the vices mean, or invited to reject the ethical qualities they represent. But these routines also have more complex effects. They may undermine the status of the characters by mocking them and the seriousness of the threat they present, allowing spectators to feel superior, however mistakenly. Equally, the innocence of such laughter may be contradicted, as plays set up a contrast between infantile manners and dangerous moral violence. Laughter at the vices may begin simply, but is always a double-edged sword.

Thinking about the ways in which laughter is generated around the vice-families inevitably leads to the central persona of the Vice himself. He is the lead figure in any group, the most vibrantly theatrical performer and the centre of the plays' generation of laughter. His ambivalent generic title, and sometimes the specific provocative quality he personifies, might seem to attach him firmly to the vice-families. But it is well to remember that the first directly identified dramatic Vice is Mery Report in John Heywood's *Play of the Weather*, who seems not to represent any kind of morally negative, or even moral, quality: the play includes no personified group of vices with whom he might be associated, and Mery Report himself does no harm but characterises his own role as simply "to reporte a sad mater merely" (l. 138). Although later Vices such as Avarice in *Respublica* or Iniquitie in the Protestant children's play *Nice Wanton* (pub. 1560) are more likely to carry names identifying them as vicious, there are many who appear to embody uncertainly ambiguous qualities: Inclination in the anony-

mous *The Trial of Treasure* (1567), Haphazard in "R. B"'s *Apius and Virginia* (1567), or Courage in Wapull's *The Tide Tarrieth No Man* (1576). The mischievous Jack in the non-allegorical *Jack Juggeler* (1562) is another character who, like Mery Report, is named as the Vice without carrying any obvious moral charge, in a Plautine comedy of mistaken identity. These two both appear in plays where there is no family of supporting vices to define their moral status.

Confusingly, there are also different possible meanings for the term "vice" itself in the sixteenth century which tug away from the allegorical sins. While the sense of "depravity" or "evil", opposed to "virtue", was a common meaning for "vice", the word might also refer among other things to a "device" or mechanical contrivance, often being associated, like the Vices themselves, with spectacle and theatre. So, in a 1516 report of Richard II's reception into London, "an aungell come doun fro þe stage on high, by a vice, and sette a croune of golde & precious stone3 & perles apon þe Kinge3 hed" (*The Brut*, II: 347). It also seems gradually to have become another name for a household fool or jester. At the end of the sixteenth century, Anthony Copley, in a series of tales of "Jesters", uses the terms "Vice", "Fool" and "Jester" wholly interchangeably,[6] while in *The Devil Is an Ass*, Ben Jonson speaks of a time "When euery great man had his Vice stand by him" (I.i.84).

It is perhaps not surprising, then, that reminiscences of and commentary on the stage Vice during the sixteenth century concentrate almost without exception not on any ethical role or allegorical status he might have, but on his function as a generator of laughter. The poet Thomas Churchyard, satirically complaining of his own departure from the court in 1566, claims that he had been "gladde to playe the vice / To plesure eche estate" ("Churchyard's Round"), while in a companion piece he repeats that he "serves no turne but for a Vice, / since first to courte I came. / To make the Ladies laugh" ("Churchyard's Farewell"). John Rastell, attacking an opponent in a religious controversy in 1567, gives a similar sense: "Set him vpon the Stage with a furd cap and a motly cote, he wil plaie the Vice without a vizarde, and make gaie sporte to the cumpanie" (fol. 15^{v}). Some years later William Rainoldes, a student of divinity, belittles a Protestant opponent by recalling the same role without even needing to attach the name "Vice", speaking of "such kinde of iesting [that] would better become some merie felow making sport vpon a stage, with a furred hood & a wood-

6 See Copley, pp. 130-33 *passim*.

den dagger" (p. 523). Mery Report has continued on into "some merie felow" without any necessary association with viciousness. The role is even sometimes attributed directly to a "Fool" rather than a "Vice", as by John Barthlet in 1566, who, mocking the Papists by his comparison, proclaimed: "the foole in the play, doth lightly vse his dagger to euerye trifle and iest" (fol. 45^{v}).[7] This all suggests that, although association with vice-families may be one strand of his identity, the role of the Vice himself might be understood as primarily to "make sport", using fake irascibility with his fake dagger to generate laughter.

If laughter is his primary theatrical function, then analysis of the kinds of laughter he generates must help our understanding of the Vice's wider role. His humour has always attracted critical attention. Contemporary comment on dramatic Vices was often scornful of the way laughter generated by the Vice was felt to undermine the spiritual seriousness of the plays' action. Samuel Harsnett's well-known criticism in *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (1603) objected, for example, to the Vice's invitation to laugh at and thus trivialise the Devil:

> It was a prety part in the old Church-playes, when the nimble Vice would skip vp nimbly like a Iacke an Apes into the deuils necke, and ride the deuil a course, and belabour him with his woodden dagger, til he made him roare, wherat the people would laugh to see the deuil so vice-haunted. (pp. 114-15)

Critical analysis has continued to recognise the Vice's comedy as ambivalent, uneasily poised between the plays' necessity to entertain and desire to instruct. Robert Jones in 1973 and Agnes Matuska in 2008 both persuasively identified and thoughtfully analysed the problem raised by this theatrical trope—namely, that "what engages the spectator is the representation of the very vices that it is the play's business to make them reject" (Jones, p. 45). Or, as Matuska explains of the Vice, "it is first of all his comedy that makes him appealing, but if he is to be morally condemned, this is his major corrupting tool as well" (p. 100). Without wishing to repeat their suggestive discussions, I would like to explore a little more closely the particular theatrical nature and effect of the laughter generated by the Vices.

7 Cf. the record of "One vyces dagger & a ladle with a bable pendante … deliverid to the Lorde of mysrules foole" (Feuillerat, ed., p. 73), as well as the report of the charge made by the Earl of Lincoln against an allegedly libellous play, which refers initially to the "person that acted the parte of the vice or foole, in the said plaie", at times dropping the term "vice" in favour of "fool"; see *Records of Early English Drama: Lincolnshire*, I: 271-98.

This will inevitably broaden our focus from the character himself to the audience and their participatory contribution to the dramatic encounter, since laughter is a key element in this exchange. We might ask how the Vice persuades spectators to laugh, and what role their laughter then plays in their response to the play as a whole. Is he comic in the same way as the rest of the family group of vice and folly, where there is one, and for the same dramatic ends, or is his humour of a different kind and purpose? Much excellent work has been done on the Vice and his stage characteristics, and we have a well-developed picture of his theatrical role.[8] Particular kinds of language (especially nonsense) and routines (as with the dagger) are common, as are recognisable functions within the plot, often hinging on deceit and temptation. But one feature, identified by all commentators, emerges as fundamental to the special theatrical persona of the Vice: his direct engagement with the audience. The most characteristic laughter he provokes appears to arise not from his encounters with other characters, but in the monologues in which he openly addresses the spectators. This makes the Vice a crucial figure in manipulating audience response, shaping that response not only to himself but to the play as a whole. In mediating between stage and audience, he generates and controls the mood and receptiveness of the spectators, openly drawing them into a theatrical experience that he creates.

The techniques the Vice uses to generate laughter when addressing the audience tend to differ somewhat from the in-play dialogues and routines of the vice-family groups. As performances, these techniques are in fact intriguingly close to the methods of later audience-interactive comedy—the kind familiar today from contemporary stand-up comedy, and perhaps from the music-hall and variety comedians of the more recent past. As with the Vice, the over-riding aim of these comedians is to provoke laughter. Analysts of contemporary stand-up have identified a range of common techniques aimed at this effect, observable in performance, which echo those in the Vices' monologues; these defining strategies may also cast revealing light on the relationship of the Vice to his Tudor spectators.

A number of characteristics have been defined as distinguishing stand-up comedy as a performance mode.[9] Oliver Double has recently proposed three central elements: a personality (or character) displaying him or herself to the

8 In addition to Jones and Matuska, see, e.g., Mares, Happé, "The Vice", and Somerset.

9 See, e.g., Rutter and Double.

audience; direct communication between the performer and audience; and what he refers to as "Present Tense", a focus on the stage routine happening in the here and now, thus acknowledging the fact of performance and the specific performance situation (pp. 19-20). It is striking how aptly these features also seem to characterise the performance mode typically created by the Vice. One of the earliest traces we have of the characteristic stage manner of the Vices comes, interestingly enough, not from an interlude or allegorical morality, but from *The Trial of Joseph and Mary*, a pageant from the late fifteenth-century N-Town manuscript. Reysesclaunder, one of the detractors of the Virgin, bounds on to the stage at the opening of the pageant, exclaiming to the audience:

> A, a, serys, God saue 3ow all!
> Here is a fayr pepyl, in good fay.
> Good serys, telle me what men me calle;
> I trowe 3e kannot be þis day. (*Trial*, ll. 34-37)

In just these four lines he establishes immediately his direct, interactive communication with the audience in the here and now, acknowledging the performance situation and inviting the onlookers to focus on his own "character".

This manner, seemingly already established and familiar, remains recognisable throughout the sixteenth-century heyday of Vice interludes. We find, for example, Avarice in *Respublica* working the same effects, as he enters bantering with the audience:

> Now goddiggod every chone, bothe greate and smale,
> From highest to lowest goddiggod to yowe all!
> Goddigod—what sholde I saie? even or morowe?
> If I marke howe the daie goeth, god geve me sorowe! …
> But nowe, what my name is and what is my purpose,
> Takinge youe all for frendes, I feare not to disclose:
> My veray trewe unchristen name ys—Avarice. (ll. 1-13; punctuation mine)

Like Reysesclaunder, Avarice plays up to the audience in colloquial current idiom to establish himself in the "here and now", using verbal teasing to draw them into the performance, and to engage them with his personality. The form of the speech reminds us, too, that comedy of this kind depends not just on

the words themselves, but on the immediate effects of the moment of performance—on functions such as expression, pace, cadence, timing and tone.[10]

The specific means by which modern stand-up comedians achieve these central effects can also be seen to pepper the Vice's performance. Jason Rutter's study of stand-up lists, among other routines, Greeting the Audience, Comment on the Setting, Comment on the Audience, Reference to the Local Geography, Self-Reflexive Remarks on the Act, Request for Audience Action (pp. 166-90). Almost all of these can be seen in the first few lines of Nichol Newfangle's self-introduction in *Like Will to Like*:

> *Heer entreth Nichol Newfangle, the Vice, laughing, and hath a knaue of clubs in his hand, which as soon as he speaketh, he offreth vnto one of the men or boyes standing by*
> Ha, ha, ha, ha, now like vnto like: it wil be none other.
> Stoup, gentle knaue, and take vp your brother.
> Why, is it so? And is it euen so indeed?
> Why then, may I say God send vs good speed!
> And is every one heer so greatly vnkinde,
> That I am no sooner out of sight, but quite out of minde? . . .
> How say you woman, you, that stand in the angle?
> Were you never acquainted with Nichol Newfangle? (Fulwell, sig. Aii^{v}; punctuation mine)

The opening business with the dropped card demands action from a specific spectator, using insult to draw him physically into the performance. The following line, which makes little specific sense on the page, appears to allow space for the comedian's ability to capitalise on whatever response he gets to his trick, generating laughter from the audience which is directed at the victim spectator as much as at the Vice. Newfangle then draws the focus back to himself, commenting on the audience's poor responses and on his own inability to make himself recognisable and hold their attention. Next, he picks on another audience member, in a specific part of the hall, aiming to embarrass her, to turn her into a target of laughter, and to introduce himself.

The tone and manner of this kind of Vice-monologue seem to correlate closely with the ways in which stand-up comedians engage with their audiences by direct address and bantering interaction, sharing their space, while

10 Cf. Wilson: "Some mannes countenaunce will make pastyme, though he speake neuer a worde. Yea, a foolishe worde, vttered by an apte manne, or a gesture straungely vsed by some pleasant body, settes men ful oft vpon a laughter" (fol. 74^{r}). Some of the techniques Wilson describes are also used in the Vice's wordplay.

consciously performing their own personalities. Other familiar features of the Vice's repertoire—nonsense talk, virtuoso lists, comically involved anecdotes and speed stories, shared innuendo, open obscenity and insult—are equally paralleled in the acts of many stand-up comics, as also in the accounts of Victorian music-hall comedians such as Dan Leno.[11] Given that the comedians' techniques are so similar, it is worth exploring whether the responses that modern stand-up comedy provokes from its audiences can also throw light on the interlude Vices, and on what their roles contribute to the plays they inhabit.

The emphasis of both modern stand-ups and Tudor Vices is centrally on provoking laughter. According to John Limon's recent study of the modern form, "laughter is the single end of stand-up. . . . Constant, unanimous laugher is the limit case" (pp. 12-13). This chimes well with our first identified Vice, Mery Report in Heywood's *The Play of the Weather*, whose name defines his function and whose ambition for each spectator will be fulfilled if "I left her meryer then I founde her" (l. 150). Similarly, the entrance of Avarice in *Respublica* is heralded by the Prologue: "Nowe yf yowe so please, I wyll goe, *and* hither send, / That shall make youe laughe well yf ye abide thend" (ll. 57-58). Complex as laughter undoubtedly is, perhaps one of its most immediate and crucial effects in successful comic performance is to draw an audience together. However much spectators come to a show as individuals, and may continue to have very different responses and thoughts about what they see and hear, the act of laughing pulls them into a community; the effect is partly physical, as they share the bodily effects of laughter.[12] Anthropologically, the effect of laughing together echoes Victor Turner's concept of *communitas*: those intense, almost transcendent feelings of social togetherness and belonging that can be engendered by certain kinds of social practice and ritual.[13] By generating sufficient laughter, a theatrically successful Vice may in this way actually create a new "family of Folly"—not this time on the stage, but between himself and the audience. As Somerset also observes, the Vices "forge, through laughter, a group of individual

11 For examples of Dan Leno's use of such techniques, see Antony, pp. 97-108.

12 For reflections on the physicality of laughter see Fudge, pp. 280-84. Photographs of the audiences of comedy reflect the bodily community imposed by laughter; see, e.g., the image at <http://979litefm.com/comedy-reigns-this-weekend/> (accessed 9 May 2016).

13 For an account of this contested term, see Edith Turner's later overview. Matuska, pp. 108-9, pursues the relation of the Vice to Victor Turner's associated notion of "liminality".

spectators into an audience. Hence they remind us of the communal nature of theatre" (p. 68).

Tudor theories of laughter in performance, following from Aristotle's familiar dictum that we laugh at what is worse than ourselves, ugly or deformed, tend to focus on the divisive, satirical and negative: this is the view Philip Sidney supports in *The Apology for Poetry*, insisting that "Laughter hath only a scornful tickling. … We laugh at deformed creatures … rather pained than delighted with laughter" (p. 112).[14] However, the function of laughter in bonding groups is also recognised at times. This seems particularly to be found in practical comments addressed primarily to performers, rather than in more philosophical reflections on the responses of spectators. The sixteenth century saw a burgeoning of jest books and collections of comic stories gathered for social purposes.[15] One such publication, Thomas Twyne's *The Schoolemaster, or Teacher of Table Philosophie* (1576), offers stories specifically for social performance: "many mery honest Iestes, delectable deuises, and pleasant purposes, to be vsed for delight and recreation, at the boord among company" (sig. Oi^{r}), since "the assembling togyther of men for honest myrth … is commendable" (sig. Oii^{v}). Laughter is specifically to be used to prompt sociability and companionable delight. Wilson's *The Arte of Rhetorique*, a work which addresses itself largely to the effectiveness of public speaking, also contains an extensive section on humour and how it can be provoked, since "good wil is got therby (for what is he that loueth not mirth?)" (fol. 75^{r}).

The effect of laughter in drawing an audience into community with the Vice is theatrically powerful but, as critics have pointed out, potentially morally problematic. It raises questions that many commentators on the Vice have examined about the ethical implications of Vice-generated laughter, and how they shape or problematise the response of an audience to the moral trajectory of the play.[16] Following the neo-Aristotelian understanding apparent in Sidney and many other early modern critics, spectators may be expected to laugh critically at the failings of the onstage folly families, enabling them to feel superior to the vice-groups they scorn; but the Vice, like the modern stand-up comic, more often appears to be drawing his audience to laugh in alliance with him. And if

14 For negative views of laughter, see, e.g., Ghose, pp. 22-23.

15 For a valuable overview and checklist of jest books, see Woodbridge, Appendix B, pp. 285-94.

16 See, e.g., Jones and Matuska.

spectators are drawn by this laughter into community with the Vice, that might seem to put them at odds with the moral fable of the play.

This is inevitably a difficult and uncertain issue, given the complexity of laughter and its meanings. But considered in the immediate context of live performance, it seems clear that laughing at a comic—or a Vice—even if it involves both pleasure and partnership, does not necessarily imply straightforward approval of the performer's theatrical persona or expressed attitudes. There are many popular stand-up comics, active since the 1990s, who deliberately cultivate highly morally suspect personas: in Britain such performers might include Al Murray, with his well-established character as the Pub Landlord, or Frankie Boyle, whose stage persona is deliberately offensive.[17] Similarly, there are modern comics who make it their trademark to invite laughter at morally disturbing and dangerous issues such as terrorism, sexual violence and racism.[18] These figures often attract moral concerns about condoning the un-condonable that might equally apply to Vices representing qualities like Avarice, Revenge or Iniquity.[19] But while the audiences of modern stand-up comics may well, worryingly, include those who approve the sentiments expressed by the stage personalities, most spectators would argue that their own laughter involves a more ambivalent recognition of the moral challenges those personalities represent.[20] Laughter does not necessarily imply simple assent.

In a performance context, laughter is a form of licence not only for the performer, but for the audience: it permits us at least a momentary release from forming moral judgements. In the act of laughing we are indeed made receptive to ideas we might expect to reject, that beat down or slip in under our normal guard. But that is not the end or the sum total of the experience of a moment of theatrical laughter; there may be a variety of shorter and longer term effects. As many medieval and Tudor educationalists would have argued, laughter may enable us to focus with more alert concentration on the serious moral messages being presented by texts. Mixing "merry matter" with "sad matter" is a respected technique in maintaining focus and learning.[21] Alternatively, laughter may lend

17 See Double, p. 271 (on Boyle) and pp. 486–87 (on Murray).

18 See Double, pp. 261–85.

19 Avarice in *Respublica*; Revenge in John Pickering's *Horestes* (1567); Iniquity in *Nice Wanton*.

20 See, e.g., Cohen and Richards.

21 Well summed up in, e.g., Robert Henryson's translation of Aesop's *Fables*, here as published in an anglicised version in 1577: "With sad maters some myrrinesse to ming. / Accordeth well

us strength and power by allowing us to contemplate and thus disarm threat, danger and taboo; or the process of drawing us pleasurably into what we do not intellectually or morally approve can show us how easy it is to be seduced by folly, giving us inside experience of the temptations of vice that can arm us against it for the future. Laughter can even allow, or force, us to confront painful or difficult issues that we would normally resist, prompting us to think about them afterwards: it is an uncomfortable but not an uncommon experience for spectators to leave thinking "I shouldn't have laughed"—at the rape joke, at the Pub Landlord's racism, at Feste's humiliating taunting of Malvolio ("like to the Old Vice" [*Twelfth Night*, IV.ii.97]).

The Vice's laughter, like that provoked by the best stand-up comics, is therefore at its best multivalent. When the Vice "makes us sport" he draws us, however briefly, into his family. He may pleasurably energise us, bringing us into community with our fellows. His comedy may release us from moral responsibility for the duration of his act. But by doing this he can also draw us into an experience that may enable further, fuller, even clearer ethical understanding. By dominating us, even making us helpless with laughter, he can actually lend us power to address rather than to evade moral questions, if not during the performance then in reflection afterwards. As the stand-up comedian can provoke us to sharpen, rather than blurring, our ethical perception, the Vice can work to enable, rather than suppressing, an audience's capacity for moral judgement. The interludes use vice-groups to provoke us to laughter in a range of different ways; but perhaps the most dynamic, pleasurable and disturbing is when the spectators find themselves belonging to the family of the Vice.

thus Esope sayd iwis, / *Dulcius arrident seria picta iocis*" (p. 1). Latin versions of the *Fables* were widely used school texts, and Henryson cites from the familiar prologue of the Gualterus Anglicus translation.

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Close Kin to a Clean Fool: Robert Armin's Account of Jack Miller[1]

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In a brilliant recent study of physical space in relation to fooling, Sarah Carpenter focused on Robert Armin's stories about Jemy Camber, the first of the fools included in Armin's *Foole upon Foole* (1600). At the heart of her rich analysis lies the contention that "Through the studied light-heartedness of [Armin's] stories he … offers surprisingly detailed insights into the theatrical and social history of the late sixteenth century" (Carpenter, p. 23). I would like to follow her example, as far as I can, in studying Armin's narratives of Jack Miller, whom he describes as a "cleane", that is a "pure", fool. Like her, I wish to look *through* the narratives to deeper implications not always explicitly pointed up by Armin himself but detectable from the stylistic and narrative management of the stories. This essay will argue that, in addition to the kinds of social and theatrical insights Carpenter identified, Armin's narratives explore the enigmatic relationship of the *pure* fool to the world around him. Before arriving at such a conclusion, however, one has to unpeel a lot of public and explicit affirmation about what the texts were supposedly doing.

1 I am very grateful to Professor Greg Walker for his advice on this paper, and to Professor Richard Hillman for the opportunity to speak to the Table Ronde in the University of Tours over a number of years.

Robert Armin urges the reader of *Foole upon Foole* to "read true" (sig. A2^{v}).[2] What does that mean? In one sense, it means not dismissing the subject matter of folly as a reflection of the *author's* failings, but rather considering it as what he calls "uncomfortable sleete", which "purgeth" the air and thus becomes "profitable rayne". The book is designed to be the cause of wisdom in others even if it is itself devoted to folly—in just the same way as it announces on the title page that it will show the lives, humours and behaviours of six sorts of fool "with their want of wit *in their shew of wisdom*" (my emphasis). The statement is ambiguous. What he means, I believe, is not only that fools offer an appearance of wisdom that is unfounded, but that their want of wit nevertheless produces scenes (shows) from which wisdom can be derived, as lessons can be learned from a play. The essential character of folly would thus appear to be that what it *is* and what it *allows when perceived* are profoundly different, this difference covering a range of areas where benefits arise from folly, including, most obviously, instruction. In this respect the book announces itself as exemplary in the strict sense of offering a set of acts and sayings, *exempla*, which if applied comparatively to one's own life would encourage or deter certain actions. The behaviour of fools no less than that of the wise can be ethically useful.

However, we should be wary of how we respond to Armin's apparent emphasis on the beneficent, wisdom-producing effects of contemplating folly. Although the title page seems to promote truth *above* sensation, describing the book as "Not so strange as true", this is the face which the publisher felt it proper for the book to present or, to change metaphor, it is the shop window for the purchaser—a shop window which is patently enticing under a show of modesty, allowing the reader to pretend to wisdom while actually buying the pleasures of folly. Armin's individual narratives often dutifully continue the promised instructive dynamic by summing up the stories of folly with neat or epigrammatic conclusions that pretend to proverbial, taxonomic, practical or other kinds of wisdom: "Thus fools thinking to be wise, become flat foolish" (sig. B1^{v}); "Here you have heard the difference twixt a Flat fool natural, and a Flat fool artificial" (sig. B2^{r}); "Goodman Homes … was not a little vexed at John's diligence, but he laid the rope ever after where John could not reach it" (sig. F2^{v}). If one purchased this book, one could thus claim to have gained wisdom from folly.

2 In quoting from this text I have retained spelling and punctuation but have modernised i/j and u/v.

But the reader would already have expected a more complex text than such conclusions suggest, because, while the title page offered to show the behaviour of different categories of fools, it also intimated that the author was not clearly distinct from his subject matter: "written by one, seeming to have his mother's witte, when some say he is filed with his father's fopperie" (sig. A1^{r}). Armin also gave on the title page his stage name as "Clonnico de Curtanio Snuffe", that is, "Snuff, the clown of the Curtain Theatre". The gap between those who are fools in life and those who play the part of fools on the stage is thus reduced, as the author who purports to instruct is revealed to play the fool as a profession.[3] In the same way the phrase "their shew of wisdom" ambiguously combined, on the one hand, the inadequate appearance of wisdom in those who are really foolish and, on the other, events staged to allow spectators to make inferences about wisdom. While the humour of Armin's narratives is dependent on the notion that fools and non-fools are *really* different, and the latter group can legitimately laugh at the former, the stories often create an overlap between these groups in a way analogous to the Renaissance commonplace that the real world could also be seen as a stage.

In fact, the endings of Armin's stories are not consistently instructive, and are certainly not conclusively so, because he is engaged in a challenging transformative enterprise that runs far beyond offering portable nuggets of wisdom. Instead, his anecdotes revivify for his readers what other people had already found entertaining when the events originally occurred, consequently turning the exemplary conclusions which folly might prompt into written comic routines, and shifting past pleasures from behaviour directly experienced into the pleasures of the present reader's imagination, where behaviour is looked at with the mind's eye. Consequently, Armin is committed to deploying rhetorical features not solely directed to serve moral narrative ends—such as the comedy punchline, variation in tone and affect, stylistic shifts between prose and poetry and between episodic narration and summarising mottoes or epitaphs. And these exist alongside (and sometimes in place of) didactic elements.

For instance, in the first of four stories about Jack Miller, the "cleane" fool born in Evesham, the climax is visual comedy: Jack had burned all his facial hair off by foolishly going after a pie which was still in a hot oven. When he sang to

3 The relationship between clowning, the expression of identity, and authorship in this and other early modern texts is explored in Preiss's important book, *passim*.

the household that night, their laughter came not from his usual tendency to stutter, but from his appearance with a face covered with beer froth to take out the heat. Armin ensures that this visual comedy can work for the *reader* by translating it into a clever and memorable simile. We are told that Jack "looked like a man that being asham'd to shew his face had hid it in a dry lome [loam] wall, and pulling it out againe, left all the hayre behinde him" (sig. $D3^{v}$). This *verbal* jest concludes the story because Armin knows it is necessary for the success of a comic routine to supplement the narrative of past events by giving an immediate readerly pleasure, thus making the scene more vivid in the imaginations of those who were not there.

In his second story about Miller, Armin's generalising proverbial conclusion is compromised by a sentiment which is quite different. Having been sent on an errand to deliver a dish of almond butter as a gift, Jack was tricked into taking the wrong road and got covered with mud. Because he was compulsively fastidious, he then washed himself so vigorously that he washed the butter away also. The climax of the story shows Armin delicately balancing feeling and distance. The Gentlewoman of the house, who had sent Miller on the errand, blamed herself for trusting to a rotten staff and told him to go and dry himself, so "Jack stood singing Derries fayre by the fire with a Jack of good beere, and while he dryed himselfe without, wet himselfe within, and there is all the thought he takes" (sig. $D4^{r}$). The conclusion, "Thus cleane fooles light still on beastly bargaines", actually takes the reader beyond didacticism into wit, since it plays on the meaning of clean as both "free from dirt" and "pure", and it plays on "beastly" as also meaning "natural", "instinctual" and "unthinking". But this generalised, proverbial sentence of conclusion is even more deeply qualified by the focus on Miller himself by the fire, drinking his beer and singing his song. Armin's playful antithesis of drying without and wetting within, and his mock criticism that Jack, like the fool he was, did this without a second thought for the cost of what he had done, cannot disguise the affection Armin feels, and wants us to share through holding that image in our mind's eye. Nor does it derail the satisfying emotional trajectory of the narrative which takes us from Jack's initial setting out on his task, through his anxiety about uncleanliness, his bathetic, and pathetic, fall into the mire, and finally to a happy conclusion, in which Jack the fool and "Jack" the tankard are drawn together.

Armin's own interpretations of the wisdom that his anecdotes about fools might offer were determined to a degree by what he thought his audience would

appreciate and, in this respect, his explicit conclusions can offer less than the stories themselves seem to permit. For example, the climactic fourth story of Jack Miller concludes: "thus simple Jack made mirth to all, made the wisest laugh, but to this day gathered little wit to himselfe" (sig. E1^{v}). This particular story's announced nugget of wisdom would appear to be that we can learn things from the fool, though the fool himself cannot benefit in the same way—a sardonic invitation to the reader to dwell upon the limitations of the fool while enjoying the permission that wisdom gives to take pleasure from foolishness. But at the level of textual rhetoric, these anecdotes about fools prove to be complex communications, combining judgement with compassion, distance with sympathy, and acknowledging both the otherness of fools and the folly of us all. They reveal more than they purport to narrate, bearing witness, as Carpenter showed, to things beyond the surface detail—to facts, to attitudes, to prejudices, to the author's sense of his readers' needs. Armin's third and fourth narratives of the "cleane" fool, a fool whose pure nature as fool can be explored without the limiting taxonomy Armin uses for the others ("fat", "lean", "merry", "very"), walk the marches of different genres—comic anecdote, exemplum, and mythopoeia—and consequently offer much more than their official "script" announces. In particular, they explore the ontology of folly beyond both its moral and entertaining functions. They reveal that it is in folly's puzzling relationship to nature, a relationship at once metaphysical and visceral, that folly's closest kin can be discovered.

I would argue that the narrative density of the last two anecdotes evidences their quasi-mythical character, signalling them as light fictions which aspire to comment on the deeper nature of reality and of folly's place in it. How far Armin was himself conscious of doing this, how far he was satisfied with the surface pleasures of his anecdotes or felt his duty had been done through their moralistic or didactic conclusions, is hard to determine, especially because *Foole upon Foole* explicitly promotes other issues: the competing appeals of pleasure and instruction, or the overlap between fools and non-fools. But the narratives themselves reveal a mythopoeic urge which is ubiquitous in Renaissance English writing, and is always potentially there in the writing of *exempla*. We might also remember that Armin was an actor as well as a writer, communicating meaning through deeds, not just words, and this should remind us to look at what his stories *do*, not just at what they say. They do a lot more than what is overtly claimed for them.

The third of the four brief anecdotes about this clean fool recalls Armin's meeting with Jack Miller when Armin was with Lord Chandos's men playing the town of Evesham in Worcestershire, where Miller had been born and was much loved. Like the other stories, it blends diverse meanings into a narrative that the reader can respond to at different levels. The ending is offered as personal testimony to the ways in which the behaviour of a pure fool reverses norms: being whipped by the players for his folly "till the bloud came", Jack took his punishment "laughing; for it was his manner ever to weepe in kindnes, and laugh in extreames, that this is true my eyes were witnesses being then by" (sig. E1^{r}). The punctuation of the original, which separates the last statement about Armin's witness from the rest only by a comma, might give the impression that it is only the strange weeping and laughing that he is anxious to confirm as personal experience. However, the whole episode involved Armin personally, and that final statement properly applies to it all, for the anecdote intensively explores the pure fool's relationship with nature. The behaviour of a pure fool as shown in his emotional responses proves to be the opposite of what one would regard as natural but, as the story shows, nature may reverse its own norms when a fool is present, and this upsets the norms of status and value that apply in a comic exposé of the fool.

At the core of the story is this episode: the players were due to leave for Pershore, their next venue, and Jack had been locked up in a room in the Hart Inn because the townspeople did not want him to leave them and go with the players. "It was then a great frost new begun", we are told, "and the even [Avon, the Welsh *afon* = Severn] was frozen over thinly" (sig. D4^{v}). Despite precautions, Jack got out of the window and, as the players stood watching,

> he got downe very daungerously, and makes no more a doe but boldly ventures over the Haven, which is by the long bridge as I gesse some forty yardes over: tut, hee made nothing of it, but my heart aked to see it, and my eares heard the Ize crackt all the way. (sig. D4^{v})

Jack gets safely over to the players. Armin writes: "I was amazed, and tooke up a brickbat (which there lay by) and threwe it, which no sooner fell upon the Ize but it burst" (sig. D4^{v}). This would be a remarkable episode in any circumstances, but Armin's interest is caught up by something specific: "was not this strange that a foole of thirty yeeres was borne of that Ize which would not indure the fall of a brickbat: yes it was wonderfull me though[t]". What intrigues Armin is that the laws of nature seem to have been suspended to preserve the pure fool. Behind

his question one hears the whisperings of other metaphors, such as the "lightness" of folly, or of other narratives of preservation, such as St Peter walking towards Christ on the sea of Galilee, or of divine forethought, such as Hamlet's near-contemporary claim: "There is special providence in the fall of a sparrow" (V.ii.165-66). But Armin leaves unresolved the matter of who or what exactly preserved Jack, and the ontological status of the pure fool remains mysterious. One cannot confidently assert which elements of the story are supposed to bear upon Miller's surprising preservation. Is the power of his love for the players a relevant part of it? Is his single-minded determination? By leaving this enigma, the tale escapes the limitations of *exemplum* to pose questions about how the constituent forces of reality compromise our normal evaluations. Armin allows the principles of material reality to be challenged in a way that demands that metaphysical values inflect the physical realm. The heavy adult fool walks safe; the lighter brickbat sinks to the bottom (and the likely fate of a non-fool walking on the ice is unclear). A similar association between things of extremely different value, though directed in order to debase the numinous below the material, is also present in Hamlet's remark to Horatio, developing a common *memento mori* trope: "Why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole?" (V.i.198-200); "Imperious Caesar, dead and turn'd to clay / Might stop a hole to keep the wind away" (V.i.208-9). The times of Armin's writing this anecdote (1600, the date of publication, being the latest date), his joining the Chamberlain's Men, and Shakespeare's composition of *Hamlet* are all sufficiently close to suggest at least a current interest in intersections of corporeal and immaterial value expressed through comparing extremes.

Armin also explores the fool's mysterious nature through questions of "identity".[4] Just as the laws of nature, shown in the ice which held Miller up, seem to set aside the pure fool from ordinary humanity, so the story shows a deep tension between, on the one hand, the fool's yearning for an identity other than his own and, on the other, reiterated proofs that he will be forever set apart from men. Armin employs, but also in a sense, implicates, his own identity in order to reveal that of the pure fool (an implication which he also played with on the title page as "Snuffe"). Miller's crossing the ice was prompted by his love of dramatic play, the players generally, and probably Armin himself. More than in many other anecdotes, Armin is actively present as a participant, and is explicitly

4 Preiss focuses on this episode in relation to identity and authorship; see p. 200.

so as a witness whose emotions are sometimes engaged but sometimes hidden. What starts and ends as an apparently dispassionate anecdote describing a fool's strange behaviour is at its mythic core a disquisition on folly, which measures Armin's professional identity against that of the clean fool. They have so much in common and yet so much that separates them. Armin is a player; Miller also loves to act. But while Armin is a member of a nobleman's acting company, the solitary Jack Miller is the patronised fool of the gentleman's house in which he is retained. Armin's theatrical impersonation is calibrated to professional and generic needs; however, as we shall hear, Jack's was obsessive and compulsive: the comedy of his acting apparently came not only from an uncontrollable stutter but also from his desire to play all the parts one after the other, as if Bully Bottom had actually got his way to play the lover, a tyrant, the lady and the lion. Armin was at this time a professional clown, and it seems that Miller was particularly drawn to him: the story says that, of Lord Chandos's men, he loved "especially the clowne, whome he would imbrace with a joyfull spirit, and call him grumball" (sig. $D4^{v}$). But Jack Miller's choice of name for Armin is revealing because it marks a desire for deeper kinship, almost identity, with him: Armin says that Miller would call him Grumball "for so he called *himselfe* in Gentlemen's houses, where he would imitate playes doing all himselfe" (my emphasis).[5] Here we see a version of the long-standing satirical dramatic trope of the "family of fools", though in this case it is pathetically sincere and desirous. Armin's rhetorical stance in this narration ambivalently reveals his sympathy but also his need to distance himself from Miller, for it is at this very moment, where Miller fashions an identity with him as Grumball, that Armin withdraws rhetorically from the anecdote, talking about "the clown" in the third person. In the ensuing middle section of the story, however, this distance is much reduced.

Although we are told Miller was drawn to the players generally, his venture onto the ice was overtly an attempt to join up with *Armin*: "he, I say, seeing them [the players] goe by, creepes through the window, and sayde, I come to thee, Grumball" (sig. $D4^{v}$). That "I say" from Armin is quite revealing, as it rhetorically integrates the narrator's voice with that of Miller, as a previous sen-

5 There is no evidence that Armin called himself Grumball at this time. Although there is ambiguity in the syntax, the context (which goes on to mention Miller's taking on all the parts of a play) suggests that it is Miller's choice to name Armin after himself, giving less foundation for the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*'s suggestion that Armin "possibly" used the name Grumball. See the entry by Butler.

tence had also done by presenting Miller's words as *oratio obliqua* within Armin's: "and Jacke swore he would goe all the world with Grumball, that he would". One hears Jack Miller's voice rise up idiomatically *within* Armin's report. But in the end Armin wishes the anecdote to show otherness as well as likeness; his heartache at watching the risk which Miller takes on the ice is a recognisable, intelligent anxiety which marks out his own normality against Miller's extremes of emotion. Armin's sympathy qualifies Miller's desire for identity with him; Grumball passes over the ice indifferent to his own safety, while Armin is the rational man who proceeds to test the ice afterwards. Miller's loving commitment to his Grumball at the start is replaced by Armin's cool observation of the cruelty meted out to Miller by the other players, and his comment on Miller's extraordinary reversal of normal emotional reactions.

On the face of it, the story marks the *limits* of our kinship with the pure fool, however much that fool might want to breach them, and however much we may ourselves sometimes "play the fool"—whether we do so professionally or by our own stupidity. Armin suggests that the clean fool is ontologically different from the normal man, such an extreme version of our own propensities that the difference in degree constitutes a difference in kind, just as the laws of nature were somehow suspended when a fool walked on the ice, but afterwards reasserted themselves so that a brickbat went through it. Perhaps Armin, as a professional clown, was prompted to do this because he wished to assert the limits of his own kinship with the pure fool, and to preserve the distance implicit in his authoritative observation of Miller, thus confirming the superiority expressed by his authorship of *Foole upon Foole*. But it is the fool's love, his endearing need to be at one with a society of friends, that stands out for the reader in an affective contrast to the cooler judgement of Armin and the cruelty of the players. While he reveals hesitation about Jack's identification with him, it is Armin himself who creates this lasting impression for the reader, suggesting in the episode of the ice that nature's favour is not constrained by sane judgements.

However, if a desire to separate the pure fool from other human beings (including those who act as professional fools) can be traced in the third story, the fourth reveals more powerfully that fundamental forces *do* link the natural fool and those who enjoy his folly. Carpenter writes of Jemy Camber, the fat fool:

> By his clumsy and uncomprehending blundering through courtly and city space he confirms the common universalising role of the natural fool, who levels humanity to its simplest and least sophisticated form. This is a common theme throughout Armin's fool tales, and it is notable that in his final Jemy Camber anecdote he reverts to it more explicitly. (p. 22)

This is true also of the final Jack Miller story. Certainly, the author preserves his *and our* distance from the natural fool: firstly, through his right to give a final exposition of the story; secondly, by his claim there that the anecdote has shown the utilitarian value of the natural fool; and thirdly, by his assertion that the fool cannot benefit from the instruction he unknowingly affords: "thus simple Jack made mirth to all, made the wisest laugh, but to this day gathered little wit to himselfe" (sig. $E1^{v}$). As at the end of many anecdotes from *Foole upon Foole*, it appears that a final separation between the natural fool and those who may be his closest kin requires restating. But, even more clearly than in the previous anecdote, the fourth story itself defies that separation, its narrative reaching such a level of thematic and metaphorical density that it speaks *in its own right* of the common ground we share with the natural fool.

I have argued that Armin's stories operate on different levels, as exemplary instruction, as biographical and autobiographical anecdote, as free-standing comic routines, and as myths which reveal more profoundly the ontology of folly in the world. Viewed through the mythic lens, the Jack Miller we encounter in the fourth story becomes the perfect instance, the mythical exemplar, of forces that contend within *every* human and can be seen operating at social, psychological, and physiological levels. This is the form that the universalising impulse identified by Carpenter takes in this story. Certainly, there is a causal relationship between the natural fool and the foolish pleasure he imparts to those who are not natural fools but go to him for entertainment. Furthermore, folly can, as this story amply demonstrates, lead wiser folk into foolish behaviour, expanding itself to incorporate more and more people, as we see claimed in the sermon of Folly in David Lyndsay's *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*, which finally embraces audience, nation and the world.[6] This proliferation is a tendency one recognises in other Armin anecdotes, and in other plays and discussions of the period. Thus Thersites, a role that Armin may have played, says in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*:

6 See Lyndsay, ll. 4500-647.

> Agamemnon is a fool to offer to command Achilles; Achilles is a fool to be commanded of Agamemnon; Thersites is a fool to serve such a fool, and Patroclus is a fool positive. (II.iii.61-64)

But I would argue that, notwithstanding that folly is often shown as centrifugal in its *effects*, reaching out to encompass the world, the last Jack Miller story suggests that the true connection between the natural fool and ordinary people, who are his closest kin, is not functional, contingent, consequential, but rather a shared human struggle, an "agōn" in the Greek sense—primal at its most extreme, visceral in its physical effect, and potentially terminal, but always latent in the joyful onrush of life and, indeed, paradoxically constitutive of that joy.

The struggle which the fourth story will explore is not exclusive to it but can be found embedded in the society out of whose anxieties and constraints early modern commentators write about laughter. Henry Peacham in *Thalia's Banquet* writes that the mere sight of Tarleton poking his head through the curtain "Set all the multitude in such a laughter, / They could not hold for scarce an hour after".[7] The key word there for us is "hold". For Peacham, spectator laughter is in tension with constraint, and specifically with self-restraint. The implicit model of audience response to professional foolery offered here by Peacham is of resistance overcome by fooling. But the same model is also implicit in Armin's description of the failings of the natural fool. Miller's only "fault" was a physical characteristic which was uncontrolled, and was uncontrollable:

> What should I saye? his parts were straight and good.
> Onely one fault was grose unto the eye:
> In places before whom so ever he stood,
> He needes must drivvle, had a Lord been by. (sig. D3^{r})

The fool's body commands him beyond any social constraint that might supervene to save him. As in the remark of Peacham about Tarleton's audience, failure of control is also felt by those who watch Jack Miller. It is with this that Armin concludes his opening poem about the fool: "Stut [stutter] he would much, which made the saddest heart, / To laugh out-right they neither will or choos'd" (sig. D3^{r}). Here it seems that fooling (whether artificial or natural) takes the spectator into a realm where self-imposed social constraints are undermined, and we end up closer to the pure fool's subjection to uncontrollable impulses. One

7 See Peacham, Epigram 94, sig. C8^{r} (spelling modernised). Walker cites this in McGavin and Walker, p. 34, but in the service of a different argument.

might characterise this underlying tension in a variety of ways—physiologically, socially, perhaps even psychologically as a conflict between id and ego. But Armin's fourth anecdote of Jack Miller achieves such iterative density of detail on the topic that it comes over as a myth about the nature of reality, which it sees as a struggle between release and constraint, flow and stoppage, movement and stasis. The fool and the fool's spectators are all caught up in this common struggle, and all exhibit the compelling effect of *both* these opposing forces.

The anecdote begins by recounting the usual entertainment that Miller provided, apparently innocently: the song "Derry's Fair", in which one phrase, "brave beggers", brought on his stutter.[8] Armin first emphasises Jack's compulsion to continue in his song against all distractions that might stop him. "The jest was to heare him pronounce brave beggers, and his quallity was after he began his song, no laughing could put him out of it" (sig. Er). Realising this, some wit asked him instead to say "Buy any flawne, pasties, pudding pyes, plumbe pottage, or pescods". Miller's agony ensued when he tried to do so against the stoppage of his stutter. Armin's phrasing is significant: "O it was death to Jack to do it, but like a willing foole he felte it. . . . And ever as he hit on the word he would pat with his finger on his other hand, that more and more it would make a man burst with laughing, almost to see his action: sometime he would bee pronouncing one word while one might go to the doore and come againe" (sig. Er). Paradoxically, the physical movement which Jack uses to try to break through the stoppage and let his communication flow again, the iterative tapping on his resistant hand, if anything signals exactly the reverse, marking the time of this obstruction, as the repeated plosives would have done, and demonstrating physically his agony at being unable to continue with the sentence. It prompts Armin to comment on the length of time this struggle went on, and perhaps significantly, he measures it in terms of movement to a door, a domestic point where obstruction and openness meet. This anecdote has other moments where time is specified, and the reference to a door here is matched by one to windows later, which are also, of course, points of stoppage and of flow.

Armin then extends this opening account of the fool's impasse by looking at the two different effects of laughter on female spectators: one who sought to constrain her laughter for social reasons, and one who gave in to it, laughing uncontrollably at the first woman. Both suffer as a consequence. By choosing

8 This anecdote is also included in *Records of Early English Drama: Herefordshire | Worcestershire*, pp. 392–93.

only female examples, one could say that Armin's account is implicitly gendered in a predictably disparaging way, but I do not believe his point is primarily about of female spectatorship; rather he is, in the casually misogynistic and socially defensive way that his male readers would have expected, using female responses to display the folly latent in the human condition. The first woman is so anxious not to damage her social position by giving way to immoderate laughter that she strains herself to the point where instead she loudly breaks wind. The second woman laughs so much at the first woman's failed attempt to resist social humiliation that she seems to have had a stroke, and falls into a swoon. The episode is full of details which intensify and focus the contending forces of stoppage and flow. The first woman strained against her inward laughter and consequently "gave out" the flatulent evidence of that struggle. By contrast, the second woman goes with the flow of her laughter, so that her systems effectively shut down and she suffers a kind of paralysis. The fart is followed by a mock quest for the culprit, which is then brought to an end when people spy a blush, which the person guilty of the fart cannot hold back, the body betraying her yet again. This then leads the poor woman to assert her married status as a way of defending herself against the laughter of others. Armin's choice of verb is significant: she "stood" upon her marriage. On the other hand, the woman who does give way to her laughter, instead of standing, falls backwards in a swoon; and who breaks her fall?—the fool, "which stood (by fortune) at her back and was her supporter" (sig. E1^{v}). The spectators, at first on a figurative hunt for the person guilty of the fart, then literally rush to open the windows to let air in for the woman in a faint: "downe they burst the windowes for ayre", but, as Armin says, there was little need to do it at a run because the woman did not recover for nine or ten days afterwards.

This is a story of language flowing and language baulked; laughter impeded and laughter freed; the onward passage of time and time halted, either by repeated action or by physical stasis; air stopped, produced, breaking out and allowed to rush in again; physical constraint undermined, and then physical release obstructed; control *and* lack of control both punished by the exigencies of the body; the fool first as initiator of chaos and then as the person stopping a victim from serious injury. Kinetic processes, some physiological, some linguistic, some figurative, some literal, are held in tension with stoppages, obstructions, paralyses. As humans, we appear to be in a constant struggle between letting go and holding in. Human laughter and human impotence appear conjoined in a

paradoxical link between the onrush of life on the one hand, and on the other, obstructions placed in its way by our own human nature as physical or social beings. This anecdote, drawing together the agōn of a natural fool and ordinary spectators, discloses our fundamental human susceptibility to losing control, whether that takes the form of dribbling, stuttering, laughing, falling, flatulence or unconsciousness. It lets us glimpse a common humanity—and although it does not say so explicitly, it mythically adumbrates that mortal moment when the flow of time and breath and language will eventually stop for each of us, not only for the natural fool. Our delight in the show of folly has fear of death as its mirror image.

It is a comic text, of course: the old woman in the swoon eventually recovers; the embarrassed woman still has her marriage to console her; the fool, who has spread so much folly around, in the end *can* be distinguished from the rest of us because he does not benefit as we do from the laughter he inspires, and Armin has still more fools on whom to exercise his literary and professional authority. The message of the text is that we endure, and can continue to take delight in folly *pro tem*. But the final impression is of the all-embracing precariousness of life.

Armin is thought to have played the part of the clown Feste in *Twelfth Night*, ending the play with "The rain it raineth every day". It is a song whose mysterious power lies in its wistful yoking of extremes: the life of man and trivial "toys", adulthood and thievery, dying and drunkenness, the creation and the everyday:

> A great while ago the world begun,
> With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
> But that's all one, our play is done,
> And we'll strive to please you every day. (V.i.401-4)

It is a far more delicate production than the stories about Jack Miller, but a readiness to see the universal in the local is common to Armin's and Shakespeare's texts. They draw the extremes of humanity together, and they show the fundamental struggle of life accommodated within its pleasures. As they affirm present or future joy, they nuance it with the realisation that things come to an end.

The title page of *Foole upon Foole*, promising the delight of "Six sortes of sottes", is also graced with a woodcut of a horned snail on a leaf. Richard Preiss explains that it was used twice by Edward Allde:

> In 1600, though, it was new, and Allde's name is otherwise absent [from *Foole upon Foole*]; we are consequently unsure whether to read it biographically or thematically. Is it a printer's device or an emblem? (p. 197).

For the potential reader, however, it might well have functioned as an enticement to enter the traditionally comic realm of the snail: a world of visual and literary grotesquerie, which, for hundreds of years, had delighted in yoking together, and playing with the potential similarity and dissimilarity between, a knight and a snail, often shown in battle with each other.[9] To that reader it would have promised the world of the socially marginal, the subversion of norms, and comic extravagance in which opposites of value and status were brought together. After this titillating allusion to comic tradition, however, Armin's actual text moves the reader on to something subtler, and more personally affecting. In the more mythopoeic tales of Jack Miller, Armin first finds natural law mysteriously suspended to preserve the life of the "cleane" fool, and then looks further past the traditions of denigratory play, beyond the overtly comic appeal of his own volume with its professionally exploitative use of fools, to discover that, for all that divides them, there is a profound and natural kinship between such a fool and the wiser spectator or reader.

9 See, for example, the British Library Medieval Manuscripts blog for 26 September 2013; Camille, pp. 31-36 and 105; and the York plays' *Crucifixio Christi*, ll. 117-18, where it serves to put the soldiers crucifying Christ into this marginal comic tradition. The symbolism of the motif has been variously explained in satirical, political and religious terms.

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The Vice Is a Lonely Hunter

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After sound reflection, the phrases "folly's family" or "folly's children" used in the presentation of the overall theme of our collective study of the Vices and other troublemakers in the English plays and interludes of the late sixteenth century seem to me to be rather misleading. It is indeed well known (and advocated by anthropologists and mythologists) that in mythological or popular narratives actorial functions are expressed in terms of family relationships.[1] During our Christian Middle Ages, God was a Father, Mankind was saved by his Son, and his real (or legendary) mother used as an embodiment of the "actant" Mercy. This connection of family relationships with the deity endows them with positive or euphoric values. So, the so-called "children of Folly" cannot flaunt the virtues of perfection and permanency, which by nature exclusively belong to the "holy" family, the members of Folly's

1 Accorrding to Greimas, "Les analyses de Lévy-Strauss ont montré que la mythologie, pour rendre compte, au niveau des acteurs, des distributions complémentaires des fonctions, manifeste souvent une préférence pour les dénominations actantielles propres aux structures de la parenté" (p. 184). In the "vicious" groups, genealogies obey the same rules as in the "virtuous" groups. Several examples may be adduced: in R. Wever's *Lusty Juventus* (*c.* 1550), Hypocrisy is the child of the Devil; in Thomas Lupton's *All for Money* (*c.* 1560), we witness several lying-ins onstage and the births of successive evils, descendants of Sin.

family being after all rightly described as criminal ruffians, diabolic agents or deceitful servants.

The basic plot of the Moral Interlude is the story of the competition of one group (virtuous group) against the other (wicked group), and the conclusion always comes as a justification of the victory of the "goodies" over the "baddies". That justification must be based on a difference of nature—that is, organisation—within each group. And, in view of the evolution of the Vice's party, it appears to me quite relevant to change one's critical standpoint. Instead of analysing the construction of that group, why not pay attention to how it falls to pieces, and the constitutive elements get isolated and left to fend for themselves, so that the Vice, the head of that party, will find himself alone in the end: an exercise in "deconstruction", to use a modish word? Hence, the title of this essay, to take up a phrase which will sound familiar to readers of American literature: "The Vice is a lonely hunter".

I

I'll take for granted that my readers are familiar with the interlude character known as "the Vice". Indeed, we all owe a clear understanding of the Vice's specificities to Peter Happé's numerous and erudite papers, introductions, essays and volumes on the subject. His abundant literature will save lengthy definitions and systematisations. Suffice it to add my own modest contribution to that mass of information: it will consist in suggesting that the Vice, beyond his role as dramatic character—which he obviously possesses—should also be considered as a function, with different possible realisations according to context.

If we get down to the study of the actual texts in which a Vice appears, we may suggest that we find two basic situations: a simple one, and a complex. In the first case, there is one Vice, explicitely catalogued under the heading "Vice", and endowed with a fairly constant existence all through the play. In the second, we face a more fluctuating situation, in which two or more characters can stand for election to that title; he or they can obtain promotion for only part of the play, or can only reach an abstract or transient status which does not make him (or them) a real character in the play. In both cases, I'll try first to characterise the permanent—or progressive isolation of the Vice, and then also to study the modalities and meaning of his "loneliness".

The text selected to illustrate the first case is a play of the late 1560s, Ulpian Fulwell's *Like Will to Like.* This play belongs to the last phase of production of plays built around a Vice-figure, a period in which the part has become a technical, almost mechanical piece of the dramatic machinery of the interludes. This implies that the problems touching verisimilitude or realism are totally irrelevant. Our Vice, Nichol Newfangle, is a knave, a rogue but, if I may say so, this choice is not due to moral considerations on the part of the playwright; it is due to tradition, and to the opportunities offered in the field of comic, quasi-picaresque and sometimes artistic incidents and situations.

The Vice opens the play with a cynical "Ha, ha, ha!" which highlights a visual and lexical pun: he holds in his hand a Knave of Clubs (playing card or bauble?), and hails him (or it) as "gentle knave", playing on the double meaning of "knave"; and so, taking the icon as a mirror of his own knavery, he asks him to "take up [his) brother" (Fulwell, l. 38)—"take as a companion", I suppose, meaning himself—thus echoing the title of the play. One could also follow the suggestion, contained in the stage direction (just before Newfangle's entrance), that a card trick is played upon a spectator (boy or man), but one whose exact nature it is difficult to guess. This confrontation of character and icon is the image of a lone Vice's desperate search for a "like", a "companion" or "brother". Another proof of his isolation is that neither the "knave of clubs", nor a woman-spectator sitting in a corner of the auditorium, can recognize him or remember his name (ll. 47-49).

This Vice has a privileged relationship with Lucifer, who is introduced, of all things, as his "god-father"![2] This family connection with the Devil is symbolic of an essential similarity – they are both immortal: "Nichol Newfangle was, and is, and ever shall be" (l. 67).

But feelings expected from members of a family are here totally absent. Newfangle's connection with Lucifer is traditional and formal. It just means that they belong to the same infernal world, as is shown by his addressing the Devil as "noble prince of Hell" (l. 206), and he remains himself "alone" when Lucifer leaves the stage equally "alone", as the Vice informs us. The benediction Lucifer vouchsafes him is, no doubt, like all demonic blessings, given with his left hand,

2 See Fulwell, ll. 82, 92 and 119; also "godfather Devil" (l. 132). The Devil retorts, "good, good, sweet, sweet godson" (l. 135). He also calls the Devil his "gransier" (i.e., grandfather) (l. 54); on their first encounter, Lucifer hails him as "mine own boy" (l. 77), and again, towards the end of the play, as he leaves the stage carrying Nichol to Hell on his back (l. 1203).

as is the case with Titivillus, when sending the three sublordinate vices of *Mankind*, New Guise, Nowadays and Nought, on their pseudo-evangelical mission (*Mankind*, l. 522). And the Vice, with yet another fit of laughter, similar to the one he indulged in on his first arrival, gives a proof of his identity, and rejoices in his solitude, exactly like his god-father Lucifer: "Now three knaves are gone, and I am left alone, / Myself here to solace" (Fulwell, ll. 567-68).

For no understandable reason, the Vice suddenly falls into a fit of anger: he had appointed himself judge, in order to pass judgement on the behaviour of his two visitors, Tosspot and Roister. He gives himself superior airs, demands that they should take off their caps before him, and upbraids them for calling him "plain" Nichol; and, in spite of the submissive attitude and soothing words of the accused, he attacks them physically in three successive assaults, pretending he is the offended party.

The reaction is different with the last two visitors, two cutpurses, when they realise that Nichol is responsible for the sentence which condemns them to be hanged. Their anger reaches a maximum when they understand the meaning of Nichol's promise of the gift of a new land called the Land of the Two-Legged Mare, that is, the gallows. They insult the Vice and beat him, but the episode turns into a scene of comedy when Nichol tries to pick himself up, asking, "Am I alive, or am I dead ?" (l. 1063). The comedy turns to the macabre when Nichol and the executioner cast lots for possession of the coats of the two cutpurses (ll. 1156-59), recalling the two soldiers drawing lots for the seamless coat of Jesus after the Crucifixion.

One is struck by the numerous occurrences of "friend" and "brother": because of the tone of the set-up and the nature of the characters involved, these words are not to be taken at their face-value, but rather as a vehicle of flattery and even deception. The dramatic world which is built in that kind of play does not know real brothers; everyone has exclusively in sight his own personal interest, and not universal love and friendship: a "moral" posture which in fact leads them to their downfall. A particularly interesting word in this respect is the term "Captain", used by the Flemish clown to refer to his drinking mate, Tom Tosspot (l. 530). Three other plays use that word to express the relationships between members of similar gangs. In *Trial of Treasure* (William Wager [?], 1565; l. 235) and *Albion, Knight* (1537; l. 166), Lust is so named; in *Respublica*, Insolence, recognized as

leader, is called "Captain" by Avarice, the Vice (l. 275). The martial connotations of this name sound most appropriate for the Vice group.[3]

It is the fundamental and biting irony of the predicament of such good-for-nothings that their only quest should be for someone similar to themselves, the "likes" mentioned in the title of Fullwell's play, also called "mates" within the play (ll. 139, 265, 275). This sort of play is the sad picture of thwarted ambitions and an irresistible process of inexorable isolation.

II

The second text to be examined here is a much earlier play, John Skelton's *Magnificence* (*Magnyfycence*), dating back to the beginning of the century, probably 1516. Contrary to some opinions refusing the denomination "interlude" for this play, it can certainly be counted among that class of dramatic productions for three reasons. First, the word "interlude" is used on the title-page. Other factors are the erratic structure of the play and the probable circumstances of its first production at Court (probably before Henry VIII). Although the argument is totally different from those of Henry Medwall's plays, yet a comparison between the works of the two playwrights is possible, as both were court entertainers.

Many character-types and motifs are common to both. For instance, the witty servant typical of the Renaissance is prominent in Medwall's *Fulgens and Lucres*: in fact, two representatives of that type of character, together with their respective masters, are used to build a structural symmetry in the plot. In the later development of the Vice of the interludes, we often find Vices belonging to that inferior social status. The motif that goes with that status is that of the recruiting of such masterless would-be servants by masters who need their help in their own love affairs or social promotion. That deal between the two parties involved is of a commercial and economic nature, as each one tries to promote his own selfish interests, rather than the welfare and happiness of the other party.

In *Magnificence* this situation is well illustrated by the recruiting of Fancy by the eponymous protagonist. After he has been convinced by Measure that Liberality can be harmoniously combined with a reasonable management of wealth,

3 The title "Captain" may refer to any type of leader, particularly in popular rejoicings. Philip Stubbs, in *Anatomy of Abuses*, wrote: "All the wild heads of the Parish, conventing together, choose them a Grand-Captain (of all Mischief) whom they ennoble with the title 'my Lord of Misrule'" (quoted Wiles, p. 11).

Fancy ingratiates himself with Magnificence by giving out his name as Largesse, or Liberality (Skelton, l. 270), and producing a forged letter of recommendation, supposedly written by the wise counsellor Sad Circumspection. So, the recruiting of a royal adviser comes as an occasion to reveal dishonest political practice, and at the same time build an entertaining plot.

It is interesting to notice that this trick is performed through a change of name. We know that this fraud is widespread in interlude plots. It has two consequences: highlighting the arbitrariness of the action of naming through a metalinguistic operation, and lending a sort of illusory independance to dramatic characters engaged in this performative process. The consequence is a general blurring of the frontiers between "character" and social "type" that reveals the fragility of a flawed society. In this case, the change of name effected by Fancy opens the way to a general borrowing of new names, the signal for the beginning of hostilities, which is hailed by Cloaked Collusion by the phrase, "here begynneth the game" (l. 682).

The blurring of demarcation lines particularly affects Cloaked Collusion, who proves to be a faithful forerunner of the Vice Ambidexter in Thomas Preston's *Cambises* (1569). He is "Syr John Double-Cope [=cloke?]" (l. 605), has "two faces in a hode" (l. 710), and can "laughe and grone" at the same time (l. 698). Cloaked Collusion's most telling remarks are his declaration about double-dealing; he boasts, "I can fede forth a fole and lede hym by the eyre" (l. 712), and voices this most ominous comment about his own action: "By Cloked Colusyon … / Cumberaunce and trouble in Englande fyrst I began" (ll. 714-15).

So, this wicked trinity—Crafty Conveyance, under the name of Sure Surveyance, Cloaked Collusion, as Sober Sadness, and Courtly Abusion, as Lusty Pleasure—can be considered as a nest of prospective Vices. They can be named "Vices" because they have a collective plan to endanger the peace of the court and Magnificence's prosperity. But the plan knows only temporary success, and the plotters are ultimately exposed: "*Magnyfycence*. Ye be the theuys, I say, away my goodys dyd cary / … / Magnyfycence I was, whom ye haue brought to shame" (ll. 2239-41). Their failure is due to discord within the group. Their association has not been founded under the best auspices, as it coincides with Courtly Countenance's ode to Counterfeiting. Our group of plotters is defined by one of its members, proud Cloaked Collusion, as "a leysshe of ratches to renne an hare" (l. 586). As for Fancy, another among the conspirators, he is accused of being brainless (l. 608). So this was not really a promising start for such an entreprise,

and the nature of the confederates was bound to lead to intestine clashes and quarrels. The plotters tease one another, and what started as a jest promises to lead to bad feelings and unfeigned anger: "ofte peas is taken for frayes" (l. 814).

In the hour of their "victory", when Magnificence's coffers are empty (l. 2163) and his power is at a very low ebb, Cloaked Collusion and Crafty Conveyance fall to quarreling, challenging and threatening each other: "*Clo. Col.* Leue thy pratynge, or els I shall lay the on the pate" (l. 2173). But they soon make it up, Counterfeit Countenance urging them not to act as knaves ("iauels" [l. 2211]) of the lowest sort (which in fact they are!) but to behave instead like civilised people: "Now let vs be all one, and let vs lyue in rest; / For we be, Syrs, but a fewe of the best" (ll. 2202-3). Not being aware of what the discussion was about, Counterfeit Countenance tries to bring the episode to an end and, at the same time, defines it, saying, "what was your quarell?" (l. 2210). But Cloaked Collusion cannot bear Crafty Conveyance's bragging about his superior skill as a thief: "And I tell you, I dysdayne moche of his mockys" (l. 2227).

The other two characters that could stand for the post of Vice, Fancy and Folly, appear each accompanied by a pet, Fancy by a hawk, Folly by a dog—or rather a cur—and perform a scene that smacks of the minstrel's comic routine. Fancy acts under a borrowed name, Largesse (otherwise Liberality), in order to deceive Magnificence. He plays a true Vice's trick when he uses a forged letter.

The same Fancy can boast of another distinctive trait of the Vice. He laughs and weeps in quick succession without knowing why:

> Sometyme I laughe ouer lowde;
> Sometyme I wepe for a gew gaw;
> Sometyme I laughe at waggynge of a straw. (ll. 1013-15)

His companion Folly seems almost proud of his weak brain: "as for me, I take but one folysshe way" (l. 1077).

And then they start bickering and openly engage in an absurd competition about the price at which they would sell their respective pets—a deal in which "wise" Fancy exchanges a valuable hawk against a "pylde curre" (l. 1055) and is thus cheated by brainless Folly, and this in the midst of a lot of nonsensical discourse. Fancy and Folly could be described as two complementary Vices: Fancy seems more professional but is finally fooled by an "amateur", who thus proves that a fool is more efficacious than a real Vice; so Folly himself claims, speaking to Fancy and Crafty Conveyance: "I can make you bothe folys, and

I wyll" (l. 1174). But his supposed "wicked" actions turn out to be sham, or just practical jokes, such as pretending to find a louse on Crafty Conveyance's shoulder, or stealing some money from his fellow's purse. These tricks, performed with the complicity of the audience, do not go beyond a comic exemplification of the technique whereby he turns men into fools: "it is I that foles can make"; "Syr, of my maner I shall tell you the playne" (ll. 1214, 1220).

In the same passage we find an old acquaintance of ours: Titivillus, the devil of idle talk. The two wicked characters (explicitely given as wicked), Simkin Titivell and Pierce Pykthank (l. 1268), are described as disciples of Folly: they "hauntyth my scolys" (l. 1265), says Folly.[4] In order to be efficaciously obnoxious, Folly will be introduced into the Palace under the false name of Conceit. Now the two "brothers" speak with one voice: "that is my parte that thou spekest of nowe" (l. 1283). It is signifiant that, in his commentary on the situation, Folly should pray for the help of his "good godfather" (l. 1313), just like Nichol in *Like Will to Like*. Who is this godfather, if not Lucifer himself ?

My last remark will bear on the use of the word "dyser". It is Crafty Conveyance (who has already been baptised a "hoddypeke", that is, a fool [l. 1162]) that uses it, addressing Folly: "In a cote thou can play well the dyser" (l. 1177). Other forms of the word can be found in contemporary texts: "disar", "disard", "disour", "desert". The term seems to have connections with entertainment in general. When quoting it, Stephen Greenblatt explains, "i.e. jester" (Greenblatt, p. 63). The etymological dictionary gives a Dutch origin: "dasaert", meaning "fool". It could more probably derive from the French "diseur", a character partaking in a medieval courting game between a young nobleman and a lady, which seems to have been a kind of dumb-show, the action being commented upon by a manipulator-interpreter, the "diseur". In *Magnificence* there sems to be more to it than the bare meaning of "jester" suggested by Greenblatt, as it introduces Folly's rejoinder: "Ye, but thou can play the fole without a vyser" (l. 1178). That exchange tends to equate "diser" and "fool".

4 Titivillus, who appears or is mentioned in several plays and interludes, is the devil who records the idle words exchanged between parishioners during divine service (see *OED*, s.v. "titivil"). (There may be a connection with the common interjection "tilly-vally", whose origin *OED* records as unknown.) Pickthank is less known. Is he in any way connected with the Pickharness (or Pickbrain), Cain's boy in the Towneley *Mactatio Abel*?

III

This multiplicity of variable characters reminds one of some earlier plays, such as *Mankind* and those of Medwall. It has proved difficult for most critics to decide whether there was one or several Vices in those plays (with a capital "V" or not), or whether their nature was more akin to that of a tempter than a jester, or vice-versa. The difficulty possibly found its origin in a rigid and inadequate conception of the dramatic realisation of the Vice function. There is indeed a consensus among critics that a Vice should be isolated, a bad counsellor, with one or several confederates, unchanged until the end of the play, when he usually comes to a bad end: execution, the traditional fate of criminals, or a trip to hell in Satan's company, sometimes carried on his shoulders.

In fact, this scheme belongs to a limited number of plays of a fairly late period, and probably under the effect of a slow evolution, a specialisation of dramatic roles, and a change in economic and cultural backgrounds during a time when most plays were no longer court entertainments. This period saw a multiplication of "hybrid" plays, intended for a more popular stage and so having more limited means at their disposal. The "new" Vices (or "true" Vices) in surviving texts are twelve in number, ranging from 1560 to 1570 (1590, if we include *A Looking Glass for London and England*, by Thomas Lodge and Robert Greene).[5]

All things considered, the conclusion to be drawn is more moral than might be expected. The fundamental opposition between Vices and "good" characters is structural: the good naturally keep together, as an ordered household, family or tribe, whereas the Vices, in spite of their oaths of fidelity and eternal friendship, rapidly start quarreling, soon fall to fisticuffs, and finish up isolated by their very iniquity. Rather than being a happy family, their community is organized as a redoubtable gang of thieves and scoundrels, for which there were countless models in the Elizabethan underworld literature.

5 They are: Inclination, in *Trial of Treasure* (1567); Subtle Shift, in *Clyomon and Clamydes* (1570); Covetousness, in *Enough Is as Good as a Feast* (1570); Sin, in *All for Money* (1577); Desire, in *The Tide Tarieth No Man* (1578). And among the "hybrid" plays (as defined by Spivack, chap. 8 [pp. 251-303]) figure the following: Ambidexter, in *Cambises* (1560); Iniquity, in *Darius* (1560); Haphazard, in *Apius and Virginia* ("R. B.", 1560); Politic Persuasion, in *Grissil* (1561); Revenge, in *Horestes* (1567); Ill Report, in *The Most Virtuous and Godly Susanna* (Thomas Garter, 1568); Radagon, in A *Looking Glass for London and England* (1590).

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When Naming Is Performing: Folly's Children in absentia *in* Mundus et Infans

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Mundus et Infans, a play of 976 lines which "has not much plot" (MacCracken, p. 487), according to one of its first critics, is an early Tudor interlude presenting man's whole life from birth to old age. Its thin plot shows man's successive fundamental stages of childhood and adolescence (innocence), youth and manhood (corruption), and old age (repentance). The interlude has the same narrative scope as *The Castle of Perseverance* but has nothing of the flamboyance of that complex moral play; neither has it the older play's vast range of characters. Actually, as many critics have observed, two actors only can play it: one in the human protagonist's role, the other in the roles of Mundus, Conscience, Folly and Perseverance. While Infans nearly always remains onstage, the others come and go, never meeting one another, so that one actor can play them all. From their names, it is evident that the four are equally divided between the "goodies" and the "baddies".

In spite of the compression of the plot and the strictures possibly caused by the casting paucity,[1] typical

1 I am here assuming that only two actors perform the interlude. Of course this might not always have been the case, but certainly the suppression of the Deadly Sins as active characters also comes out in favour of this hypothesis.

tempter characters, such as the seven Deadly Sins, "act" in the play *in absentia*, simply through the speeches of the other protagonists. Naming them in this way gives them stage life, and Folly's family is thereby shown in its entirety.

Context, Content, Criticism

The only extant early edition of *The Worlde and the Chylde otherwise called Mundus and Infans* was printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1522, as the colophon testifies, but very probably the date of its composition is earlier. Ian Lancashire, after studying what he recognises as topical allusions, dates it around the end of the first decade of the sixteenth century: "[it] must have been performed in a noble or well-off household celebrating Christmas ca. 1506-09" (p. 100). He also recreates the possible environment and the auspices of the play's performance: the household of Richard Grey, thirteenth earl of Kent, a man dangerously indebted to King Henry VII and greatly embittered toward the royal power (p. 101), issues on which Lancashire grounds some topical allusions in the play. Lancashire's argument cannot be more than "a tentative one" (p. 101). Hence Davidson and Happé, the editors of the most recent edition of the play, while considering these hypotheses, do not finally accept them but opt for an earlier date of composition, the last decade of the fifteenth century (p. 4).[2] Nevertheless, when analysing the allegorical features of this interlude, they write that it was "apparently composed in the first years of the sixteenth century" (p. 15), thus leaving the question of the exact date unresolved. In any case, de Worde's edition fixes the printing date as 1522, just a few years after the same printer had issued a second edition of Henry Watson's prose translation of Sebastian Brandt's *Das Narrenschiff* (1517), that is, at a time when Fool literature was still highly fashionable with its range of moral allegories, after Alexander Barclay's verse translation of the same in 1509 and, of course, Erasmus' *Praise of Folly* in 1511.

Before focussing on the particular issue identified in my introduction, I think it may be helpful to give a brief summary of the play and of its reception by modern criticism. *Mundus et Infans* could be labelled a "small *Castle of Perseverance*" because it deals with more or less the whole life of man, his successive ages and the various sins to which he is allured by World, a character very similar

2 Quotations from *Mundus et Infans* will be drawn from *The Worlde and the Chylde*, ed. Davidson and Happé.

to his namesake in the *Castle.* Nevertheless, the reduced length of the text, the small number of speaking parts (and, more definitively, the ingenious doubling allowing only two actors to perform it), have attracted critics' interest in their own right, without the need to look for parallels in the fifteenth-century, and much longer, moral play. After all, a plot journeying through the ages of man, with more or less numerous processes of fall and redemption, toward final salvation is typically medieval, and many traces of these themes are also found in poetry. Thus MacCracken studies the interlude's affinity with *The Mirror of the Periods of Man's Life*, an early fifteenth-century verse allegory.

The "Infans" of the title is successively dubbed Wanton, Lust and Liking, Manhode, and Age (but also Shame and Repentance) by the other protagonists of the play, that is, by World, Conscience, Folly and Perseverance. From the last four names, it is not difficult to understand that these characters belong to the two opposite fields of virtues and vices (even though the Vice had not yet been introduced on stage as a character). Thus the allurements of World bring the protagonist—in his successive ages—to sin, from which he is redeemed first by Conscience and, after his second fall, by Perseverance. The protagonist's death is not shown (contrary to what happens in the *Castle*), but from Perseverance's last speech, the last in the play, we understand that mankind is saved: "Ye, and now is your name Repentaunce / Throughe the grace of God Almyght" (ll. 971-72). What can also be understood from the plot and from these words is that *Mundus et Infans* is still a Catholic work, where salvation is warranted by means of God's mercy and the sinner's repentance, albeit late.

Of course, Folly is a representative of evil, together with World, even more so because while World shows Infans many, albeit morally dangerous, opportunities in life, Folly is the one who tempts the protagonist and brings him to sin. Folly is not accompanied by minor evil characters, such as the seven Deadly Sins; nevertheless, the latter are mentioned in the play and made as lively as if they were present on stage. (This effect will be dealt with below.)

David Bevington, having studied the doubling machinery, the structural value of the monologues, and the general compression of plot events and of characters, considers *Mundus et Infans* a clear example of popular dramatic structure (pp. 116-24), while T. W. Craik highlights the parallel changes in the protagonist's names and costumes (pp. 82-83). Richard Southern (pp. 126-42), on the other hand, after dividing the text into five episodes (according to the human protagonist's interlocutors), analyses the play from the point of view of its stag-

ing, whether outdoors or indoors, arriving at the conclusion that it was staged indoors (p. 142). More recently, Suzanne Westfall has grouped *Mundus et Infans* with those early sixteenth-century interludes "concerned with various theories of pedagogy; all attempt to delineate the process a foolish nobleman goes through in order to learn good governance" (p. 190), and therefore fit to be performed in a noble household, in this case Richard Grey's, according to Lancashire's previously mentioned hypothesis. In other words, together with *Youth* and *Hickscorner* and other early moral interludes, *Mundus et Infans* might be considered a sort of chapter in a hypothetical—and yet at the time non-existent—*Book Named the Governor* (of course without the topical references Greg Walker has seen in Sir Thomas Elyot's later work).[3]

Davidson and Happé, in their rich introduction to the play, delve into the iconographic tradition of the theme of man's ages, in order to show how deeply it was ingrained in medieval culture, and also to show possible scenic solutions for Infans' costumes. The meaning of allegory is also studied, in a successful attempt to redeem it from its centuries-old condemnation when compared with a realistic theatrical rendition of events. The editors claim, in fact, that the allegorical methods used in the interlude "provided dramatizations of perceived experience and were regarded as reflecting a reality beyond and above the literal sense of the words or the physical gestures of the action" (p. 11).

"These seuen synnes I call folye" (l. 460)

As mentioned above, both World and Folly represent evil in the play, but while the former only speaks and may remain fixed on his throne (perhaps resembling the image printed by Wynkyn de Worde on the frontispiece of the text[4]), merely furnishing Infans with new clothes fit for his various ages (ll. 1-236), Folly arrives on stage at l. 521. This entrance occurs after Manhode's encounter with Conscience, as if Folly had been announced by Conscience's repeated allusion to him, especially when the good counsellor advises Manhode to avoid evil:

> *Manhode*. Folye? what thynge callest thou folye?
> *Conscyence.* Syr, it is Pryde, Wrathe and Enuy,

3 See Walker, pp. 141-89.

4 The image, reproduced from the original print, can be seen at <https://books.google.it/books?id=m2pbAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=it&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false> (accessed 29 July 2015).

Slouthe, Couetous and Glotonye, —
Lechery the seuente is:
These seuen synnes I call folye. (ll. 456-60)

He leaves the stage at l. 698, but it is as if he remained part of the action, since his name will often be rehearsed in the following lines. It is interesting to compare the occurrences of the other main words which emerge as *Dramatis Personae* (DP):[5]

Table 1. Mentions of the characters in the play

	Speech headings	Mentions before a DP's entrance	Mentions after a DP's exit
Conscyence	31	0	29
Folye	35	7	18
Mundus	12	0	0
Perseueraunce	13	3	0
Worlde	0	0	20
Man (various ages)*	89	—	—

* Figures referring to the protagonist are calculated only for the occurrences in speech headings.

From the table it is evident that Folye has more turns at talk than the other speakers, apart from Manhode. This shows him to be an active interlocutor who avoids long speeches, on the one hand, and speaks in quick repartee, on the other, especially if we consider that Folye is on stage for 177 lines only, while Conscyence is present during 232 lines in his two interventions. Still, he is mentioned a little less frequently than Conscyence, whose name is pronounced by Folye himself, in particular when sneering at him as an enemy for the conquest of Manhode. Before his entrance, Folye is mentioned seven times in Conscyence's caveats to Manhode against him. After the character leaves the stage, he is named eighteen times as the evil which has assailed Manhode, before the latter's admission: "Folye falsely deceyued me" (l. 969). Such analysis does not only concern the quantitative aspects of a text, but also involves the theatrical relevance of a character (and especially of what he stands for). To give a Shakespearean parallel, one thinks immediately of Julius Caesar, who, in spite of being killed in Act Three, Scene One, remains an "acting" character, so to say, to the end of

5 The search for Table 1 was made by using the AntConc concordancer applied to the text of the interlude (<http://www.laurenceanthony.net/software.html> and <https://machias.edu/faculty/necastro/drama/comedy/Mundus_et_Infans_Basic.txt>, respectively; accessed 9 July 2015).

the play, being mentioned many times in the second part of the tragedy, besides appearing as a ghost twice. In other words, Caesar, albeit dead, still works on the plot till its end.

If Conscyence is mentioned in the text more frequently than Folye, the discrepancy between the occurrences of the two names is balanced by the number of times what we may think of as Folye's "children" are evoked: Covetous (14), Envy (6), Glottony (6), Lechery (8), Pride (17), Sloth (7), and Wroth (7). While Mundus is clearly one of the dangerous triad of the World, the Flesh and the Devil, that is, the basic enemies against whom man has to fight in order to gain salvation according to Christian teaching, Folly is the name generally given to man's attitude when not complying with God's and the Church's precepts, that is, when sinning.[6] Therefore, the relationship between Folly and the seven Deadly Sins is close, because folly means sinful behaviour, and by sinning man manifests his folly. The famous woodcut representing Mère Sotte with two of her children in the printed edition of *Le jeu du prince des sotz et mere Sotte* by Pierre Gringore (1512) well mirrors the parental relationship between the Deadly Sins and Folly.[7]

The Seven are not characters in *Mundus et Infans*, and as a consequence, the audience is deprived of the physical, three-dimensional presence that is so vivacious in other moral plays because of the sins' colourful language, lively stage behaviour and body language. But is this totally true? What follows will examine this issue and demonstrate how, in my opinion, the dramatist succeeds in making the "Children of Folly" visible, and their action tangible in spite of their absence.

The Double-sided Seven Deadly Sins

Once Wanton (the name given by Mundus to Infans at the beginning of the play) reaches fourteen years of age, he returns to World's throne and receives another new name (Lust and Lykyng), together with a new garment, since he boasts of being "proudely apperelde in garmentes gaye" (l. 134). Only when he comes of age

6 On Folly both as a concept and as a character, see Happé, "Fansy and Foly".

7 The frontispiece of Gringore's play can be seen at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k70260t/f3.image> (accessed 29 July 2015).

(at twenty-one, according to l. 155)[8] is the protagonist named "Manhode" (once again by Mundus). The latter also explains on what his own power depends, namely on "seuen kynges [who] sewen me, / Bothe by daye and nyght" (ll. 170-71):

> The kynge of Enuy, doughty in dede;
> The kynge of Wrathe, that boldely wyll abyde,
> For mykyll is his myght;
> The kynge of Couetous is the fourt[h]e;
> The fyfte kynge he hyght Slouthe;
> The kynge of Glotony hath no iolyte
> There pouerte is pyght;
> Lechery is the seuenth kynge,
> All men in hym haue gret delytynge,
> Therfore worshyp hym aboue all thynge,
> Manhode, with all thy myght. (ll. 172-83)

One "king" is missing in Mundus' enumeration. As a consequence, Manhode asks him for an explanation, which comes soon afterwards: "The fyrste kynge hyght Pryde" (l. 188). The audience immediately recognises the seven Deadly Sins in this list and feels the discrepancy between their being called "kings" and their religious significance: if they are kings, they are kings of evil. But Manhode is not aware of this and thanks Mundus for his gifts, which also include "robes ryall, right of good hewe", the bestowing of knighthood (l. 199) plus a sword (l. 210), beauty (l. 201), and also wealth "Of the wronge to make the right" (l. 203), as the text adds with a satirical touch.

So well "equipped" is Manhode that, as soon as Mundus leaves the stage (at l. 236, after a boastful oration starting at l. 216), he begins his own proud and bragging speech. It is fifty lines long (ll. 237-87), and, while allowing the actor performing Mundus to change into Conscyence's costume, thus effecting the first doubling in the play, it also offers a particular image of the human protagonist. Even before Folye enters, through and in Manhode's words we see and listen to the Deadly Sins "in action".

Manhode starts by addressing the spectators themselves: "Peas, now peas, ye felowes all aboute" (l. 237). The style of this speech mirrors that of Mundus in its heavy alliteration and boastful phrases[9] and shows the playwright's ability in

8 The treatment of time (and of time passing) in the play is extremely compressed. See Lester, pp. xxx-xxxi, and Southern, pp. 132-34.

9 See Lester, p. xxxiii.

varying words, rhythm and register for each character. On this point, Davidson and Happé write that "the choice of appropriate registers to match characterization is remarkable in the play … it seems that the difference of the individual voices may have been of particular value as part of the staging" (p. 21). Manhode's speech consists of five quatrains of lines of various length, plus two tail-rhyme stanzas (ll. 267-82) and three five-line stanzas, the latter as well with lines of different length.[10] Lester notices that some verbal forms such as "I have" become relevant at this point, "as Manhood, at the peak of his worldly powers, recounts his achievements" (p. xxxiii). To "I have" I would also add "I am" as an emphatic assertion of individuality and proud self-awareness; this verbal form is repeated seven times in the whole speech, but particularly six times in ll. 267-74, five in a strong anaphoric position:

> I am worthy and wyght, wytty and wyse,
> I am ryall arayde to reuen vnder the ryse,
> I am proudely aparelde in purpure and byse,
> As gold I glyster in gere;
> I am styffe, stronge, stalworthe and stoute,
> I am the ryallest redely that tenneth in this route,
> There is no knyght so grysly that I drede nor dout,
> For I am so doughtly dyght ther may no dint me dere. (ll. 267-74)

While Manhode speaks, the spectators "see" the Deadly Sins of which he is culpable. When vaunting his victories and killings, his territories and his fame, he becomes Pride, Wrath and Covetousness at the same time; when recounting that "many a lady for my loue hath sayd alas" (l. 257), he performs the role of Lechery, till—just before the end of this speech—he claims to be a liveried retainer of all the seven "kings", who are listed at ll. 275-82. Performing this monologue (and especially the lines devoted to the seven "kings"), an actor might put all his skill at characterization even into the pronunciation of the individual names, so as to bring these absent but powerful *dramatis personæ* to life.

Of course, Manhode does not call the seven "sins" at all, but by the title conferred on them by Mundus: they are "kings". Manhode narrates what these kings have done for him, in other words, their actions apparently in favour of Man. For the sake of dramatic economy in this short text—whose purpose is

10 See Davidson and Happé, pp. 21-22, and, on the verse structure of the play, Appendix I, pp. 113-16, in their edition.

mainly to represent the ages of man rather than other thematic issues—the seven are only "told" and not "shown". Nevertheless, they are virtually onstage and efficacious through other characters' voices. The offstage action is summarised in short sentences that list the events of which the kings/sins have been protagonists. Lechery "hath sent" (l. 276) letters to Manhode; Pride, Lechery himself and Wroth have promised to accept him as their liege-lord in a feudal system which also includes Covetous, Glottony, Slothe and Envy; "all those sende me theyr leuery" (l. 281), Manhode sounds proud to relate.

Later, once Conscyence has arrived, Manhode spontaneously says he is ready to behave according to what Conscyence himself has just told him—namely, to live "after me"—but only if "it to Prydes pleasynge be" (ll. 337-38). That is, Manhode recognises Pride as his major guide in life. Conscyence cannot accept this condition, of course, and explains to Manhode the real nature of this "king": "For pride, syr, is but a vayne glorye" (l. 344). The dialogue between the two goes on with Manhode, on the one hand, exalting the qualities of each Deadly Sin and naming them all, and with Conscyence, on the other hand, passing judgment on and turning down each of them. At the end of this skirmish, Manhode is conquered to repentance and brought to accept the ten commandments (briefly rehearsed by Conscyence at ll. 424-39), till a word new to him—as new and unknown as those belonging to the semantic field of good, like "conscience" itself, "spirituality", "mercy" and "measure", because of the protagonist's moral blindness—is introduced by Conscyence as an admonition to behave properly: "For doubte of foly doynge" (l. 455). It is the first time the word "folly" appears in the text, and Manhode, unable to distinguish between good and evil because of his moral ignorance, asks, "Folye, what thynge callest thou folye?" (l. 456). It is at this point, after Conscyence's answer, that Manhode becomes aware of the real nature and perilousness of the seven "kings":

> *Conscyence*. Syr, it is Pryde, Wrathe and Enuy,
> Slouthe, Couetous and Glotonye,—
> Lechery the seuente is:
> These seuen synnes I call folye.
> *Manhode*. What, thou lyest! To this
> Seuen the Worlde delyuered me,
> And sayd they were kynges of grete beaute
> And most of mayne and myghtes. (ll. 457-64)

Now the "kings" are unmasked, and Manhode is advised to "beware of folye" (l. 481) and, furthermore, to "beware of Folye and Shame" (l. 489). The meaning of the latter word is not investigated by Manhode, since it has already been used twice by Mundus (at ll. 163 and 166) albeit according to its worldly and secular application. Later it will clearly show its spiritual and religious meaning when Manhode is called Shame by Folye ("I shall clepe you Shame" [l. 682]). Age, as the protagonist's speech headings call him from l. 763 onwards, laments this new epithet at least three times towards the end of the interlude, and he is renamed "Repentaunce" by Perseveraunce at l. 854 ("I clepe you Repentaunce"), but the speech headings still identify him as "Age" to the end of the play. Furthermore, Age still calls himself "Shame"—"Than Shame my name hyght" (l. 970)—just six lines from the end, perhaps to underline his deeply felt shame for his own sins. The name "Repentaunce", given from the outside rather than interiorised by the protagonist, shows the effect of God's mercy and the final salvation of the hero.

Manhode's Second Fall

Up to l. 489, the text has shown Manhode first as obedient to World, then as redeemed by Conscyence, but the moral-play structure would not be complete without a relapse, for which another evil-doer is necessary. This is the function of Folye himself, as is especially clear when Manhode, in his monologue after Conscyence's exit, declares that he will "hym [World] not forsake / For mankynde he doth mery make" (ll. 510-11). Manhode's inclination to mirth and merry-making in spite of his previous repentance offers the opportunity for Folye's appearance and his possible domination of Man's soul. The character arrives on stage addressing the audience (ll. 523-24), rather than Manhode, and declaring who he is: "My name is Folye, I am not gaye?" (l. 522). Shortly after a brief exchange made up of insulting phrases on the part of the newcomer, there is a sword fight between the two, though with no final winner. Then Manhode asks Folye for information: "where was thou bore?" (l. 566). (Incidentally, the use of the second person singular pronoun manifests from the beginning the protagonist's feeling of superiority to Folye; actually, Folye first uses the plural pronoun, then passes to the singular form at l. 540, before the duel.)

The moral scope of the interlude reaches the audience more directly, localising not only the speaker, but the whole action, by way of Folye's answer:

By my faythe, In Englonde haue I dwelled yore,
And all myne auncetters me before;
But, syr, in London is my chefe dwellynge. (ll. 567-69)

Folye becomes an Englishman and a Londoner on top of that, so that even previous textual words and phrases acquire "a local habitation and a name".[11] This is also reinforced by the various London places mentioned by Folye, such as Westminster, London Bridge, the stews on the South bank of the Thames, Lombard Street and Pope's Head in the City: the physical world, evoked in Manhode's boastful monologue and encompassing Salerne, Florence, Calais, Picardy, Flanders and the whole of France, has now dwindled to a single town, to *the* town for the English, so that allegory turns into less esoteric and hidden meanings. This effect is further enhanced later on when Manhode/Age tells Perseveraunce of the misfortunes which led him to Newgate prison. London, for Manhode, has been revealed as a place of perdition, where he has perhaps learnt "reuel" (l. 702), but where his behaviour has reduced him to a foolish prey of the seven Deadly Sins.

Actually, on reentering at l. 763, Age recounts all his life, showing his despair and desire to end it after failing to obey Conscyence's teaching. Once again the "seuen deedly synnes" (l. 774) are evoked:

Pryde, Wrathe and Enuy and Couetous in kynde, —
The Worlde all these synnes delyuered me vntyll, —
Slouthe, Glotony, and Lechery, that is full of false flaterynge.
All these Conscyence reproued both lowde and styll. (ll. 775-78)

Manhode calls them by their real names, having experienced their dire effects. The audience, this time, hears Manhode's biographical narration and "sees" the Deadly Sins in the protagonist himself; not only is Folye the summary incarnation of the sins, but Manhode has become him/them: he/they have revelled in London, have drunk in inns and taverns, have played dice and frequented the stews. They have perhaps been acquaintances of the spectators, or even the spectators themselves.

The interlude ends with the protagonist's salvation after Conscyence's second intervention and the arrival of Perseueraunce. Talking to the latter,

11 For other early sixteenth-century interludes interpreting London as a place of sin, see *Youth* and *Hick Scorner*.

Manhode/Age recollects all his life twice (ll. 763-806 and 824-50), with its falls into sin because of his service to Folye and the Seven. As Repentaunce (the name given him by Perseueraunce, as mentioned above), he listens to "the twelue articles of the faith" (l. 905), that is, the Nicene Creed in twelve points, rehearsed by Perseueraunce, who also salutes the audience, offering them a metaphorical "mantel perpetuall", a garment of salvation through the Catholic faith, the definitive and only clothing to wear after all the various attires (and names!) put on by Manhode.

Mundus et Infans highlights, then, its own didactic purposes and a structure in line with the dramatic tradition of the moral play, in spite of the strictures imposed by the limited number of possible performers. The anonymous playwright, so attentive to the possibilities, or need, for doubling in his work and to the combination of verse and register for the various speakers, thus reveals his skill by reducing the number of actors drastically, by multiplying the sonorous nuances of the spoken parts, by alternating and enriching meanings for the same words, and by showing man's life in a sort of time-lapse sequence. While abandoning (or, having to abandon) the idea of the physical onstage presence of such plot agents as the seven Deadly Sins, he nevertheless succeeds in creating the illusion of their immediate reality, their "here-ness". It is, so to say, another type of doubling: it is a case not of an actor performing many roles visibly, but of the inner transformation of one character into another who is only mentioned, but in such a way as to emerge from within extant protagonists. This is also due to the allegorical characterisation, which allows personages to be what they claim to be through their words and behaviour and to be interpreted by the audience on the basis of the abstract principles they embody. So Manhode himself, with respect to his morals and to the actual staging of *Mundus et Infans*, becomes a child of Folly, and the absent figures are given an almost palpable performative power because their corruptive influence is quite discernable in the title co-hero and protracted throughout the whole play.

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Dramatic Aspects of the Vices in Lyndsay's Satyre

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The recent attention to Lyndsay's *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* has made advances in the study of its theatricality and also of the breadth of its achievement in moral and political spheres.[1] It is a play which gives us a broad reflection of its time and of people in different positions in that society, high and low. The title indicates that many characters are involved and also points to the desire to expose what was wrong. It is a remarkable achievement in that it addresses the ills of the kingdom as a whole and yet, in addition, it succeeds in reflecting interests at a local level. That the play is called a "satire" seems to me to be significant because it brings to mind a traditional process of exposure of faults and weaknesses by laughter going back to classical literature. That is what the play seems to aim at, and if this is so, its objectives are to be achieved by a comic process which is entertaining. But in saying this we need to notice that there are many different varieties of laughter, sweet or sour, which might be stimulated. It is also true that satire has a serious function: it turns upon an exposure of what is reprehensible and indeed what may be unpalatable, even shocking. Such an exposure is often seditious since it can strike hard at what is going on officially or politically.

1 See Walker, Twycross and Happé, "'What is ane King?'".

Besides this function as satire the mockery involved in this play is closely linked to the perception and portrayal of folly. Recent discussions of folly in the play have successfully underlined that its portrayal can point to contrasting effects, especially to the exploitation of the ingenuousness apparent in innocent victims by fools who are themselves foolishly corrupt.[2]

In this essay I would like to address the ways in which Flatterie, Dissait and Falset, the three vices of the *Satyre* who work as a distinctive group, as a kind of family, contribute to both the comedy and the seriousness which the play comprehends. In the end they have to be seen as foolishly evil but also dangerously potent, and that is my reason for discussing them under the general topic of the family of folly. In fact, they seem to me to exemplify certain ambiguities in the notions of folly, not least the possibility of being foolishly and reprehensively evil, but also a means by which innocence and virtue may be revealed through their own wickedness, as well as being the target of attack. But beyond this we may find that folly is egregiously performable and perceivable in acts as well as in words. Somebody being foolish is clearly perceived to be so if he or she works upon an audience and encourages them to watch and participate in comedy. Through this means the exposure of folly becomes entertaining. Much of our experience of drama involves a mixture of approach and rejection, and I think these vices in Lyndsay's *Satyre* have that quality, as the brilliant performances in the manifestation at Linlithgow in 2013 made apparent.[3] But we should bear in mind in thinking of these effects that in the end Lyndsay gives Foly the last laugh and that last laugh is a warning rather than a triumph. Lyndsay's satirical approach is born of a dissatisfaction and an anxiety which do not quite go away, as we shall see.

Why should we respond to and like the evil characters as much as we did at the Linlithgow performance? I think the answer to that question lies in part in the fact that theatre has many different forms and that the actuality, localisation and detail of those forms engage our curiosity. The very specificity of satirical reference is one of its chief weapons. Satire is more disturbing when it pins down precisely what it is attacking. I have already mentioned that Lyndsay is interested in the local detail as a satirical target, and even if sixteenth-century Scotland is

2 For conflicting elements, see Carpenter.

3 For films of the performances at Linlithgow see the website "Staging and Representing the Scottish Renaissance Court": <http://stagingthescottishcourt.brunel.ac.uk/> (accessed 15 March 2016).

not our native habitat, we are still drawn into it by the presentation of folly he sets before us, in part because in his localised detail of the suffering of the Pauper and his lost cows he hits at something which is both local and universal in its outrage. Much turns upon the particularity of the satire, and we react to the specific details of the Pauper's pitiable account.

The construction and adaptation of a theatrical means of achieving such an engagement is the essence of what I should like to consider here. To do this I shall need to look at some of Lyndsay's work outside this play and at the specifics of dramatisation of the processes of folly as exemplified in these vices. This means that the practices of sixteenth-century drama by others are relevant to his play, and that is especially interesting because of the absence of information about other plays in Scotland at the time, and the details that are available about what was going on in the way of theatrical performance elsewhere. However, there is one important caveat in that the three vices are not the whole story, because Lyndsay's play embraces many different dramatic styles and modes. Indeed, I have suggested in a different context that it succeeds partly by presenting a number of dramatic styles associated with other circumstances than those this work is concerned with.[4]

In what follows we shall have occasion to compare Lyndsay's achievement with a number of other dramatic methods. That he chose to make use of the three vices as a group inevitably associates his work with morality plays and interludes. The allegory these characters present is a manifestation of the evils of the court and especially those which involve speaking for evil ends, which is closely linked with a process of corrupt enrichment. They are not the only evil influences at work in the play, but their presence makes apparent the damage which can be done by these villains of the court, and their use of language to flatter, to deceive and to tell lies or represent falsely. It so happens that much of what we know about the early drama in England is focussed upon the court and its ills.

However, before considering Lyndsay's dramatic techniques in his play's portrayal of folly I should like to look at a few items from his non-dramatic poetry, in which there is much attention to dissatisfaction about life in the royal court at which he was a participant as well as an exposer. We can detect a deep emotional commitment to the court on his part, but also a long-standing sense

4 For French influence, particularly the *sotties*, see Mill and Happé, "Stage Directions".

of its corruption, its abuses and the need for reform. He served as a courtier for many years, and his loyalty was mixed with complaint. Indeed, one of the poems I wish to mention is specifically concerned with his dissatisfaction about not being adequately rewarded for his services. *The Complaynt of Schir David Lyndesay to the Kingis Grace*, written in 1529-30, gives an eloquent account of his grievances. It is noticeable that the discourse of the poem repeatedly returns to the evil effects of flattery which he sees as endemic in court life and which he does not wish to engage in himself, even though he sees that it undoubtedly brings rewards for those who do. At times he does question whether he should indulge in it himself: "I wald sum wyse man did me teche / Quhidder that I suld flatter or fleche [*coax, cajole*]" (ll. 29-30).[5] He refers to the benefits to be gained—"Men gettis na thyng / Withoute inopportune askyng" (ll. 57-58)—and demonstrates its ubiquity:

> Thare was no play bot cartis and dyce
> And ay Schir Flatterie bare the pryce
> Roundand and rowkand, ane tyll uther [*whispering and, tale-bearing to one another*]. (ll. 184-86)

He connects flattery with folly in a passage which may hint at what was to come in the *Satyre*. He pities the young and pure king, whom he sees being surrounded by enemies: "Bot sum to crak and sum to clatter / Sum maid the fule and sum did flatter" (ll. 235-36). At another point he complains that John McCrery, the King's fool, was a rival who succeeded in acquiring a reward that was justly Lyndsay's own. In doing this he makes it clear that he sees the king as innocent: it is those surrounding him that should bear the blame (ll. 281-97). Further indications suggest that he was thinking about his material in a similar way to what was to come in the play: "Oppressioun and all his fallowis / Ar hangit heych apon the gallowis" (ll. 385-86); and eventually he tells his readers that Folly is fled out of the town (l. 401).

At about the same time, in *The Testament and Complaynt of our soverane lordis Papyngo, Kyng James the Fyft* (1529-30), Lyndsay again notices that fools and flatterers are rewarded without merit: "And quhow fonde fenyeit fulis, and flatteraris / For small servyce opteinith gret rewardis" (ll. 388-89). He invents Sensualytie and Ryches, who are the daughters of Propertie (ll. 610-14), and Correctioun, who must be obeyed (l. 658). His character Chastitie escapes and goes to the priests,

5 References to the poems are to Williams, ed.

who reject her for her "flattrye" (l. 894). He repeats the idea that flattery leads to injustice: "Quhy sulde vertew throuch flattrye be refusit, / That men for cunning can get no rewarde?" (ll. 1013-15). His extensive account of the difficulties experienced by a line of Scottish kings is prefaced by a pessimistic judgement of court life: "So sen in court bene no tranquillytie / Sett nocht on it your hole fielycite" (ll. 407-8). But perhaps the most intriguing aspect for the subject of this essay is the persistent closeness of flattery and folly. This relationship underlies Flatterie and his group of foolish associates in the *Satyre*. But it is not an innocent folly.

In considering this disgust over the role of flattery, I would point out that in the years between Lyndsay's first presentation of his play as a brief interlude in 1540 and the fuller realisations of 1553 and 1555, his criticism of court morals seems to have developed and intensified. Sir William Eure's Notes for Thomas Cromwell describing what he calls the "Interlude" performed at Linlithgow in 1540 make no mention of satire as such, and it is possible that Lyndsay did not use this word for the early version.[6] But perhaps more significantly, Flatterie is mentioned as taking part in the interlude, and he is without the family given to him later in the *Satyre*.

I

One of the questions which has arisen in the study of the *Satyre* is that it appears to be rather solitary in its achievement. However, it has been shown by Sarah Carpenter that there were other plays in Scotland and that Lyndsay showed an interest in them over many years. Dramatic activities seem to have been an essential part of court entertainment, as they were in England. But what actually survives is thin and we have little in the way of plays which can help us to envisage a theatrical context for what Lyndsay was aiming to do. Perhaps, therefore, we must look at the English drama to suggest where he found some hints or models. The likelihood that he was interested in English drama is not entirely speculative. We do know that he visited London in 1535 to accept the insignia of the Order of the Garter on behalf of James V and that he met Henry VIII as well as receiving money from Cromwell. In 1543 he was again in England returning the Garter after the death of James.[7] It is possible that he might have seen, read or discussed

6 For references to *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* and supplementary documentation, see Hamer, ed. Eure's Notes are given at II: 2-6.

7 *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII*, vol. IX, no. 165.

plays on these occasions, and in addition we cannot know what informal contacts he might have had with people interested in writing or in performing plays or in merely watching them. The first of the visits took place when John Bale and John Heywood were active, a critical time when the drama associated with the court was becoming a weapon of religious and political importance. Bale was supported by Cromwell at this time in writing and performing plays for religious and political objectives in a number of places outside London. Heywood had written satirical comedies which commented upon the royal policies and sought to influence them. A carefully managed indirectness brought attention to matters of significance, such as Ann Boleyn's pregnancy, which is referred to covertly in John Heywood's farce *John John*.[8] Heywood, like Lyndsay, continued to be closely connected with court entertainment for many years.

In composing the *Satyre,* Lyndsay invented a group of villains who are presented as being connected with one another and who rely upon their membership of a group in order to be successful. Such a combination is rich with theatrical opportunity. The device of grouping evil characters goes back a long way in the English drama—at least as far as *The Castle of Perseverance* (1400-25) where the evils (who are mostly deadly sins) are gathered into groups led by Mundus, Caro and Belyal. More effectively because they are used in a number of different ways, the evils of Newguise, Nowadays and Nought are closely related in *Mankind* (*c.*1470). They have a leader in Mischief, who manages them and exposes their evil significance, as well as their foolish behaviour when they are beaten. A generation later Skelton had recourse to a comparable group in *Magnyfycence* (1519-20), though here we find them working as individuals who at times show rivalry with one another—another productive dramatic device. Skelton cements their fellowship in evil distortion of court life by giving them names which seem to draw them together, but which are confusing by their very similarity: Clokyd Colusyon, Courtly Abusyon, Crafty Conveyaunce, and Counterfet Countenance. To these he adds another subgroup in the relationship between the characters Fansy and Foly, whose association we are told (l. 1066) went back to their school days together and who are contrasted by being manifestations of witty and ignorant folly. The presence of this second group is pertinent to what

8 Some of Heywood's additions to *La Farce de la Pasté,* which he translated for his own play, point to this topic, which must have been of great interest and speculation at court; see Happé, "'Rejoice ye in us'".

happens in the *Satyre*: that the performance and the observation of evil could be enhanced by the contiguity of groups embodying vices with those demonstrating folly.

Because of Lyndsay's visit to London 1535 we should note here that, whatever its form when first written in about 1518, the text of *Magnyfycence* we now have was not printed by John Rastell until about 1530. John Bale's *Comedy concernyng the Three Laws* (*c.*1536) was written within a few years after this publication, and we find that he has evolved a master of evil in Infidelity, who participates in the downfall of each of the three laws. In each of the episodes he is assisted by a pair of evils thematically appropriate to each of the three laws he is attempting to destroy: Idololatria and Sodomismus against the Law of Nature; Ambitio and Avaritia against the Law of Moses; and Hypocrisis and Pseudodoctrina against the Law of Christ. In a costume note at the end of the play these characters are described as "the frutes of Infydelyte" (sig. G1^{v}). These costumes are notable for their interrelationship with one another and for their reference to ecclesiastical vestments, which in itself is a form of satire. Bale's arrangement of allegory is meant to show how each of the laws is undermined by two evils able to corrupt it. This is made more significant by the way in which each component in the three pairs interacts with its complement. In Bale's arrangement into an allegory such interactions are part of his didactic programme to undermine traditional religion and to promote the Protestant reformation.

When we come to *Respublica*, a court play which has been questionably attributed to Nicholas Udall, we find an elaborate presentation of an allegory of evil characters. They are led by Avarice, who exhibits a perverted fatherly influence but also selfish dominance over another group of evil characters. These evils are again a destructive force in court life: Insolence, Oppression and Adulation. They are shown to be attacking the prosperity of the nation through their individual avarice. Adulation appears to be a variant for flattery. The play survives in a manuscript dated 1553, and it was intended for performance at court in the winter of 1553-54, but it is not clear from the court records whether it was actually performed. If the play was indeed written after the accession of Queen Mary, as seems more than likely, this would have been between the dates of the two known performances of the *Satyre*, and there is no evidence that Lyndsay saw it, or indeed whether the performance which was plainly envisaged ever came to pass. However, the conventions the play adopts, when considered with the examples I have already mentioned, do seem to have been generally employed,

and there is no doubt that they are perceivable as becoming more and more commonplace and conveniently useful in plays that followed in England in the second half of the sixteenth century. But we should notice that by calling his play a "satire" Lyndsay is giving particular emphasis to his dissatisfaction with the specific court in which he found himself, and also looking for an amendment of the evils exposed.

In *Respublica, The Castle of Perseverance* and *Mankind*, evil is spread among all the individuals in the conspiring groups and there is a thematic relationship between the individuals of each evil group: new fashion in *Mankind*, courtly abuse and profit-making by financial corruption in *Magnyfycence* and *Respublica*, while in *Castle* the evils are distributed in accordance with yet another potent and traditional grouping, the World, the Flesh and the Devil, as we have noticed. Bale's play has a more distinct religious and political motivation in its attack upon what he considered to be the evils of the Catholic church. The links between the individual characters are the essence of allegory, since they operate as figures for the relationship of the evils concerned.

We might suppose that these exploitations of allegorical groupings would be typical of other lost plays. There may have been a great number that might be relevant, as in the first half of the sixteenth century there are references to a regular supply of interludes being performed at court. Particularly striking is the evidence that usually payments were made to players through the Christmas period for their participation in such entertainment.[9]

II

Let us now look at how these vices are used in the plot of the *Satyre*. I suggest that their participation can be divided into five sections. In considering these we notice that there are large sections of the play in which they are not involved which we can leave aside for the moment, though sometimes the vices are onstage without direct action—as in the long sequence when they are sitting in the stocks. The first section (ll. 602-1169) introduces them to the audience, to one another and to other characters. We shall return to this in some detail, for it is a prolonged episode with several relevant aspects in it. It includes establishing a relationship between them and identifying their evil hierarchy. They take on

9 For many references to lost interludes at the English court see Streitberger.

aliases and disguises which deceive the King. From the point of view of theatrical history, this is one of the most remarkable passages in the play because of the extensive use Lyndsay makes of staging conventions discernible in English interludes. The episode shows them establishing influence over the King, who appoints them as his officers, as well as demonstrating their hostile reaction to Veritie's arrival. They seek to discredit her and are successful, in that she is put into the stocks, and they achieve this by pleasing the King in such a way that they can act against her with his connivance. While this episode is being played out the King falls into amorous temptation, but not as the result of their initiative, since other evil characters led by Solace are responsible for his seduction.

The second episode in which they participate directly comes in response to Correction, whose arrival is heralded by his Varlet (l. 1484). They express anxiety and fear as this unfolds and as a result they take refuge in allegiances to different parts of the community: Flatterie to the Spirituality, Dissait to the merchants and Falset to the craftsmen. Once again Lyndsay is quite specific in associating flattery with the misdemeanour of the spiritual estate. But this device does not serve them very well because it leads to dissention between them. Falset steals the King's box and the three of them fight over it, until Dissait seizes an opportunity and makes off with it for himself (l. 1581). Their alliance is thus manifestly self-serving.

The third episode is less distinct, but before the end of Part One of the performance Chastitie and Veritie, in the wake of Correction's assertion of his reforming influence over the King, expose the corruption of the vices in their absence and inform the King of their real names (ll. 1869-84). In Part Two, the exposure of the vices is continued in the fourth phase. The purging of the faults in the state which goes on as a result of the complaint of John the Commonwealth includes their fall (l. 2460). His indictment of them leads directly to their arrest by the Sergeants (Lawyers). Pauper follows this up by his appeal for their punishment (ll. 3963-64). In the fifth episode (ll. 2495-4301) the three vices are condemned to hang, and in their extensive death speeches Dissait and Falset describe the extent of their evil doing. But Flatterie escapes the noose because he betrays his "marrowis" (companions). He goes off to continue his evil work elsewhere. His departure is immediately followed by the arrival of Foly (l. 4302), who, as we shall see, brings an oblique comment on the misdeeds of the vices. To summarise the participation of this group of villains, we can conclude that they do provide a major element in the narrative, several times being the driving force in

the unfolding of events. They are one of the principal contributors to the evils which undermine the good of the nation. But the evils which Lyndsay is assailing as his satirical targets are not confined to these three. The sensual temptation of Rex Humanitas and the corruption of the clergy, which is partly sensual and partly avaricious, as well as the issue of the role of the king, are all themes of comparable importance in Lyndsay's evaluation of court life.

III

We have noticed the possibility that Lyndsay may have been acquainted with the English drama of his time, and that what has survived from it and much that is lost may have influenced his work. What is surprising about his presentation of the vices is that they share so many details of presentation and performance with comparable characters in the surviving interludes and moralities. As far as the evil characters in surviving English plays are concerned, it is clear that a large accumulation of conventions became available to dramatists, that they made consistent and persistent use of them, and that ultimately this led to the development of the conventional figure known as "the Vice". Such was the latter's theatrical prestige that he seems to have been almost indispensable to writers of interludes between 1530 and 1580. Presumably these characteristics were part of the entertainment offered by such plays and the recognition of familiar features imported from earlier experience would have added much to the stage effect. A great proportion of the characteristics of vices in English plays is discernible in Lyndsay's characters. The dramatists, including Lyndsay, seem to have taken the view that comic devices which were tied to evil were both good doctrine and successful theatre.

In the following discussion I shall mention some specific parallels in the characteristics and behaviour of evil characters between Lindsay's characters and those of other dramatists working in about the same time. Flatterie is the first of the villains to arrive (l. 601), following the King's seduction by Sensualitie. He appears alone on the stage talking directly to the audience. Within a few words he has connected himself with the devil. He has had a remarkable journey, coming from France over the stormy sea and into the Firth of Forth. He calls upon the onlookers to make room for him and he draws attention to his odd clothing "Begaryit all with sindrie hewis" (l. 604). He makes a connection with Christmas festivities and describes himself as a fool who had participated in

them. The bizarre clothing may itself be a hint at a fool's costume which would be instantly recognised. This link with folly, which we have noticed in the earlier non-dramatic poems, recurs a number of times subsequently. The features of appearance and performance are characteristic of evil characters in other plays. He greets the two other vices who now arrive. He has already told the audience that his name is Flatterie, and the two others are introduced by name as well: Flatterie instantly recognises Falset, and they anticipate the arrival of Dissait by name before he arrives. When he does, he also calls for room and delivers his name. Falset has already been claimed as a brother by Flatterie and it is not long before Dissait also asserts brotherhood. Possibly this is not meant as a blood relationship so much as a common purpose, one strengthened by the similarity of the names, which all indicate a kind of verbal deception.[10] The comic routines of these introductions are likely to have made the names memorable and to have established links between these characters. They immediately begin plotting to deceive the king, and to facilitate this Flatterie proposes that they disguise themselves and take false names.

This is another routine which became very common among evil characters, and it was frequently developed into a comic sequence as they hit upon their new names. Here the process is made more comic, but also more barbed, because Flatterie suggests that they adopt clerical clothing—not unlike some of the vices we have noticed in Bale's *Three Laws*. This anticlerical satire here anticipates much that is to follow, and the allusion is pressed home in that when they have decided upon their aliases, Falset proposes that they all be baptised anew, and they immediately perform some version of the rite with one another (thus Falset: "Hayif me and I sall baptize thee" [l. 781]). Apparently, they each kneel in turn, and in this comic version of a sacrament Dissait becomes Discretion, Flatterie, who is now disguised as a Friar, becomes Devotion and Falset is given the name of Sapience. After a fortifying drink they introduce one another under these aliases to the King. During this sequence, however, Falset forgets his alias and has to be introduced by Flatterie. This stupidity brings him near to folly and the foolish incompetence of evil. The King, although he is initially suspicious of Falset's forgetfulness, also shows culpable folly and is completely deceived by the excuse that Falset was in a trance "heich abone the Trinitie" (l. 877). Although his suspicions serve to underline the folly of the villains, he is quick to appoint

10 Later Dissait calls Flatterie "Father" (l. 1077).

them as his officers: Falset becomes Secretary, Dissait Treasurer and, with further irony, Friar Flatterie (alias Devotion) is appointed Spiritual Counsel—once again Lyndsay links flattery with the church. In a corresponding passage, the vices in *Respublica* decide to change their names. Avarice warns, "Els will some of you make good hanging stuff one daie" (l. 376). When Oppression asks Avarice to "christen" (l. 377) them, they argue about what he proposes, and in the ensuing muddle Adulation forgets that Avarice is to be addressed as Polycye (ll. 390-91). We note too that this incompetence makes folly ridiculous.

Although their identities and the evils they bring are now manifest to the audience, this demonstration of Vice-comedy in the *Satyre* is not over yet. The first episode is completed initially by their success in driving away Gude Counsaill, with the King's approval, and then by their attack on Veritie. To overcome the latter they seek the help of Spiritualitie on the grounds that Veritie is a heretic and carries the English New Testament. When they have put her in the stocks they return to Spiritualitie and the attention shifts away from them (l. 1181 SD). We should note that their attack is seen in terms of the evils prevailing among the clergy, and though Lyndsay may not have been Protestant himself, he was repeatedly emphatic in his criticism of the spiritual estate. This theme recurs much more strongly later in the play, to become one of the most weighty issues and one to which a great deal of dramatic time is devoted.

In the second and third episodes we see the impact of Correctioun's intervention upon them. It leads to a typical demonstration of their dissention, as they fall to fighting over the King's box which they have stolen and which Dissait finally carries off for himself. Quarrelling and fighting among groups of vices was a standard element, presumably to illustrate the shallowness of their relationship. On Correctioun's arrival they begin to split up, as they take refuge separately: Flatterie with Spiritualitie, Dissait with the Merchants and Falset with the Craftsmen. Refugees they may be, but their allegorical significance strongly suggests that they have found areas where the evils they represent might flourish in real life. Indeed, John the Commonwealth exposes the misleading of Merchants and Craftsmen by Dissait and Falset (ll. 2451-54). They lose their false names as well as their disguises. Correctioun, acting upon the complaints raised in the indictment by John the Commonwealth, has them put into the stocks.

By now the relationship between the three is breaking up, and this is made worse when Flatterie is exposed by the Sergeants. His friar's habit is removed and he too is condemned. However, he declares that he will help to hang his "mar-

rowis" and so his fate is different from theirs from then on. This is a variation on what commonly happens to Vices in interludes, for the conventions are that they are hanged, or that they craftily escape, disappearing in order to come back and work their evil on someone else. Because Flatterie was the first to appear and he now separates himself from his companions, he is plainly the leader, and central in Lyndsay's allegory of evil. His survival is linked with his pervasive influence throughout the narrative, as we have seen in the poems. The relationship within this family of villains is now lost and his two companions make their gallows speeches. Though the Vices in interludes do sometimes have a few words at this point, I have found nothing to match the size and eloquence of Lyndsay's Dissait and Falset. They are, perhaps like some introductory soliloquies, opportunities for a bravura performance, which depends in part upon the audience realising that they, the audience, are being made to wait for the characters' ends, a process which was cleverly exploited in the recent performance for its comic potential.

Although the death speeches of Dissait and Falset are both a kind of confessional, they are boastful of their achievements, giving a sense of the scope of their activities. Neither expresses much remorse. Dissait shows how the merchants and traders have depended upon him to sell their wares. This includes cheaper ingredients which falsify what they are supposed to be, for instance, rye-meal in soup. He praises the value of usury and the use of false measures and weights. He pinpoints a number of eminent people who have prospered by means of deceit.

Falset's speech is rather longer and more wide-ranging. He shows how the practices of many crafts and businesses have prospered from his teaching. In doing so he names many families who have benefitted from his ways. The action is spun out by Lyndsay when Falset looks at the hanging body of Dissait, whom he calls his father-brother (l. 4228). Once the noose is put round his own neck, however, his tone changes, as he now turns from enjoying his achievements to giving a grim warning to all who follow him. Much of this is pointed at covetous kings, wrongful conquerors and "all publick oppressours" (l. 4237). Among these he names a Pharaoh and Pontius Pilate. He now welcomes these and undertakes to prepare places for them in "hiddeous hell" (l. 4245). This promise seems to shift his identity more towards being a denizen of hell, a devil perhaps. But he finally complains of his wife's betrayal of him and dies boasting defiantly that he never made a better end (l. 4271). In this death speech of Falset Lyndsay shows theatrical expertise by elaborating the arraignment of his former associates and show-

ing that Falset is much pleased by the way he has managed to ensure his own survival. This interaction makes one wonder whether Falset is a person—he complains of his wife and her sexual misdeeds with priests—or an abstraction, or a devil. It seems likely that the allegorical mode and the theatrical devices associated with it make this effect possible.

Flatterie's introduction of himself on his first appearance mentioned his clothing of sundry hues and reminded the audience that he had appeared as a fool at Christmas (ll. 629-31). At the end of his performance, when Flatterie has betrayed his fellows, Lyndsay returns to this relationship by his unheralded introduction of Foly as a character, and more significantly as a commentator on events. In performance this may be quite a surprise, but we may perceive, in hindsight, that Lyndsay has prepared the ground. The sharp juxtaposition with the end of the vices is significant because in some ways it undermines the moral structure of which the vices with their punishment was a major part. Foly gives a demonstration of foolish concerns by describing his wife and his family, and he makes it clear that the vices are now to be seen as fools, along with everyone else in that infinite number targeted by Foly in his ensuing sermon. The moral lesson of the vices is threatened because of the proximity and inevitability of universal fools. Foly introduces a disturbing attitude to the reforms which have been promulgated in the Parliament. I suggest that Lyndsay is here following the idea and purpose of satire, which is to make the most of attack and to leave unresolved what will actually be done about it. Lyndsay has laid before the audience many changes through the Acts of his Parliament, but this final undermining of reform, stating the need for it but leaving open the issue of whether it will be sustained in real life, as distinct from the closed structure of a theatrical plot focused upon didactic ends, remains as a warning. At the end the play is reminding us that we are all fools, and that includes all ranks of society as well as the audience and the family of vices we have been considering. Flatterie, the leader of the vices who represents something Lyndsay saw as embedded and pernicious in court life as well as in the world outside it, escapes by means of the shabby trick of turning on his erstwhile comrades, so that he is now free to work his ways elsewhere.

This cynical desertion is another typical feature of interlude Vices, as in Ill Report's mockery of the elders in *The Virtuous and Godly Susanna* (by Thomas Garter; pub. 1569) and Iniquity's scorn for the doomed Ishmael as a "whoreson noddy" (l. 386) in the anonymous *Nice Wanton* (pub. 1560). Flatterie is now to serve the holy Hermeit of Lareit, we are told, "And leir [*teach*] him for till flatter" (l. 4301);

and literally his last word in the play is actually "flatter". Like some of the Vices in English plays, such as Ambidexter in *Cambises* (by Thomas Preston; pub. 1569), and the eponymous Common Conditions (anon.; pub. 1576), he lives to fight again. This means that the link between Flatterie and the spirituality has still not been completely severed. As an abstract character, he survives as though superhuman and indestructible. A little before Flatterie's escape, the Pauper's last words appeared to be cautionary. He asked the King to hang the other vices and drive Flatterie out of town. Rest, for him, was conditional on that being done (ll. 3996-97). And this survival seems implicitly connected with the fate of Foly. At the end Foly may tell us the truth, but he remains a danger from within, and Lyndsay finally achieves a remarkably complex portrayal of the relationship between evil and folly through his exploitation of stage conventions. The family of vices is a notable contribution to this intriguing ambivalence. Foly has the last speech and the last laugh. Dismissing the audience, he promises to pray for them, but apparently he will "rin incontinent" (l. 3374) to the tavern in order to do so.

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The Vice-characters' Conspiracy in the Interlude Respublica *(1553)*

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Allegorical characters in the English drama of the Middle Ages and Renaissance can usually be referred to one of two opposite sides—Virtue or Vice. And it is not rare that the forces of Virtue or Vice are represented by multiple characters who cooperate actively with one another. This essay aims at defining the essence of the Vice-characters' interrelations in the interlude *Respublica*, putatively by Nicholas Udall,[1] and at demonstrating how their relations turn into the mechanism that sets in motion the schemes at once of playfulness and morality in the interlude.

It is widely accepted that *Respublica* was written in 1553 on the occasion of the coronation of Queen Mary Tudor with the intention of drawing the new sovereign's attention to corruption in state institutions as well as to

1 Although there is no direct indication of Udall's authorship in the text of *Respublica*, the play is usually attributed to him. In arguing for Udall's authorship, scholars refer to the warrant addressed by the Queen to the officers of the Revels in December 1554, in which Udall's name and his diligence in presenting some performance at court are mentioned (Greg, ed., pp. viii-ix). Since there is no evidence of other plays being acted in the first year of Mary's reign, *Respublica* is believed to be the one indicated. Besides this, the textual analysis carried out by Leicester Bradner to connect plays presumptively attributed to Udall with the text that certainly belongs to him (*Roister Doister*) leaves no doubt as to his being the author of *Respublica* too (Bradner, p. 380).

the impoverishment of vast segments of the population. As such, the play is distinguished by topical political and social problematics. The playwright obviously belonged to the political class of England that was conscious of the necessity to reinforce the state after the six-year rule of the Regency Council, which had governed the country for Edward VI in his minority. Udall adapted the interlude form so as to expose some of the most painful sores in the body politic of his day.

The English interlude inherited from medieval religious drama a bipolar system of characters.[2] Within it, virtuous and vicious characters fight over the central (neutral) figure of the play, who usually personifies mankind. This figure can sometimes comprise references to the personality of the monarch (see, for instance, *Nature* by Henry Medwall or *Magnyfycence* by John Skelton). In Udall's drama, this central personage is the widow Respublica, who is the embodiment of the state system in general. Four "ministers" hire themselves to manage the state economy for Respublica, Avarice being the head of the company. Insolence, Oppression and Adulation act as his co-conspirators. The four of them make up a virtual composite character of corruption—we might risk calling it "the Vice"—which is aimed at demonstrating the degree of turmoil and economic devastation in the country.

The leading role in the group thus belongs to Avarice, which is the only true sin among the negative figures of the play. This character's essence is made clear at the very beginning of the interlude, with his first appearance on stage in the first scene. In a monologue, Avarice introduces himself to the public and declares his desire to conceal his true identity. He requests that he be called "polycie in stede of Covetise" because "The Name of policie is of none suspected" (I.i.80, 83).[3] The Vice-character obviously has the whole enterprise of Respublica's destruction already designed. He begs pardon in advance for his wittiness and those japes or tricks he is going to play on Respublica, as well as admits his intention to get the better of the "noble dame" (92), as he calls her, "if I maie have the grace, and happe, to blynde her" (I.i.107). It is typical of Vices to trick the audience, so it is no surprise that Avarice resorts to ploys to move the audience to pity by mentioning his substantial daily expenditures, low income and urgent need to provide for his old age. He stands out for being the only Vice-figure in

2 See Bevington, pp. 126-27, on the casting formula and the principles of organisation in late medieval drama.

3 *Respublica* is cited in the edition of Greg, though without his use of italics to signal expanded contractions and missing letters.

the play that is, from the beginning, aware of Respublica's attitude to him and his associates. And he understands perfectly well that the case devised by him may bring them all to the gallows. That is why his jokes are sometimes full of grim humour—for instance: "Els will some of youe make, good hanging stuff one daie" (I.iv.376).

The role of mastermind is kept by Avarice till the end of the play. It is he who engrafts in his associates' minds the necessity to conceal their true selves behind false names. As soon as the idea is articulated to them, Insolence accepts it. The character of People, who sees and understands clearly enough the essence of the "ministers" despite their claim to be improving his living conditions, proclaims Avarice to be the leader of the villains, who actually leave him without means of subsistence: "he teacheth them to rake and scrape vp eche whytte" (III.iii.698). It is to Avarice that the other three Vice-figures apply for advice when their deeds are unmasked by Verity (V.viii.1642-58). It is he that Verity calls "moost stinking and filthie Avarice" (V.iii.1376), while Nemesis addresses him as "the plague of Comonweales as all men doo note" (V.x.1893). Through these and other references the idea is emphasised that Avarice underlies those manifestations of social behaviour that are embodied in the figures of Insolence, Oppression and Adulation.

In their turn, the latter three characters, too, have a leader among them, one whose very name indicates that he possesses the energy of action that other practices of corruption can profit from. The viewers' acquaintance with the three rogues starts with Adulation's honeyed addresses to Insolence: "Oh noble Insolence if I coulde singe as well" (I.ii.123); "ye are one of suche goodlye personage / of suche wytte and beawtye and of sage parentage / So excelente in all poyntes of everye arte" (I.ii.131-33). Oppression seems to be of the same opinion: "if he wer disposed to take the charge in hande, / I warraunte hym a chive to Rewle all the whole lande" (I.ii.139-40). Avarice, too, in playing up to the knaves, recognises Insolence's advantages over the others:

> No, syr, ye shall bee chiefe to bring all thinges abowte.
> ye shall emonges vs have the chiefe preeminence,
> And we to youe as yt were, oughe obedience.
> ye shalbe our leader, our Captaine and our guyde
> Than must ye looke a lofte with thandes vnder the side. (I.iii.272-76).

Insolence thanks his friends for their support and declares himself ready to serve them, but at the same time he admits that in their deeds they cannot but ask Avarice for advice and direction: "But we maie herein, nothing attempte in no wyse / withowte the Counsaile of our fownder Averyce" (I.ii.49-50). So again, the fundamental role of Avarice in designing and realising the Vices' plans is emphasised.

It is notable that the Vices keep quite closely to the function that the playwright assigns each of them. According to this division of powers, Adulation talks to People when the latter can still be influenced and put off guard by the Vice's hearty reassurance (as in III.iii). A bit later, when People no longer believes Respublica's "ministers", the problem is dealt with by Insolence and Oppression, who menace People and behave rudely towards him (IV.iv).

The play gets more complicated and interesting at the same time when the rogues adopt false names to deceive Respublica and to conceal their principal goal—to enrich themselves: "And so shall we be sure, to gett store of money, / Sweter then sugar. *Avar.* sweter then enie honey" (I.iii.287-88). To disguise his nature Avarice takes the name of Policie, Insolence that of Authoritie; Oppression welcomes the chance to be called Reformacion (or Reformacyon), and Adulation becomes Honestie. They jokingly practise calling each other by their new names before going to Respublica. Their playful humour is associated with rivalry and the drive for leadership. Though Adulation claims he would like to keep the name of Policie for himself, Avarice does not agree to forfeit it. In this way Avarice's strong position is accentuated.

The new names and, thus, the new guises the four Vice-figures receive in the play refer to the concept of the state order. This new governing arrangement, as Respublica sees it, should repair the chaos and destruction caused by corruption. Quite logically, Avarice, as the mastermind, structures the new system of government for Respublica and thereby justifies the need to bring his associates into action (I.ii.512-29). He asserts that the country cannot be run without Honestie, which is the moral foundation of all state affairs. With the help of Reformacion, the present system will be changed and Authoritie will guarantee the implementation of new laws. In this way, one can observe in *Respublica* not only the alternation of serious and comic material—one of the principal structural methods of Tudor morality drama[4]—but also the alternation of scenes in

4 See Bevington, p. 248.

which Vices act according to their true characters and those in which they are disguised as responsible statesmen.

It is corruption that remains the focus of the playwright's attention in *Respublica*. And the four Vice-figures emerge as integral parts of this phenomenon. This becomes evident when we look at them as facets of the entire action and not as stand-alone figures. Each of them fulfils a fixed role within the hierarchy of relations between them, contributing to a whole that is larger than the sum of its parts.

As a composite character, "the Vice" in *Respublica* impresses us not only with its complexity, but with its psychological depth as well. One can discern the inner motives of the Vice displayed in the character of Avarice. At the same time, the actions of the three other negative figures could be interpreted as the Vice's behavioural reactions to various situations he finds himself in. The Vice either fools his opponent and wins him over with the help of flattery, or displays rudeness, tries to suppress him and keeps him at bay. An element of psychology can also be traced in the capacity of the Vice to choose this or that demeanour in different situations, or to combine the elements of various tactics in a particular case. This happens in Scene Four of Act Four, for instance, in which the Vice-figures have to defend themselves and make excuses for the absence of positive changes in People's life. As soon as they see their attempts to prove that they work for the good of the country fail, they go on the offensive. They stigmatise People's ill-breeding and backwardness, which, to their mind, should be corrected: "he is so headstrong he muste bee bridled with Lawes" (IV.iv.1111). Thus Flattery gives place to Insolence and Oppression. This disdainful manner of communication with People is preserved further on (for instance, in V.viii.1617-30).

When the forces of Virtue eventually come to Respublica's rescue, the Vice-figures seem unable to establish communication with them, as in Scene Nine of Act Five. All of them, except Avarice, are at loss, benumbed with fear, while their mastermind, as the most endangered member of the company, makes vain attempts to insinuate himself into their confidence. Avarice starts with greetings and courtesies to Verity and, when he sees that his advances do not work, finishes by exposing his associates. The audience is shown the instruments of corruption fading away in the face of Verity, while its vicious basis continues fighting.

When seen as separate characters, the Vice-figures in *Respublica* resemble similar personae from Tudor morality plays and interludes. As such, their per-

formance counterpoises the serious material in the drama, creating the relaxed, free and easy atmosphere of entertainment and play that the audience enjoyed so much. The pranks the Vice-figures play in communicating with each other in *Respublica* comply with the typical patterns of action that evil characters usually have recourse to in medieval theatre. For instance, having adopted a new name, Avarice changes his gown as well (he actually turns it inside out), which is supposed to help him in deceiving Respublica. He initially applies to Adulation for assistance, but on recalling his associate's new name, which is Honestie, turns his help down (I.iv.422-24). The action is made more sportful, entertaining and vivid by the Vices' slips of the tongue, their use of short words, word-play and singing, articulated conflicts between the form and the contents, and other similar devices.[5] This sort of playful banter and foolery marks the Vice-figures' interaction from beginning to end.

Feigned lack of understanding and disputes are not rare among the Vices. For example, in Scene Three of the first act of the play, when all the four Vice-figures come together for the first time, Avarice pretends not to recognise his future accomplices. He takes them for rogues, which of course they actually are. And in so doing he tries their patience, making them again and again show obeisance to him:

> *Adul.* Nowe if ye have done[,] I pray youe looke this waye backe.
> *Avar.* Whoo buzzeth in myne eare so? what? Ye sawecye Iacke?
> *Adul.* Are ye yet at leysure with your good frendes to talke?" (I.iii.179-81).

An example of rivalry among the knaves can be observed in the fourth scene of Act One, in which the friends request Insolence not to forget about them when he gets his hands on great riches. Oppression believes that Insolence should pay him first and best. The rogues' appetites are particularly striking:

> *Insol.* I muste have castels and Townes in everye shierc.
> *Adul.* And I chaunge of howses one heare[,] and another there.

5 See, e.g.: "*Adul.* . . . And I will for youe take suche paine / that ere I deserve one / ye shall geve me twayne. / *Avar.* Honestie your tong tripth" (II.iii.560-62); "Avaryce ye whooresone? Policye I tell the" (I.iv.391); "Oppression? hah? is the devyll in thye brayne?" (I.iv.397); "Hipocrisye, hah? Hipocrisie, ye dull asse?" (I.iv.401); "we enfourmed them and we defourmed them, / we confourmed them, and we refourmed them" (III.v.805-6); and "Thou saiest even trueth tis a bagg of Rye in dede, / vsiree, periuree, pitcheree, patcherie, / pilferie, briberee, snatcherie, catcherie . . . " (V.ix.1739-41).

Inso. [*sic*] And I muste have pastures[,] and townships and woodes.
Oppr. And I muste nedes have store of golde and other goodes. (I.iii.305-8).

Listening to his accomplices, Avarice remarks that they resemble a pack of hungry dogs: "these hungri dogges will snatche all" (I.iii.314).

Scene Six of the third act is also notable for its presentation of rivalry or pretended disagreement among the knaves. In this episode Avarice boasts of his newly acquired riches. Like a true showman he demonstrates to the others thirteen sacks of goods he got in various unfair ways. In so doing he warns his friends against coming closer to his riches, conspicuously showing no trust in them:

For your learning I will youe a spectacle sette
but first gette ye from me, and stande a goode waie hence,
This shallnot lye within your reache by youre lycence. (III.vi.848-50)

No wonder that employing several Vice-figures in theatrical presentations became one of the generic particularities of allegorical drama in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. The presence of several evil characters in the play space allows them to act as a group and thus helps to create many more possibilities for witty pranks, farcical situations and buffoonery. This accords with the prominence, among the principal "deception techniques" (Pineas, p. 163) commonly identified in the Tudor morality play, of lying and truth-twisting, trying on other people's clothes, adopting false names, and so forth.

There is no doubt that, in the audience's mind, the Vices' significance was conditioned not only by their characteristically *vicious* behaviour towards virtuous figures in the play, but also by the quarrels occurring among them. This effect can be clearly observed in particular scenes, especially those from the beginning and the end of the interlude. At first, the Vices cannot agree on their new names and, consequently, on who is to be their leader; later they shift the blame for the evil deeds they have committed onto each others' shoulders.

All in all, the manner in which evil is represented in these four characters in *Respublica* fits into the tradition of comprehending moral and ethical categories in medieval drama. Splitting an abstract category into multiple personae turns out to be a particularly effective means of creating dramatic tension. In interrelating with each other, with each trying to gain more riches than the others, and more quickly, the Vice-characters obtain more opportunities to produce ludic action.

According to the usual practice, the Vice group in *Respublica* is depicted in greater detail and more expressively than the Virtues are. As an indication of the temper of the times, and especially the new humanist outlook, all the Vice-figures, except Avarice, mimic the behavior of civil servants tainted by corruption. In this way these allegorical characters become charged with topical social content. At the same time, Avarice emerges as the driving force that can inspire such forms of behaviour in human beings. It is precisely the division of roles among the Vices in *Respublica* that allows them to be perceived as a composite figure of evil in the play.

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A Modest Suggestion That Ignorance Dances to the Tune of Folly

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Many *dramatis personae* of dubious, malicious or evil intent may also be described as Folly's acolytes or Folly's children, and Ignorance is no exception. Ignorance may signify innocence on the one hand—even if the innocence is culpable—or wilful denial, on the other, but either way it suggests an outsider, a lost child perhaps, sometimes to be cared for but sometimes to be rejected. As it happens this figure features in only four surviving plays of the sixteenth century, one each by John Rastell and John Redford and two by William Wager. The occasions can only at best be regarded as random, though Wager does have a more developed propagandist agenda than either of the other two playwrights. For, between about 1520, the date of the *Nature of the Four Elements*, and about 1570, the date of *The Longer Thou Livest the More Fool Thou Art*, the social upheavals and upheavals of conscience and consciousness that accompanied the Reformation produced a conceptual shift regarding the public understanding of the quality of ignorance. From being a characteristic arising simply from the context of learning, it became associated with a theological question regarding the possibility of salvation for Roman Catholics past and present. That ignorance might mitigate the error of adherence to the Roman Catholic faith became a kind of theological quandary at the time of the Elizabethan Settlement and the cause of much debate.

Rastell—and we should presume it is his own advertisement—suggests that *The Nature of the Four Elements* is "a new Interlude and a Mery" (p. 30). The plot framework that he deploys is familiar. Humanity, as a single representative of fallible humankind, is obliged to go through a series of testing encounters from which he should emerge purged of his failings. But Rastell had a secular and educational agenda for his play that offered a message differing in essence from that of the moral and religious plays with which it was contemporary. This is immediately made clear in the words of the Messenger Prologue. "This philosophycall work", the Messenger announces,

> is myxyd
> With mery conseytis, to give men comfort
> And occasyon to cause them to resort
> To here this matter, whereto yf they take hede
> Some lernynge to them therof may procede. (ll. 136-40)

These words foreground Rastell's aim to bring, through dramatic performance, serious matters to a general public, an aim manifest, perhaps, in the possibility that he built a stage on his own ground in Shoreditch in the 1520s (Reed, pp. 280-83; Pollard, ed., pp. 307-21). The Messenger's speech also reveals Rastell's awareness that some members of that public may need the promise of entertainment if they are to attend a performance.

Another aspect of the originality of Rastell's creation can be found in his decision to have the figure of Nature, rather than God, as the final arbiter of Humanity's progression from innocence to mature understanding. In a familiar way Humanity is a conflicted individual but, under the aegis of Nature, is set here between Studious Desire, on the one hand, and Sensual Appetite, on the other. Each is accorded his influence, and Sensual Appetite, though showing a tendency to distract Humanity from his main task, is nevertheless fully acknowledged as an essential attribute of all living creatures. Fulfilling the promise of "mery conseytis", Appetite becomes, quite early in the play, the dominant force tending to overwhelm other aspects of human endeavour in favour of the pursuit of pleasure. This means that Humanity, after a first seminar on the subject of the earth's roundness conducted by Studious Desire, is enticed by Sensual Appetite to take a break. While he is offstage at the tavern, the audience is treated to a long discussion between Studious Desire and a character Experience, based in geography and new world exploration, areas of especial interest to Rastell him-

self. When Humanity at last returns to the stage, he quickly expresses a genuine desire for such learning, a response that shows that he is not utterly subject to his sensual appetites. There is hope for him.

However, these lessons in "philosophy" really do take up a good deal of dramatic time. Indeed, the text just beyond the midpoint shows a great gap of 360 lines, as Richard Axton calculates it. He suggests that what is missing is a further extended lesson in which the character Experience

> demonstrates to Humanity the earth's roundness, using the globe, a candle flame, and a telescope, and tells him of the earth's physical properties. (Rastell, ed. Axton, p. 59)

Furthermore, it may be that this gap is a clue that a travelling troupe had decided that the long lecture by Experience was "sad mater" that their public wouldn't accept and so made a cut. This extant text, therefore, may have been edited for performance in the way that Rastell himself suggested. This interlude, he said,

> yf the hole matter be playde, wyl conteyne the space of an hour and a halfe; but yf ye lyst ye may leve out muche of the sad mater. . . . and than it wyll not be paste thre quarters of an hour of length. (p. 30)

Whatever the case regarding the performance history of the *Four Elements*, it is after this great gap, at a late point in the play, that the character of Ignorance is at last introduced. It seems that he is brought into the drama to indicate the dangers of ignorance, but also, I would suggest, to spice up the action. Resistance to the educational intention of this play is fully encoded in this figure, as his own first words confirm:

> I love not this horeson losophers,
> Nor this great connyng extromers,
> That tell how far it is to the sterres;
> I hate all maner connyng.
> I wolde ye knew it, I am Ignorance. (ll. 1137-41)

His mis-pronunciation is a demonstration of his character and his hatred of "all maner connyng" a self-condemnation. He goes on to boast of having greater power and influence than the kings of England or France. He is, he claims, "the grettyst lord lyvyng" (l. 1144). He also boasts a huge following in England—"Above fyve hundred thowsand" (l. 1150). Through this character Rastell seeks to show

his own deep unease about the level of ignorance in society at large, and therefore the real need for education.

At some point in this gap in the text, prior to or connected with the arrival of Ignorance, Humanity has somehow or other ended up head down and off to the side of the stage. Whatever the manner of his fall, there can be little doubt that this is the moment when the merry conceits begin in earnest to entertain the audience. Sure enough Sensual Appetite and Ignorance, presumably framing, though ignoring, the elevated bum of Humanity, engage in some witty repartee demonstrating their fellowship in clowning. Eventually they pull Humanity out feet first—all good opportunity for slapstick. When Humanity explains that he was almost clean out of his mind, Sensual Appetite quickly replies "it is the study that ye have had / In this folyshe losophy hath made you mad" (ll. 1203-4), and Ignorance concurs: "That is as trewe as the gospell" (l. 1206). Then Sensual Appetite seeks to seduce Humanity with the promise that he will provide an entertainment, dancers, singers, a banquet, good wines and "a feyre wenche nakyd in a couche / Of a soft bed of downe" (ll. 1264-65). He will be "chefe marshall" of these revels "and order all thynge well" (ll. 1287-88). He leaves Humanity alone with Ignorance while he goes off to make provision for this party. Humanity is enthusiastic about having such fun, and Ignorance, speaking on behalf of and, indeed, at this point, to the audience, again just like a good clown, says:

> And so shalt thou best please
> All this hole company.
> For the folyshe arguynge that thou hast had
> With that knave Experiens, that hath made
> All these folke therof wery. (ll. 1296-1300)

Ignorance now takes on an MC role, in which he introduces some offstage singers: "I prey thee be styll. / I wene they be not far hens" (ll. 1311-12). They sing *a capella* and he comments, "It is pyte ye had not a mynstrell / for to augment your solas' (ll. 1326-27). Sensual Appetite takes up the spirit of the occasion—"Ye shall se me daunce a cours / Without a mynstrell, be it better or wors" (ll. 1329-30)—and Ignorance again organises things with "Make rome, syrs, and gyf them place!" (l. 1334) .

The dance concludes and Ignorance steps in with "That is the best daunce without a pype / That I saw this seven yere" (ll. 1347-48). Sensual Appetite exits to the Tavern to get a minstrel to play for more singing and dancing, while Igno-

rance himself comes forward to entertain the company by singing a ballad of Robin Hood. What is recorded in the text after the first line seems to be an absolute mixture of nonsense lines from more than one story, whether or not about Robin Hood is hard to determine. It may be more a kind of résumé of many first lines of several popular songs. While it makes no sense in itself, it could have provided the audience with a number of cues to remind them of a range of songs with which they were familiar. They might even have been encouraged to join in one or another of them. This shows a parallel with the stage direction introducing Moros, Wager's fool in *The Longer Thou Livest*, who comes in "*singing the foot of many songs as fools were wont*" (p. 6, SD). If fools were wont to offer this kind of entertainment, it might appear that Rastell's Ignorance, on this score, may be accounted such a "fool". As such a fool, then, Ignorance keeps the party going until Nature, the figure from the opening of the play, suddenly makes his reappearance. The confrontation is brief since the text ends abruptly after Nature speaks. He brusquely interrupts the fun and in his role as arbiter of all things he remonstrates with Humanity:

> For if thou wylt lerne no sciens,
> Nother by study nor experiens,
> I shall the never avaunce,
> But in the worlde thou shalt dure than,
> Dyspysed of every wyse man,
> Lyke this rude best Ygnoraunce. (ll. 1438-43)

This final swingeing clout against Ignorance characterises him, as Meg Twycross suggests, as a "loutish philistine" (p. 77). But such use of the word "beast" also appears instructively in the first of the *Schoolboy Dialogues* of Juan Luis Vives. A father introduces his boy to the teacher, asking that he "make of him a man from a beast". Philoponus, the teacher, replies:

> This shall be my earnest endeavour. He shall become a man from a beast, a fruitful and good creature out of a useless one. (Vives, p. 10)

Ignorance, therefore, may be an enemy of learning, but he is also an enemy of Humanity, as reflected in a remark of John Colet, founder of St Paul's School and Dean of St Paul's. In a letter to Richard Kidderminster, Abbot of Winchcombe, Colet wrote:

Ex impietate negligentiaque Dei ignorantia exorta est. Ex Impietate, ignorantia, ut a fonte, omne malum profluxit.

[Ignorance arises from impiety and the neglect of God, and from impiety and ignorance, as from a fountain, all other evils flow.] (cited in Knight, p. 267; my translation)

For all his comic appeal, then, Ignorance stands out as a symbol of refractory mankind, a naysayer who refuses to acknowledge the importance of learning altogether. The folly of Ignorance is represented, therefore, in both Rastell's interlude and Colet's text, as a beastly state that the individual Humankind owes it to himself to avoid.

From a dramatic point of view, Rastell's Ignorance can be regarded as a "fool artificial", that is, a fool whose folly is beastly, mischievous and deliberate, rather than innocent. By contrast, John Redford, choir master at St Paul's between 1531 and 1534, introduces us to a figure of Ignorance in his play *Wyt and Science* that must be differently categorised. This is simply the "fool natural", an innocent who cannot learn his lesson, indeed cannot spell his own name. Redford, of course, in contrast to Rastell, was directly involved in the education of children, and, as Twycross has definitively shown,[1] the sequence in his play where Idleness attempts to teach Ignorance the syllabic sounding out of his own name looks to be grounded in Redford's own teaching experience. Its dramatic function, however, is to amuse the audience by showing them an entertaining example of what to many of them would have been a familiar process. The scene is given over to a series of prompts from Idleness, herself a less than competent teacher, and the struggling responses of her pupil:

Idlenes. Say thy lesson, foole
Ingnorance. Upon my thummes?
Idllenes. Ye, upon thy thummes. Ys not there thy name?
Ingnorance. Yeas.
Idellnes. Go to, than; spell me that same. (ll. 450-52)

Ignorance is put through his paces but, unfortunately, he is palpably beyond help. The whole scene, if performed for Redford's school audience, would no doubt have been greeted with peals of laughter at the expense of both the pupil and the teacher. When, at the climax of the lesson, Idleness asks, "What hast thow lernd?", Ignorance looks blank: "Ich can not tell" (ll. 546-47). The fact that Ignorance fails to achieve the intended outcome of the lesson shows by anal-

1 See Twycross, *passim*.

ogy the risks to young Wit's courtship of the Lady Science, the thematic centre of the play. To make his point Redford has the scene with Ignorance played over Wit's sleeping body. He takes it further by having Idleness remove the coat of Science from Wit and substitute the coat of Ignorance. So Wit, for all his promise, "begynth to looke lyke a noddye" (l. 573) and the poor fool Ignorance is given the comment, "He is I now" (l. 583). Redford gives this key moment to the innocent explicitly to mark the change. It just takes Idleness to blacken Wit's face and Wit is "Coniurdd from Wyt unto a starke foole" (l. 594).

So, while the characterisation of the poor foolish child, Ignorance, is possibly sympathetic, the fault of ignorance is the state into which Wit has culpably fallen. The consequences of this wilful fall become evident during the succeeding scene, in which Wyt meets up with his supposed fiancée, the Lady Science. There is instant misunderstanding between the two of them since Wit is unaware of his appearance. Science's indignant rejection of him bemuses him and then angers him to the point where he threatens violence against her. The final exchange again reveals Redford's strategy. Wit claims that Science is treating him as a fool, he thinks a fool natural, to which she replies:

> I take ye for no naturall foole
> Browght up a-mong the innocentes scoole,
> But for a nawghty vycious foole,
> Browght up wyth Idellnes in her scoole.
> Of all arrogant fooles thow art one. (ll. 787-91)

And she sweeps out, leaving Wit, angry, frustrated and extremely puzzled. Reaching for the looking glass of Reason, Wit then sees for himself the extent of his degradation. He looks into the audience and discovers all their faces "fayre and cleere", while his is "As black as the devyll" and himself

> a foole alone,
> Deckt, by Goges bones, lyke a very asse.
> Ingnorance cote, hoode, eares—ye, by the masse,
> Kokscome and all—I lak but a bable' (ll. 814-17).

He blames Idleness, who has wreaked this change on him, so that "the stark foole I playe / Before all people" (l. 825-26). Only admission of his fault and the forgiveness of Reason, and, above all, of Lady Science can recover Wit from the shame of ignorance. And Redford's dénouement, as one can anticipate,

brings all this about because it is in his interest to demonstrate how necessary it is to avoid falling into the trap of idleness. That leads to the stigma of ignorance, where ignorance, far from being the mark of a simple fool natural, is an apparently degenerate state of being, Vives's beast and Colet's fountain of evil.

What Vives or Colet could not have known, however, was that over the sixteenth century changes would come about that would transform these thoughts on ignorance into a Protestant critique of Catholicism. To the Protestant mind ignorance came to belong with superstition and the devotions of the Catholic church as marks of the errors of the old religion. Significantly, in her Coronation Procession, Queen Elizabeth was met at Cornhill by a pageant where she was represented as the epitome of True Religion and Love of Subjects. Beneath her feet lay crushed Superstition and Ignorance. So Ignorance as an emblem of the outdated religion took its place in the public domain of religious observance and faith.

When, therefore, William Wager, in 1569-70, came to write his two plays, *The Longer Thou Livest the More Fool Thou Art* and *Enough Is as Good as a Feast*, we must assume that this conceptual change was sufficiently familiar to be understood by audiences, for Ignorance as a representative Papist appears in both. In *The Longer Thou Livest* Wager constructs his play around the figure of the fool, Moros, who, like Everyman and Humanity before him, is central to the idea that man is a fallible creature. In terms of his life journey, however, Moros is most like the Ignorance of Rastell, antagonistic to everything that will better him. His first advisers, Piety, Discipline and Exercitation, try hard to educate him. By turns they encourage him, threaten him and thrash him in their attempts to transform him and save him from himself. He is totally unwilling, and in the end they are obliged to give up on him.

Within this frame, and when Moros is at the height of his worldly career, he is supported in his folly by Fortune. She introduces first the companions Wrath, Idleness and Incontinence, and then a further trio of advisers, Impiety, Cruelty and Ignorance. They make up a powerfully corrupting sextet, but the character of Ignorance is given an especially interesting persona. Wrath comments at his first entrance that he comes "As he were blind, about he doth pore" (l. 1243). Just as telling, perhaps, is the fact that Ignorance is trailing behind his companions Cruelty and Impiety. He has, therefore, both poor sight and a lack of vitality. The conversation with Wrath also establishes that these three advisers have surrogate names. The other two are Philosophy and Prudence, while

Ignorance is simply Antiquity. Such personification through action and naming is a familiar tactic. In this case it creates for the audience a figure of inadequacy and out-datedness as much as of wickedness.

Ignorance is allowed to speak for himself:

> Ignorance, yea Ignorance is my name,
> A meet mate with fools to dwell,
> A quality of an ancient fame;
> And yet drown I many one in hell. (ll. 1273-76)

Significantly, he reveals that his special clients are the Papists:

> I have so taught them that howsoever the wind blow,
> They shall still incline to my sentence,
> So that though they have knowledge and cunning,
> They are but ignorant and fools. (ll. 1279-82)

Furthermore, he says that though they try to excuse themselves in their erroneous beliefs, nevertheless

> their acts are wicked and evil;
> Therefore, when they shall come before the Lord,
> He shall condemn them with Satan the devil. (ll. 1290-92)

Ignorance, while thus directing his animus against Papists, is also to be understood as their confederate.

Now Moros enters in the company of Impiety and Cruelty. He is disguised with "*a foolish beard*" (p. 53, SD) to give him "a gentleman's countenance" (l. 1298). Impiety does his best to introduce the three advisers by their assumed names of Philosophy, Prudence and Antiquity, but in the spirit of ignorance and folly, Moros renames them again "Pild-Lousy" for Philosophy, "Fip-pence" for Prudence and "Tandidity", possibly meaning "lump of excrement", for Antiquity (l. 1325). Ignorance nevertheless seems impressed by Moros, whom he has greeted as "a proper gentleman" (l. 1306). He expresses the wish to do him the best service that he can. For a while Impiety holds the floor, speaking in the assumed name of Philosophy, but then moves to advise Moros about "Such as go up into pulpits and preach, / Especially these new fellows, to them give no ear. . . . For it is but all heresy that they do tell" (ll. 1391-92, 1396). At the end he exhorts Moros to "Endeavour yourself to be acquainted / With your noble counselor Antiq-

uity" (ll. 1407-8). So in this play Impiety and Ignorance are strongly identified with the old religion and, working together, they advise Moros to oppose the "new fellows" and their preaching.

Shortly Cruelty and Impiety leave the stage, again encouraging Moros to follow the advice of Antiquity, "prudent and full of sagacity; / His counsel see that you do believe" (ll. 1499-1500). There now follows a series of farcical actions that not only provoke laughter but also emphasise the fellowship and shared characteristics of Moros and Ignorance. The first of these concerns a feather for Moros's cap. The feather, says Moros, "will make me a gentleman alone" (l. 1544). Once it's in his cap, he can't, of course, see it, and, twisting round to find it above his head, he trips and hurts his knee. Ignorance then tries to take him in hand. It is obvious that the fellow doesn't wear his finery very well: "your sword is between your legs" (l. 1566), says Ignorance, and, "let me help you to set your gown right" (l. 1569), and such like. He fusses round his *protégé* to smarten him up. Ignorance is now firmly joined with Moros in this foolish exchange.

At this moment Discipline re-enters to confront them and voices an attack on Moros. "Good audience", he says,

> note this fool's proceeding.
> In tender age, in Idleness he was nuzzled.
> In adolency, when pubes was springing,
> Touching virtue as a dog that is muzzled,
> Ill-willing to learn and therefore unapt,
> All his senses he applied to vice. (ll. 1581-86)

This is followed by much more of the same. Finally, he makes a direct link between Ignorance and the old religion—"Behold here he is led with Ignorance / So that he will not believe the verity" (ll. 1605-6)—where, of course, the verity is the Protestant truth.

The character of Ignorance then eggs his man on to combat Discipline, but, in the fashion of comic *lazzi*, stays well out of range of any consequence there might be. "I would see you boldly him to withstand" (l. 1620), he says, "Are you afraid? For very shame, draw near" (l. 1623). Moros puts up a good show of cowardly resistance, shouting, roaring and waving his sword about, while in steady retreat. He has no intention of getting too close to Discipline. At the very last Moros and Ignorance, shamed, retire from the confrontation and disappear offstage. Thus Ignorance as a character has fulfilled his role as Moros's alter ego,

showing antagonism to learning in general and, in Wager's version, adherence to the old religion in particular. Ignorance's capacity foolishly to entertain is shaded with an extreme kind of rebuke to those who continue to resist the spirit of the age moving towards Protestant doctrine and practice. However, it should be noted that while Ignorance serves one purpose in this play as representative of the old religion, Moros is truly the beast of ignorance shown in the previous discussion. He is indeed a child of folly but utterly reprehensible, and he earns his passport to damnation when, at the end, he is carried off piggy-back straight to hell.

In Wager's other known play, *Enough Is as Good as a Feast*, the figure of Ignorance also features. This time, however, the satire against the old religion is more obvious. Ignorance arrives, again late in the play, purportedly as chaplain to Worldly Man, at the moment when Worldly Man has been taken ill, persecuted by God's Plague. Ignorance, alias Sir Nicholas, is represented as a priest who is very drunk indeed and still thirsty: "Cham faint by gisse, would ich had a little more bum" (l. 1252); "I can drink a gallon and eat never a bit" (l. 1254). He is a parody of a dissipated Catholic Priest. Unashamed, he announces he has "spouted with the Genevians, twenty on a row" (l. 1259) and, "With a piece of Latin I set them all on dry land" (l. 1262). On the promise of a pot of beer, he proceeds to spout a piece of macaronic Latin. Despite Covetous's suggestion that it was "out of doubt a worthy piece of learning" (l. 1270), it would be clear to an audience that here was nonsense, with the added suggestion that it belongs with Papist practice. Worldly Man, meanwhile, begins to fail and claims a need for both physical and spiritual help. Covetous and Ignorance panic and fuss over him to try to bring him round. Ignorance staggers off to find a physician. He returns with a doctor with the unlikely name of Dr Flebeshiten who attempts to take charge of the care of Worldly Man. The Doctor's false expertise, however, is as much part of the farce as the antics of Covetous and Ignorance. To that extent he seems to derive directly from the doctors of folk drama who attempt unlikely cures with their quackery. There follows a series of farcical exchanges, with Ignorance running on and offstage, busying himself with drinks and other things to help. But it is all to no avail. Worldly Man is declining fast. He decides to make his will. Ignorance offers to write it for him but his attempts to write are hopelessly inadequate. Before anything significant can be written, Worldly Man falls down dead. So the death of Worldly Man occurs in a comic episode that reflects badly on the two characters. Ignorance, especially, appears inadequate. He is both

drunk and barely literate, despite being able to rattle off nonsensical Latin, and makes only poor attempts at pastoral engagement. Any idea of spiritual support is totally absent from his role. But despite the satirical edge to the presentation of Ignorance as the drunken cleric, he makes his exit with Covetous more in the theatrical manner of a fool. This is confirmed by the fact that Covetous's final lines are a direct address to the audience: "Come, let us go hence, here is no more to be said. / Farewell my masters, our parts we have played" (ll. 1426–27).

To conclude, therefore, it becomes apparent that, despite the infrequency of his appearances, the figure of Ignorance, whenever it was deployed, carried with it a moral dimension that these three playwrights in their different ways sought to exploit. This personification, in at least three cases, was extreme enough to provide an opposition to the central character's attempts to reform his life. In the case of Moros, however, although he clearly is characterised as a fool, the disposition accorded him by the playwright made him an archetype of the kind of ignorance that provoked the anathema of Rastell, Vives and Colet. An audience can be left in little doubt that Moros is unredeemable. In dramatic terms, by contrast, the actual figure of Ignorance was nicely ambivalent in a familiar way. He was both reprehensible and at the same time foolishly entertaining. Audiences, as seems always to have been the case, were thus invited to laugh at and feel superior to such an errant creature, even while they possibly remained critical of the implications and consequences of his folly. It may be impossible to read these different roles of Ignorance other than independently of each other; nevertheless, the different dramatic functions of the figure may sufficiently coalesce to make something like a familial relationship and to allow a suggestion that they all dance to the tune of folly.

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"Counterfeiting his maister": Shared Folly in The History of Jacob and Esau

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The History of Jacob and Esau is a mid-Tudor interlude that has been relatively underexplored in studies in early English drama, not having aroused the same interest as other contemporary interludes that were performed in court or great hall settings, such as John Bale's, John Heywood's or William Wager's. Although it is assumed that the play was written by a schoolmaster and staged by choir boys,[1] a lack of evidence about the contexts and auspices of the play's performance has elicited a variety of conjectures concerning its authorship[2] and the identity of the reigning monarch at the time.[3] The work has been identified by Paul

1 Grantley, p. 157, presents the possibility that the play was performed by boys at court. See also White, "The Bible as Play in Reformation England", p. 102.

2 Nicholas Udall and William Hunnis have been suggested as possible authors for the play. See Blackburn, p. 148; Walker, *Politics*, p. 166; and White, "Predestinarian Theology", p. 292.

3 White considers the play's first performances to have been staged in the 1550s and that the play was possibly performed again during the reigns of Elizabeth I and Mary (Introd., pp. xxxiv-xxxix). The play has been interpreted as Edwardian by Bevington, p. 109; King, p. 301; and Westfall, pp. 285-86; Pasachoff, p. 18, has argued that the work is Marian. Campbell, p. 215, suggests that the play may have been performed or printed during Mary's reign and changed during Elizabeth's, but the evidence is not conclusive. Stopes suggests the possibility that the play was "written in Edward's reign, acted and printed in Mary's, and reprinted in Elizabeth's" (p. 269).

Whitfield White as "moderately Calvinist" in doctrinal thought, predominantly on the grounds of the play's attitude towards the doctrine of predestination.[4] The play enacts the Calvinist notion that God has preordained some to be given salvation through grace, while others are predestined as reprobates. Jacob and Esau—their Hebrew names already signposting the younger brother's supplanting the elder—both exemplify such doctrinal ideas and, as Old Testament figures, allow for a use of the dramatic medium that would have been acceptable to Protestant reformers, as theatrical representations of these figures would not have been seen as "idolatrous".[5] "Iconoclastic" theatre, Dalia Ben-Tsur argues (p. 53), facilitated the play's turn from earlier biblical morality drama, with its Catholic implications and associations, through the removal of saintly and holy images on stage, including Christ and God.[6] John E. Curran's thought-provoking study elaborates on this notion and argues that iconoclasm in the play thematises notions of watching and spectating to address the predestinarian theology at the core of the drama. Indeed, Curran argues that spectators are invited to contemplate their own spectatorship, turning watching into a self-reflexive act, and through that to arrive at a doctrinal understanding of how inconsequential their own perception really is. To this end the play uses a theatrical "trap", which encourages all present to judge Esau for his actions (hunting, mistreatment of servants), only to find out that doctrinally, Calvinism does not recognise human merit as relevant, as all has been predestined, correcting spectators' "sinful" or presumptuous judging (Curran, p. 286), whilst also urging audience members to place their faith in that which they cannot perceive. Furthermore, Curran follows Ben-Tsur in arguing (p. 286) that iconoclasm is employed to justify the appropriation of the dramatic medium for Protestant purposes, thus indicating an anxiety that spectators might have felt about the medium.

However, what is not pointed out in Curran's study is that the theatrical "trap" to which he refers is a typical morality play device, such as the spectators of *Mankind* (*c.* 1470) experienced, no doubt to their satisfaction but hardly to their souls' health. In that play, the infamous "Christmas song" initiated by the vices Nowadays and Nought tempts the audience to sing along with them

4 White, "Predestination Theology"; see also Thomas. This opinion is not shared by Bevington, who describes the playwright as "a zealous Calvinist" (p. 109), and Blackburn, whose study addresses the author's "rigid Calvinism" (p. 13).

5 See Ben-Tsur, p. 52.

6 See also O'Connell.

in "mery chere" (l. 334). Singing, "yt ys wretyn wyth a coll, yt ys wretyn wyth a cole" (l. 335), the Vices encouraged spectators to sing along in repetition of their line. Before they knew it, the audience members had fallen into the trap of participation, chanting, "He þat schytyth wyth hys hoyll, he þat schytyth wyth hys hoyll" (l. 337) along with New Gyse and Nowadays. Although this singing can hardly be considered "sinful", spectators were shown a mirror in which their behaviour was magnified for all to see. Indeed, they enjoyed being led into temptation by the Vices in the "here and now", along with the protagonist, whose name represented all humankind. Such playful temptation was necessary for the doctrinal purposes of the morality, showing spectators the road to heaven through strategies that temporarily allowed them to promote festive celebration over moral insight.[7] Such theatrical "traps" were supported by the narrative structure of the play, which caused spectators to be completely absorbed in interaction with the characters, allowing audience members to gradually "change sides" between the Vices and the protagonist. Robert Jones has asserted that this change of attitudes was caused by replacing "an engagement in the entertainment of the vices" with "judgment that places that sort of entertainment in perspective" (p. 53). In other words, the spectator was to directly experience how easy (and how much fun!) it was to lapse into sin but also learned, along with the protagonist, that this fun had a less playful and more cruel side to it.

By using such a theatrical mechanism, *Jacob and Esau* in fact remains closer to earlier Catholic biblical drama than has previously been argued. Furthermore, as *Jacob and Esau* was performed for and by children, who were familiar with Terence's comedy and associated theatre with wit and privileged learning, they would have associated the medium as much with Roman comedy as with Catholicism—if not more. Therefore, one may wonder whether the dramatic *medium* really caused anxiety to its audience, or whether—as this essay will argue—it was the play's less appealing doctrinal aspects that needed to be managed by the playwright. It may be imagined that a play for children that suggests that one may not go to heaven, even if one is a good boy, needs to have the pill sweetened through a great dose of folly.

The discussion below will demonstrate that the play invites a conflict between *sola fide* and *sola scriptura* that arises when performing a part of the Bible

7 Somerset has argued that "as the vices amuse us, we can be said to share the hero's seduction. We have believed in it, have felt the springs of sympathetic laughter, and have perhaps even been called upon to assist in seduction" (p. 65).

that spectators *doctrinally* do not believe in, but which one has to believe in simply *because* it is in the Bible. Indeed, although the biblical story has been freely elaborated upon, a clash between the biblical and the doctrinal can still be perceived in two important moments in the narrative: the "pottage scene", in which Esau devours the dish out of his own free will, thereby relinquishing his birthright, and the scene in which Jacob misleads his blind father, causing him to believe that he has blessed his eldest son. These scenes are problematic because if spectators believed that God had predestined Jacob to rule over his older brother, then Jacob's act of deception would not be necessary to the plot. Similarly, for a play adhering to the principle of predestination, it would appear to be doctrinally immaterial whether or not Esau eats the pottage, and "sells" his rights, if he is already singled out as a reprobate.

The play, I argue, embraces this problem through the application of overt theatricality, thematising playmaking and pretending, in the play referred to as "counterfeiting". This includes a trivialisation of Esau's eating the pottage and a move towards drawing Jacob's fraudulence into the realm of *ludus*. Folly thus, apart from offering the burlesquing of taboo subjects and fun for the spectators, takes attention away from doctrinally incompatible moments. Furthermore, folly addresses the issue of the reality of drama and the question of whether playing something makes it real. This approach invites, on the one hand, an abstraction of human action, suggesting that all is play in Calvinist thought because God is the only one who "acts" in the non-theatrical sense, but it contributes, on the other hand, to making the doctrinal idea of predestination accessible to children through the characters' child-like qualities and behaviour.

I

The *Jacob and Esau* playwright faced a challenge that is generally underestimated in readings of the play: explaining predestination to children, who were not only educated to conform to the norms set for them by the society in which they lived, and who were encouraged to live "good lives", but who had also been trained to enjoy debating and appreciate argumentation. Exemplifying the doctrine through the narrative of two brothers, neither of whom had done either good or bad before their futures had been divinely preordained, the playwright faced the risk that children would deem the story unfair or illogical. Furthermore, it invited the possibility that Jacob as protagonist would not invite spectator iden-

tification, hence that his example would not inspire the youthful audience to be and do "good" as did other mid-Tudor interludes, such as R. Wever's *Lusty Juventus* (*c*.1550) and the anonymous *Nice Wanton* (*c*.1550), in which the character representing a young and virtuous boy laughs last. For example, in the latter play, Barnabas reflects on the fact that his brother and sister have been caught up in sinful lives and congratulates himself on his ability to "avoid evil and do good" as inspired by God's "special grace":

> If God had not given me special grace
> To avoid evil and do good, this is true,
> I had lived and died in as wretched case
> As they did, for I had both suff'rance and space
> . . . . . .
> And as for my sister, I am able to report
> She lamented for her sins to her dying day.
> . . . . . .
> To believe this and do well, to God for grace call
> All worldly cares let pass and fall
> And thus comfort my father, I pray you heartily. (*Nice Wanton*, ll. 509-27)

No such claim about the protagonist's divinely inspired goodness is made in *Jacob and Esau*. Indeed, through the Prologue, audience members are made aware that the play does not wish to suggest that Jacob is necessarily more deserving of being elected than his elder brother, or that Esau has somehow incited God's hatred; instead it conveys the notion that this was simply decided upon. This disclaimer needs to be justified to the play's audiences, and the Prologue first sets out to do that by echoing Malachi 1:2-3 and Romans 9:13 in the line, "Iacob I loue … and Esau I hate", presenting Malachi and Paul as scriptural authorities, but more importantly as prophets as well as "witnesses" of God's act of predestining the brothers' futures:

> … before Iacob and Esau yet borne were,
> Or had eyther done good, or yll perpetrate:
> As the prophete Malachie and Paule witnesse beare,
> Iacob was chosen, and Esau reprobate:
> Iacob I loue (sayde God) and Esau I hate. (sig. A1^{v})[8]

8 Citations refer to *A newe and wittie comedie or enterlude, newely imprinted, treating vpon the historie of Iacob and Esau, etc.* (1568).

In a rather contradictory manner, spectators are further managed through the playmaker's overt claim that the work draws on but does not limit itself to scriptural evidence, as the Prologue here promises to "exhibite" the "story" (sig. A1^{v}) of Jacob and Esau, thus informing spectators that they are to watch a performance that may deviate in content from the biblical narrative to which they are accustomed. As such it causes spectators to be aware of the fictionality of the play as it moves away from Biblical reality at plot level, creating a distancing effect.

At the level of character, folly, as a key element of fictionality, also contributes to the overt theatricality of the play. Folly is made apparent through characters' actions, but also by the way in which they are addressed by other characters. For example, Esau calls his servant Ragau "foolishe knaue" (sig. A3^{r}) and speaks of him as "a fine knaue" (sig. C2^{r}). Similarly, when Rebecca asks her younger son why he will not give Esau "some good sad wyse counsaile", Jacob answers that whenever he does approach his brother with advice, Esau shows his displeasure at the younger brother's presumption: "He calleth me foolishe proude boy with him to mell / he will sometime demaunde by what authoritée / I presume to teache them which mine elders bee?" (sigs. A4^{v}-B1^{r}). The play here invites spectators to "side" with Jacob, whilst voicing the question of authority and justification that some audience members may have felt about Jacob's sense of entitlement. In a similar manner, the play both offers the interpretation that Jacob and Rebecca are the instruments of fulfilling the divine word and will, to which Isaac is stubbornly blind, whilst encouraging spectators to superficially judge Rebecca's—at first sight—foolish performance. The latter is made possible through the framing of Rebecca and Isaac's dialogue in a context of classical drama, so that they are temporarily removed from the scriptural narrative and are presented as self-consciously theatrical, reminding the children in the audience of the fictional characters in the classical literature that formed part of their educational backgrounds.

To this end the playwright employs stichomythia. The following example focuses the play's central conflict:

> *Isaac*. And the eldest sonne is called the fathers might
> *Rebecca*. If yours rest in Esau, God giue us good night
> *Isaac*. A prerogatiue he hath in euery thing
> *Rebecca*. More pitie he shoulde haue it without deseruing
> *Isaac*. Of all the goodes his porcion is greater

Rebecca. That the worthy should haue it, I thinke much better
Isaac. Emong his bretherne, he hath the pre-eminence
Rebecca. Where Esau is chiefe, there is a gay presence
Isaac. Ouer his bretherne he is soueraigne and lorde
Rebecca. Such dignitie in Esau doth yll accorde
Isaac. He is the head of the fathers succession
Rebecca. I wolde Esau had loste that possession. (sig. B3^{v})

Stichomythia as a tool to accentuate fictionality is further employed in interaction between Mido and Ragau; when Mido mimics Esau's eating, Ragau underscores Esau's animalistic qualities and lack of generosity: "*Ragau*. Is there any pottage left for me that thou wotte? / *Mido*. No, I left Esau about to licke the potte" (sig. C3^{v}). This draws the narrative about Esau's selling his birthright into the realm of *ludus*, building on earlier moments in the play when Ragau playfully represents his master, as is apparent from a stage direction: "Here he counterfaiteth how his maister calleth hym vp in the mornings and of his answeres" (sig. A2^{r} SD). In a later scene, Ragau "counterfeits" his master again, copying his tone and the manner of his address: "Then, helpe, runne apace, Ragau my good seruant" (sig. D1^{r}). Such in-play mimetic representation foreshadows later instances of playing and pretending employed as spectator management devices.

For the play's more problematic scenes, which risk doctrinal incompatibility and which need to be made more accessible to the youthful audience, the clownesque characters steal the show by parodying the play's most challenging subjects through childish play. For example, Mido the clown enters laughing, thereby allowing spectators to identify his character as contributing folly to the dramatic action. His opening words as he comes onstage are, "Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, / Nowe who sawe ere such an other as Esau" (sig. C2^{v})—an entry which is clarified by the stage direction: "Mido cometh in clapping his han[…]s,[9] and laughing" (sig. C2^{v} SD). Mido combines overt folly, the pleasure to be had from telling or hearing a juicy gossipy story, and the imitation of actions to offer a hyperbolic statement in which Esau's eating habits are likened to those of a dog, this dehumanisation allowing spectators to avoid identifying with or feeling compassion for the character, while at the same time evoking a clear and recognisable picture for the mind's eye:

9 Early English Books Online uses bracketed ellipsis in its transcript of the early edition where the text is illegible. The current article adheres to the same practice.

By my truthe, I will not lie to thee Ragau,
Since I was borne, I neuer see any man
So greedily eate rice out of a potte or pan
He woulde not haue a dishe, but take the pot and sup
Ye neuer sawe hungry dogge so slabbe potage up. (sigs. $C2^{v}$-$C3^{r}$)

It is notable that Mido in his account of the scene is not interested in the birthright that is renounced through the act of eating this pottage, but focuses on ridiculing Esau's hunger and greed through a vivid and humoristic description. He then illustrates his words by *showing* Ragau and the audience how Esau performed the act of eating, thus again "counterfeiting" his master:

Mary euen thus, as thou shalte see me doo now.
[Here he counterfaiteth supping out of the potte]
Gently done Iacob: a fredely parte Iacob
I can suppe so Iacob.
Yea that wyll I suppe too Iacob.
Here is good meate Iacob. (sig. $C3^{v}$)

The repetition of the name "Jacob" adds a comic effect to the moment, furthering the caricature that Mido presents of Esau, whilst beating the joke to death.

Invited to laugh at Mido's folly, the spectators are not encouraged to ponder on Esau's renouncing his birthright for a pot of rice, nor on the doctrinal implications of this moment. The licking of the pot is presented as a sensual act, both animalistic in nature, to accentuate Esau's dehumanisation at this moment, and comic because of the repetition of the word "licke":

When he had supte vp all, I sawe him licke the potte
Thus he licked, and thus he licked, and this way
I thought to haue lickt the potte my selfe once to day
But Esau beguilde me, I shrewe him for that
And left not so much as a licke for pusse our cat. (sig. $D2^{v}$)

It is important that the playwright relies on the humour of the scene to remove some of its sharp dogmatic edges, while at the same time creating a distancing effect, so that spectators do not actually *see* Esau eating from the pot; thus the actual moment of doctrinal incompatibility is not shown to the audience, who are left to enjoy its mimicking.

II

Although spectators do not see Esau consume the pottage on stage, as they are only given second-hand accounts of this moment, his character is to be enjoyed within a framework of playfulness; we learn early on that not sleeping for long and insisting on waking his servants in a rather rough manner is "our good Esau his common *play*" (sig. A2^{r}; emphasis mine). In keeping with the traditional role of the Vice-character, Esau's choice of words and style of speech remind spectators of comic characters in late medieval morality plays and Tudor interludes.[10] A tell-tale sign in Esau's characterisation is his use of lengthy enumeration connected through rhyming, alliteration or repetition, such as is found in John Heywood's *The Play of the Wether* (1532-33), in which Merry Report boastingly refers to all the places that he has visited during his travels: "At Louyn, at London and in Lombardy / At Baldock, at Barfolde, and in Barbury / At Canturbery, at Coventre, at Colchester" (ll. 198-200). John Bale's *King Johan* also includes such enumerations, uttered by the Vice-character Sedicyon, for example:

> In every estate / of the clargye I playe a part:
> Sumtyme I can be / a monke in a long syd cowle;
> Sumtyme I can be / a none and loke lyke an owle;
> Sumtyme a channon / in a syrples fayer and whyght;
> A chapterhowse moncke / sumtym I apere in sytht;
> I am ower Syre Johan, / sumtyme with a new shaven crowne;
> Sumtym the person / and swepe the stretes with a syd gowne
> Sumtyme the bysschoppe / with a myter and a cope;
> A graye fryer sumtyme / with cut shoes and a rope;
> Sumtyme I can playe / the whyght monke, symtyme the fryer
> The purgatory prist / and every mans wyffe desyer. (*Complete Plays*, ll. 194-204)

When Esau offers such an enumeration, employing internal rhyming, and including in his description a great amount of superfluous synonyms and contradictions, he does so to abuse his servant in a manner that makes him both theatrically appealing and morally unlikable:

> So idle, so loytring, so trifling, so toying?
> So pratling, so tra[…]ling, so chiding, so boying?
> So iesting, so wrestling, so mocking, so mowing?

10 For a study of the "Vice", see Steenbrugge.

So nipping, so tripping, so cocking, so crowying?
So knappishe, so snappishe, so eluishe, so frowarde?
So crabbed, so wrabbed, so stiffe, so vntowarde?
In play or in pastime, so iocunde, so mery?
In work or in labour so dead or so weary?
Oh that I head his eare betwene my teeth now,
I should shake him euen as a dog that lulleth a sow. (sig. C2[r])

Esau's theatricality is further underlined by his use of the word "geare" when describing his selling of his birthright, a word that is often employed by Vice-characters and offers the possibility of a double entendre:[11] "But the best pottage it was yet that euer was / It were sinne not to sell ones soule for such geare" (sig. D1[r]). Here we know that Esau refers to the "pottage", but the word is far from innocent when understood within the framework of self-referential theatre, great hall performances, and the traditional Vice. The light-hearted way in which Esau, the reprobate, recounts that he has now lost claim to all his earthly goods perhaps invited audience members to relish the irony of the fact that, doctrinally speaking, Esau is not at liberty to sell his soul, so that the moment is trivialised.

Jacob can be seen to also utilize the word "geare", but in a way that is different from his brother's understanding of the word:

I could with mine owne geare better contented be
And but for satisfying of your minde and will
I would not weare it, to haue it for mine owne still
I loue not to weare an other birdes feathers. (sig. F1[r])

11 Walker reminds the reader of the sexual connotations of the word "gere" (l. 178) in *The Play of the Wether*, l. 178 (Walker, ed., p. 460, n. 26). The word is used five more times in this play, four times by Merry Report, the play's "Vice". Nicholas Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister* contains seven occurrences of the word, uttered by comic characters, such as *Talkapace*: "Faith, I would our dame Custance saw this gear!" (I.iii.96). Sodmismus in John Bale's *Three Laws* says, "The woman hath a wytt, / and by here gere can sytt, / though she be sumwhat olde" (ll. 474-76). See also Courtly Abusyon in John Skelton's *Magnyfycence*: "Ye[a], so I can devyse my gere after the cowrtly maner" (l. 765). In Lewis Wager's *Life and Repentaunce of Marie Magdalene* (*c.* 1550), the word "geare" carries different meanings depending on the character that employs it. In this play, the characters Infidelity, Carnal Concupiscence, Malicious Judge, Simon, and Mary Magdalen together use the word twenty-one times, the Vice-characters twisting Mary's words for comic effect at every turn, even though Mary uses the word innocently when referring to clothing and her general appearance.

Where one may expect a pun in Esau's language in tune with his Vice-like theatrical behaviour, Jacob's lines do not invite this. Nevertheless, the word "geare" for Jacob has a similar distancing effect, as, not unlike the trivialisation of the pottage scene, the reference to clothing draws a doctrinally awkward scene into *ludus*, presenting Jacob's fraudulence as a theatrical act, in which Jacob dons a costume ("Here she doth the sleues vpon Iacobs armes" [sig. E4^{v} SD]), as is devised by his mother, who thereby takes on the role of playwright or stage manager:

> *Rebecca*. It shall serue anon I warraunt you, take no thought
> Now throughly to rauishe thy father Isaac,
> Thou shalt here incontinent put vpon thy backe
> Esau his best apparell, whose fragraunt flauour
> Shall coniure Isaac to beare thee his fauour
> *Deborra*. Now I see apparell setteth out a man. (sig. E4^{v})

Jacob's trickery can be understood in a variety of different ways, depending on spectators' interpretations. The play may successfully have caused some spectators to infer from the scene a sense that Rebecca's and Jacob's staged actions are legitimate, and, indeed, necessary as acts justified by their presence in the biblical narrative. Others, however, might not have seen the performance in such a positive light, understanding Jacob's behaviour as immoral, due to his superficial lack of respect for his blind father, which might offer a wrong example to the children in the audience; others again perhaps felt uneasy about the scene's doctrinal superfluousness. Jacob's reluctance to accept his costume indicates his (and more importantly, the playwright's) awareness of both of these potential anxieties, which find themselves further managed through Jacob's expressed concern about the *audience* for whom he is to show himself dressed as Esau—or at the theatrical level, the Vice; for although his father Isaac is blind, the "folke" referred to can see his apparel, and thus see through his duplicity: "Goe before, & I folow: but my chekes will blushe red, / To be sene among our folke thus apparailed" (sig. F1^{r}). The audience-in-the-play and the external audience here merge into one, drawing spectators into the biblical narrative as they become part of "our folke".

III

Jacob and Esau ends in solemn song and prayer, forms of ritual that would have been approved of by Calvinist spectators and participants. The shift to ritual action marks a new phase in the play, which until that moment had presented its audiences with clownesque characters, including fools, knaves and a character resembling the traditional Vice, and which addressed all doctrinally awkward moments through self-conscious theatricality. In this new part of the play, the dramatic action ceases to be self-referential, as befits the introduction of a final character, who remains off-stage but is made part of the world of the play and the world of the spectator through pious address: God. The playmaker seems to suggest that God, however invisible, is the only character who *actually* performs: "*Rebecca*. As thou has ordeyned right so must all thing be / Performe thine own words lord which thou spakest to me" (sig. $E2^{r}$). "Performance" here does not have a theatrical undertone and is conceptually linked to God's biblical "promise", as can be seen in Rebecca's addressing Jacob to ask him to join her in prayer:

> Sonne Iacob, forasmuche as thou has so well sped,
> With an himne or psalme let the Lord be praised
> Sing we all together, and geue thankes to the Lord,
> Whose promise and performaunce do so well accord. (sig. $D2^{v}$)

The implication is that Rebecca and Jacob's performances have been the gracious instrument of the divine one, suggesting that human action *can* have an effect, when this is divinely inspired and guided. It follows that any human action that is not thus motivated is ineffectual and abstract, and this implies that all actors in this play, except Rebecca and Jacob, have actually been "counterfeiting", thus reducing these performances in *Jacob and Esau* to plays-within-the-play, with or without in-play audiences, but always in the presence of the external, "real" audience. For the latter, the playwright at times creates a distancing effect, whilst at other times drawing them into the dramatic action, changing spectators' relationships to the play as well as their modes of involvement and participation, according to the play's need to balance its doctrinal agenda with the biblical narrative and theatrical form. The playmaker's emphasising of the theatricality of these moments perhaps allowed the children in the audience to feel that if the world is a stage, on which (most) human action is "counterfeit-

ing" and only divine performance ultimately matters, human performance can be seen as harmless fun if it is not applied for the wrong reasons.

However, the playwright also offers a more cautious undertone, in which he suggests that there is a danger to playing those parts that could jeopardise the soul's health. For Rebecca warns that affecting to be blind and impersonating a blind man may elicit divine wrath: "Nay it is to tempt God before thou haue neede / Whereby thou mayst prouoke hym in very deede / With some great misfortune or plague to punish thee" (sig. B2^{v}). The question that arises is whether her claim, which evokes the biblical injunction against tempting God (Deut. 6:16, Luke 4:12), comments on mid-Tudor theatre practices as a vehicle for the play's Calvinist message, or is more broadly offered to echo Puritan strictures against acting. Making such scruples relevant to the youthful audience, the playwright offers a perspective on playing or play-making as something that is trivial and childish through the scene in which Mido imitates the blind Isaac. Rebecca's considering Mido's antics to be rude and unnecessary, whilst being the driving force behind her son's "counterfeiting", exemplifies a condemnation of theatrical forms that are not divinely inspired and that serve only to amuse:

> *Mido*. I trowe if I were blinde, I coulde goe well inowe
> I coulde grope the way thus, and goe as I do nowe
> I haue done so ere now both by day and by night,
> And I see you grope the way, and haue hitte it right.
> *Rebecca*. Yea syr boy, will ye play any suche childishe knack?
> As to counterfaite your blinde master Isaac?
> That is but to mocke him for his impediment. (sig. B2^{v})

Her comment may have served a double purpose: to remind the youthful spectators that *although* this play sought to entertain, and encouraged the enjoyment of playfulness, self-conscious theatricality, and the antics of clowns, fools and vices, its purpose was doctrinal. The play's doctrinal agenda as such justified the silliness of the performance to those suspicious of the use of the medium for doctrinal ends. However, it was also the play's folly that made possible the staging of *Jacob and Esau*'s less appealing dogmatic aspects. Crucially, Rebecca's remark could be interpreted as a moral footnote glossing the play's Calvinist message: even if its spectators believed in predestination, which would suggest that one's actions are essentially irrelevant, the playwright wanted to remind them that the doctrine also prescribes that good behaviour is a sign of, and enabled by, grace.

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Fart for Fart's Sake: Fooling through the Body in Grobiana's Nuptials[1]

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The Early Drama at Oxford project explores the history and character of plays written and performed in Oxford Colleges in the late-medieval and early modern periods, and in this paper we will explore *Grobiana's Nuptials*, the last play that falls within EDOX's historical period of study.[2] The play is an excellent example with which to raise wide and significant questions about academic drama generally for a number of reasons: the play is remarkably metatheatrical; it is insistently intertextual and draws reference from a broad and fascinating range of material, both scholarly and general; and it looks backwards to various attitudes towards the proper relationship between drama and pedagogy throughout the period. In fact, the survival of the text itself provides an initial irony. MS Bodley 30 seems to have begun life as the presentation copy of a Latin play, *Physiponomachia* (*c.* 1609-11), written by Christopher Wren

1 We would like to thank scholars of the Tudor Theatre Round Table (2015) at the Université François-Rabelais de Tours, and of the Medieval and Early Modern Research Seminar at the University of East Anglia, who provided invaluable comment on parts of the paper here presented. We are particularly indebted to John-Mark Philo for suggesting our title.

2 Although this is the final Oxford play which we can positively identify, we have records to confirm that St John's College, from which it comes, continued to stage drama regularly until 1640. The play is entry no. 2561 in Wiggins.

and given to the President of St John's, John Buckeridge, as part of an apparent tradition at the college.[3] Once we get beyond the carefully spaced and neat Latin text, however, we arrive at the rather more chaotically written English play that occupies the second section of the manuscript.

I

The play was clearly seen as valuable enough to be preserved, even if it seems, at first glance, to be rather unpromising stuff. *Grobiana's Nuptials* is written in one act, divided into nine short scenes.[4] It opens with a prologue delivered by Old Grobian himself, who announces his search for a suitable son-in-law. In Scene Two, Pamphagus plans a feast, with his cook Lorrell and servant Oyestus: they discuss menu and guest list, and Oyestus is sent to issue the invitations. Scene Three presents the Grobian court held by Vanslotten, Tantoblin and Ursin: the nature of this court is elusive but its functions are both legal and institutional—it tries a case, and it also has the power to admit members to the society of Grobians: it is perhaps like the Governing Body of an Oxford College, since Colleges historically had the power to arbitrate crimes involving their members. Vanslotten, Tantoblin and Ursin complain that the court session is keeping them from other business, namely the making of candles in the case of Vanslotten and bear fighting for Ursin. Pamphagus enters and announces that he has discovered some new recruits in the streets. They discuss the feast, ordering food, specifically rancid butter. Games are set up: "foote ball" (l. 251) bearbaiting, and "the auncient sport of throwing snoweballs, or slangturd, or snot" (ll. 258-59). In Scene Four we meet Grobiana, Old Grobian's daughter, and her nurse Ungartred. We learn of Grobiana's unsightly looks and her bad breath, and hear that her charm makes all the young men follow her. Oyestus arrives to issue an invitation to Pamphagus's feast. In the fifth scene, candidates Hunch and Jobernole talk about their prospects with women: Jobernole is wooing Grobiana, whereas Hunch is happy with his kitchen maid. The Grobian feast is presented in Scene Six: Old Grobian commends all present to his daughter, who has fallen for Tantoblin. Tantoblin reveals, in Scene Seven, that he has been infected

3 For details of the manuscript, see Wren, ed. Weckermann, p. 23.

4 We follow throughout the scene and line numbering from the printed edition in *Grobianus in England*, ed. Rühl.

by love for Grobiana: "Is shitten came shites the beginning of love?" When Grobiana enters she is very encouraging, but their kiss is interrupted by Ursin, who sets upon Grobiana himself and is struck down by Tantoblin: Ursin cries murder and his friends Pamphagus, Lorrell and Oyestus enter to save him. Grobiana is sick, perhaps lovesick, in Scene Eight: she swoons and is revived by Oyestus and Old Grobian with a stinking, snuffed tallow candle, though they remark a turd would do the job better. Oyestus informs us that his wife is accomplished in the art of conserving excrement. Scene Nine shows Vanslotten presiding over the Grobian court as they examine the case of Tantoblin's assault on Ursin. The two rivals are reconciled and set off for the nuptials. Jobernole and Hunch are admitted into the Grobian ranks after swearing an oath to follow Grobian rules. In the Epilogue, Old Grobian bids the audience leave since the play is now over.

II

This short description may indicate why the play has been ignored by almost all scholars: it was edited by Ernst Rühl not because he was interested in its dramatic merit but as part of his study of the Grobian tradition. "Grobianism" is a much more familiar term in German than in English: the Middle High German adjective "grob", "uneducated" and "unrefined", is the root of the word "Grobian", which appears in 1482 in Zeninger's *Vocabularius teutonicus* as the German translation of the Latin "rusticus", and "Grobian" is still used in German to describe a boorish, rude or simple person, and as a synonym for "peasant".[5] In 1494 Sebastian Brant's *Narrrenschiff* introduced Saint Grobian as a popular new saint for the order of drunkards and gluttons: his followers *Ellerkunz* (Boorishblock), *Wüstgenug* (Uglyenough), and *Seltensatt* (Seldomsated) have taken charge of a town from *Sauberinsdorf* (Cleaninthevillage), who has gone blind, and the peasants are now all drunk and behaving badly (Brant, p. 262).

In 1495, Brant revised his work and added a chapter on table manners. The Grobian at dinner will not wash his hands, nor will he observe seating orders based on social precedence; he will spit out food, and wipe his nose on the tablecloth. These same themes were later imitated and expanded in another German

5 We would like to acknowledge our debt to Janine Barrett, who first drew our attention to the German Grobian tradition and whose University of Fribourg MA thesis on *Grobiana's Nuptials* supplies valuable information on the German background. We are also indebted to her for the translations from German in this essay.

work of Grobianism, Dedekind's Latin *Grobianus et Grobiana* of 1549, which was translated into German by Kaspar Scheidt in 1551. Grobianism is used by Dedekind to parody books of manners, and to teach through negative example, although since it was composed in Latin its first audience is unlikely to have been the Grobian peasantry. Dedekind appears to develop the Grobian tradition as a veiled critique of the social order—it is difficult to argue with the logic of his Grobian who is unhappy with a seating plan:

> Warum solt ich eim andern weichen,
> So er doch eben ist meins gleichen?
> Wir sind von einem vatter gleich,
> Ob wir schon arm sind oder reich,
> Und sind gemacht auß staub und erdt.
>
> [Why should I give way to another, if he is the same as I? We are all from the same father, be we rich or poor, and are all made of dust and earth.] (Dedekind, ll. 651-55)

Dedekind's text also, importantly, introduced the female figure of Grobiana, heroine of our St John's Play. An English translation of Dedekind was published in 1605 by "R. F. gent". His title is satirical: *The Schoole of Slovenrie Or Cato Turnd Wrong Side Outward. Translated out of Latine into English verse to the use of all English Christendome, except Court and Cittie*. He does not name Grobian but instead evokes titles perhaps more likely to be familiar to English readers. *The Schoole of Slovenrie* may be juxtaposed to a school of good manners, such as F. Seager's *Schoole of Virtue*; Cato, who is turned inside-out, evokes the *Disticha moralia* by Dionysius Cato, a core text known to every English schoolboy. Similarly, in the play that is the focus of this essay, *Grobiana's Nuptials*, Grobiana herself makes direct reference to a "scoole of complement" at which young men prepare to pay her suit (l. 352).

III

"R. F." explains his project in a fairly close translation of Dedekind's preface. He will attempt to teach by contrary example how to avoid the "ill conditions" which "infect" the times ("R. F.", l. 18), and he hopes that he will thus have more success than "oure Latine writers" who were unable to "prevaile" when they protested against "rusticke vices" (ll. 25-26): "Which tride indeede, but all in vaine, those vices to amend / Which did mens minds, by follies meanes, in beastly sort offend" (ll. 23-24).

Men's follies have led them to vicious behaviour no better than that of beasts: by portraying this bestiality in all its ugliness, the writer hopes to encourage the reader to purse virtuous behaviour instead. The vices which must be eschewed are "rusticke"—those of the peasant, or Grobian, who is also characterized as a "clown" and a "knave":

> Each clowne shall see what fits him best, and what his manners be,
> And I affirme that craftie deeds with crafty knaves agree.
> Perhaps when many see their faults so fitting their owne name,
> Such clownish manners from their minds thei'le banish quite for shame.
> ("R. F", ll. 91-94)

But "R. F." also imitates Dedekind's veiled challenges to the social order:

> Had we not all one father "Adam", and one mother "Eve"?
> Shall earth and ashes thrust thee downe? At that who would not grieve?
> When as our Grandsire "Adam" dig'd, and Grandam "Eve" span,
> Who then, I pray, amongst us all was the best gentleman? ("R. F.", ll. 424-27)

In citing the famous dictum by which John Ball stirred up the Peasants' Revolt (it is notable that the anonymous play *The Life and Death of Jack Straw* had been published in 1593), is "R. F." condemning Jack Straw as the ultimate Grobian? Is he indicating that the end of bad manners is social revolution? Or is he granting some validity to a Grobian class war?

Such contextualisation of *Grobiana's Nuptials* may start to indicate reasons for considering the play as more than simply base scatological farce. Its eponymous heroine is part of a satirical European tradition used to present radical challenges to the social order. In English, this tradition is also represented in prose by Thomas Dekker's *The guls horne-booke* (1609). Dekker addresses all who have "a monethes mind to haue y^{e} *Guls Horn-booke* by heart" and assures them that by memorizing his words they "in time may be promoted to serue any Lord in *Europ,* as his crafty Foole or his bawdy Iester" (p. 3). Although Dekker's work fixes its satire on the behaviour of gallants, it is addressed, with heavy irony, to

> any man, woman, or child, be he Lord, be he Lowne, be he Courtier, be he Carter, of y^{e} Innes a Court, or Innes of Citty, that hating from the bottome of his heart, all good manners and generous education, is really in loue, or rather doates on that excellent country Lady, *Innocent simplicity.* (p. 3)

Although generosity and good manners should be the mark of the courtier, they are not exclusively so; nor are they always found at court, and the carter may be as vulgar, but also, implicitly, as courteous, as the lord.

IV

For a long time, *Grobiana's Nuptials* was considered to be the work of two students at St John's, Roger Shipman and William Taylor (*Grobianus*, ed. Rühl, p. 52). But the editors of the *Records of Early English Drama* (REED) volumes for Oxford unearthed an important piece of evidence which has caused the play to be re-attributed. More importantly, perhaps, it must also cause us to reassess the play's quality, as we shall go on to discuss. In a letter of 16 January 1637, the university's Vice-Chancellor, Richard Baylie, who was also President of St John's, wrote to William Laud, the University Chancellor and notable St John's alumnus, as follows:

> Young Charles May presented us with a mock-shew on Saturday last, ye subject was slovenrie it selfe, ye marriage of Grobian's daughter to Tantoblin; but ye cariadg and acting soe hansom and cleane, that I was not better pleased with a merriment these many yeares. (cited in *REED: Oxford*, p. 556)

The date alone would undermine the previous identification of authorship: at the time of the play, William Taylor had been at the college for less than a month; Shipman would not even arrive until May 1637. Charles May, by contrast, had matriculated in July 1634, aged fifteen—he would take his BA in April 1638—and so he had spent two-and-a-half years at the college prior to the play (Hegarty, p. 361). St John's had a thriving and important theatrical scene throughout the period—helped enormously by the number of scholars from Merchant Taylors School who took protected places and were almost exclusively responsible for St John's entertainments. Indeed, May is relatively unusual in not having been at Merchant Taylors prior to St John's, although we do not know where he had been instead. Indeed, the fact that he wrote *Grobiana's Nuptials* is one of the few things recorded about him in the recent Biographical Register of early modern St John's alumni. Certainly we don't know enough about him for any biographical information to inform a reading of the text itself—other than perhaps to remark on the relationship between the play's sophistication and the relative youth of its author.

From Baylie's letter, not only can we attribute the authorship of the play correctly; we can also note that the Vice-Chancellor was delighted by the play when he saw it performed. What is the secret of the play's success?

Grobiana's Nuptials is, as far as we know, the only attempt to present Grobian in dramatic form; as a play, unlike Dekker's prose work, it can exploit the presence of actors' bodies, as well as the interaction between dramatic action and setting. To consider the second of these points briefly first, if, as seems likely, the play was presented in St John's dining hall, then its focus on feasting—the feast which occupies the central scene of the play, and the nuptial feast which is anticipated at the end of the play—becomes an important means by which the audience is drawn into the action: the audience occupies the space in which it is normally occupied with public feasting, and is thereby brought to reflect on its own table manners by comparison with those of the Grobians; the audience is also defined, perhaps, as "fellow dinner guests", and becomes part of the set. The college kitchens, where food for feasts is prepared, are "offstage", but are nonetheless brought to the audience's attention through the character of the cook, Lorrell, and there is reference too to books, which might be considered essential to a college, in a passage discussed below. The books mentioned include domestic college books as well as academic volumes ("Butteries bookes, kitchinge bookes, besides all declamations and theames" [*Grobiana's Nuptials*, ll. 211-13])—another aspect of the play's localisation in St John's College.

With respect to theatrical embodiment, the play exploits the limitations of the stage world, and of actors' bodies, through its—generally obscene—fooling. We might normally expect drama to create a sense of wonder through material devices, and indeed university plays are perhaps best known to us now through some of these—for example, the astonishing city of Troy in marzipan presented at the feast in William Gager's *Dido* (1583), with the rose water which showered the audience as Dido and Aenas entered their cave.[6] Such costly effects were a feature of University plays presented for important dignitaries, often with accompanying feasts: as with *Grobiana's Nuptials*, the audience participated in the feast and thus quite directly in the play. But *Grobiana's Nuptials* is a lower budget, college in-house production, and deliberately deflates such culinary-dramatic effects, emphasizing the material over the wondrous and, as it were, revealing

6 An account of these elements of the play, recorded in Holinshed, is provided in *REED: Oxford*, pp. 190-91.

the puppet's strings. For example, the cook, Lorrell, proudly explains the origins of his most celebrated dish thus:

> *Lorrell*. You have heard off my flying pudding? How
> doe you thinke that was made? People tooke it for a piece
> of art; nothing else, Sir, I had newly stript him out of his
> warmed skinne, the bagge he was sodde in, but my puddinge
> slipt into the feather tubbe, and because I would not plucke
> him, I sent it in for a made dish, and the apes, my brother
> Cookes, have imitated this Chaunce as a piece of service (ll. 80-86).

Indicating the reason for Lorrell's name, Pamphagus declares that Lorrell "has't deserv'd the bayes from all poets else" (ll. 120-21)—poetry and cookery are made indistinguishable, and slovenly cookery at that. Perhaps the cook is to the character's body as the playwright is to the actor's body: one gives the other the material with which to work.

The play explores the connection between authorship and the body further through a consideration of the uses to which paper may be put. Pamphagus tells us that he has invited to his feast a "sweete natur'd gentleman" whom he met in the streete "turneinge against a wall", and whose reply to Pamphagus's salutation was "such thankes it did my heart good to heare it" (ll. 205-8). Pamphagus's apparently gracious speech clearly nonetheless describes bodily functions, and Tantoblin picks up both theme and subject matter:

> Thankes, my good friend, that's hee that makes
> the true use of feasts, sends all unto their proper places,
> hee is call'd the Auter, he hath a monopoly for all Butterie
> bookes, kitchinge bookes, besides all declamations and
> theames, *which* to the wonder of the world he spends very
> punctually, and constantly, you scarce can get any paper
> to put under pyes, against a good tyme for him. Pamphage,
> let there be order taken, the tarts have some honie in them,
> wee care not for them else, they have noe operation. (ll. 209-17)

The dramatic exploitation of the feast, as exemplified by the "Auter", is their "true use", and the author's placing of his characters is like the host's seating plan, having the power to put all in their place. The author's prolific use of paper, which we might expect to be for inspiration and composition—reading books and writing them—has deprived cooks of the paper in which they might bake pies. But the passage seems to suggest that the author has in fact

torn up papers for his personal use in the privy. This suggestion is reinforced by Tantoblin's allusion to the "operation" of honey, which was a laxative, and by Tantoblin's exit line: "Lets away, my belly rumbles. Ursin, hast any paper?" (ll. 283-84). So the author putting words onto paper is likened to a man wiping his excrement on toilet roll. If the comparison seems unflattering to the audience, it does not seem so to the Grobians, who consider bodily functions necessary and good—which of course they are, though rarely publicly so. Put in a more flattering light, perhaps the comparison suggests that play-writing is as natural and essential an activity as excretion.

After Lorrell's flying pudding and Tantoblin's laxative honey, another foodstuff, oysters, occasions the particularly revolting narrative about dinner guests eating oysters. First, Lorrell reveals that Oyestus' snot dressed the oysters, when he apparently sneezed on them after they were dropped; Pamphagus then ate them eagerly. Next, Pamphagus relates that the guests ate oysters from each other's noses:

> *Lorrell*. Oyestus there did me great service at the fall
> of a dish of stew'd oysters, which the rogue pleanteously
> repaired, a cold haveing glandered him, and I ordered them,
> they past for good plump colchesters.
> *Oyestus*. I never told *your mistress* of *that*, but it did
> mee good to see how heartily *your* hon*our* fedde, beside the
> rest of *the* reverences, and truly it joy'd *your* worships
> poore Crier to see that he had any thinge about him could
> content *your* Lordship.
> *Pamphagus*. I remem*ber* the dish very well. By the
> same token Mr Simon Slouch; a sodaine jeast beeinge broken,
> fell out a laughing, as he was eatinge them, and drove on
> up his nose which *pre*sently hee voided most *pro*perly to the
> plate from whence it came, and his next neighbor swallow'd
> it with better lucke. (ll. 91-105)

Oyestus comments, talking of himself formally in the third person, that he was delighted that Pamphagus found his snot pleasing: his courteously humble, even sycophantic, language reflects a hierarchical social order in which a servant hopes that he has "any thing about him" which can please his master. That it should be the base product of Oyestus'—diseased—body function, snot, that pleases his master perhaps parodies an idealised view of a loyal servant whose body is dedicated to his master's commands. The snot also seems to level rela-

tionships, since Pamphagus, by eating the snot, is debased to the level of the servants who served it up.

The passage makes an explicit connection between oyster flesh and snot before a more familiar association is invoked between oysters and women's bodies, and particularly prostitutes. Oyestus declares that Grobiana, wearing his cap, "look'd (I shall not offend, I hope) like, I pray pardon, an Oyestus wife" (ll. 801-2). Oyster-selling was a term for prostitution, and the idea that Grobiana might become Oyestus' wife (an idea only in Oyestus' mind) evokes the pun, while also associating Oyestus himself with both oysters and prostitutes. Oyestus' explicit concern to avoid giving offence may be motivated by his desire to avoid the hierarchical impropriety of suggesting that his master's daughter could marry him: for the audience, it is clearly a comical apology-in-advance for likening that same master's daughter to a prostitute.

Foodstuffs operate within *Grobiana's Nuptials* as part of the play's preoccupation with what goes into the body and what comes out of it. The things people eat are as debased as what people pass out, and if authorship is a form of excretion, romantic love is foul wind. When Grobiana is heart-sick for Tantoblin, she is able to find relief for her anguish in a good round of farting:

> *Grobiana.* O, o my head, hold harder, wench, my braines will fly in pieces else. . . . Now it is past into another place; my heart has a whirlewine in't, o, o, now it is gon downeward.
> *Ungartred.* Bend your body and let it out, soe, soe it is gone, farewell it, they are but tenants at will, and may be turn'd out, when you list. (ll. 718-19, 732-34)

The actor is not actually required to fart on stage—rather his character explains that it is her plan to relieve herself in this way. Presumably it is difficult for an actor to fart at will, although the need to represent an onstage fart would have provided, as now, a good opportunity for physical and aural comedy. Other bodily functions which might prove difficult to stage are similarly narrated—for example, Pamphagus' encounter with the author pissing in the street. The limitations of the body are also, of course, necessarily the limitations of the stage, and the playwright seems playfully aware of this. So, when Grobiana is caught short at the feast, and "rises and exits" (l. 581 SD), Vanslotten demands, "Cannot she have a pot brought her in, why did shee goe?" (ll. 584-85)—relieving oneself at table presumably being conventional Grobian behaviour. But Oyestes explains that "necesseitie has noe lawe" (l. 586)—drawing attention, perhaps, to the fact that drama does—and that asking an actor to relieve himself onstage

goes beyond the laws of drama. It might also be a gender joke. Grobiana is a female character, albeit presented by a man: anatomical differences between the actor and the character he presents might be comically foregrounded were the actor required to pretend that he were urinating onstage. Less scatalogically, Grobiana's implicit stage direction to Ungartered—"Why doest scratch thy head soe?" (l. 326)—might be expected to describe a gesture indicating puzzlement or thought, Ungartered's reaction to Grobiana's comment that she has affected the habit of clapping her hand to her mouth simperingly to cover her lack of teeth. Here, however, it indicates rather that Ungartered has nits: "the rogueinge lice doe playe soe many prankes" (ll. 328-29). The playwright is frustrating the expectations of his audience in relation to the theatrical convention of head-scratching.

A suggested equivalence between play and body draws attention to the fact that everything comes down to the body—and, albeit in unconventional ways, the Grobians explicitly celebrate the body. Civility, taught by the conduct books which *Grobiana's Nuptials* parodies, equates to control of the body—as does acting. But within the world of the play, the narrative is all about the lack of bodily control. One Mr Cob is much admired for the witty line with which he "put off" the effect of a particularly rousing fart at table: "he said he could not avoid it" (l. 413). The fart is voidable, and an un-avoidable consequence of the body. By contrast, the precise terms in which Baylie praises May's production are intriguing: the play's *subject* was slovenliness, but the *performance* of it was "handsome and clean". The student actors' skill seems to have exemplified everything that the subject matter condemns: their voices and bodies were admirably proper in their playing, even as they embodied characters exemplifying entirely opposite values.

So the play's dramaturgy is skilful: it uses the devices of theatre to make virtues out of the body's necessity; the virtuosity of the actors' performance of the play paradoxically indicates, nonetheless, cleanliness and control. At the same time, the playwright, alluding to impulses within the Grobian tradition which he has inherited, at least flirts with a Grobian challenge to many social values: the master eats his servant's snot; paper seems better used for pies than for learning; authors write shit; romantic love can be readily purged in a good round of farting. What is this play really about?

V

Naturally, names are hugely significant. In her seminal study, *The Names of Comedy*, Anne Barton astutely argues for a comedic bias towards Cratylic names, those that reflect the innate essence or circumstances of particular characters, or indeed the comic "type" which they represent (pp. 3-15). And certainly this is the case with *Grobiana's Nuptials*. The pun on "oyster" in Oyestus' name has been noted. His name also refers to a public function, not merely that of town crier (he practises "oyes" for attention [l. 127]), but also, thanks to a play on "oyer and terminer", the practice of a local court being empowered to hear and decide cases, as happens in the play. Ironically, however, whilst Oyestus has a smattering of legal diction, he is dim-witted and illiterate; when Pamphagus rehearses the list of invitees to the feast, there is a Dogberry-esque setpiece in which he mangles the words he has merely to repeat:

> *Pamphagus.* All yee that are invited,
> *Oyestus.* All yee that are devited—
> *Pamphagus.* To the Grobian Festuall
> *Oyestus.* To the Grobian estuall. (ll. 128-31)

And so on. It's simple, foolish stuff, but also clever, in that it helps to define and refine our understanding of Oyestus as a character through intertextual reference to a long literary tradition in English.[7]

The names of the invitees, as we might anticipate, confirm slovenliness and foolishness as shared characteristics: Sir Simon Slouch, Mr Grouthead (apparently a well-known synonym for a dunce), Lady Fustie, Mr Dulman. Other names provide cheap, albeit fitting, humour: a Physician is called Mr Lotium (lotium being medicinal urine); a lawyer is called Old Thump, which suggests a blunt physicality akin to Peter Thump in *Henry VI, Part Two*—or indeed "Hunch" within this text, albeit the joke is more effective here, if we anticipate that a lawyer and apprentice might behave differently. Also invited is a Mr Deawbeater of Houndsditch, apparently a location with an established Jewish population. How should we interpret his inclusion? Is it inherently amusing to have a char-

7 The tradition notably includes Garcio's subversion of Cain in the Towneley *Murder of Abel* and Matthew Merrygreek's deliberate misreading of Ralph Roister Doister's letter in Udall's play (III.iv).

acter whose occupation is beating Jews be seen as similar to one who slouches or one who smells a bit fusty? Is anti-semitism seen to be a folly, or is that being too optimistic and/or anachronistic?

Finally, we have "The Mayor and Aldermen of Gotham with the Towne Clarke". Together with the more Cratylic names of fools, the civic dignitaries from Gotham presumably refer to the "fools of Gotham", mentioned in the Towneley Plays (12/260) and known equally often as the "wise men of Gotham". The legend goes that Gotham folk pretended madness, which was a malady thought to be contagious, to dissuade King John from travelling through the village and thereby rendering the road a public right of way. This particular reference, to the feigning of madness that ironically demonstrates wisdom, can usefully be adapted to describe how the play performs bad behaviour in order to prove scholarly virtue. And indeed, as we have seen, this is precisely the paradox that Baylie articulates in his praise of a performance of "slovenrie" that actually asserts "handsomeness".

The roll call of loaded names extends to characters beyond Pamphagus' list: that of Tantoblin, the romantic lead, means both a small tartlet and a piece of excrement (*OED*, s.v. "tantadlin"); Jobernole is to be found in Marston's book of satires, *The Scourge of Villanie*, where he writes: "Shall brainles Cyterne-heads, each iubernole / Poket the very *Genius* of thy soule?" ("In Lectores prorsus indignos", ll. 25-26),[8] and so it is quite possibly a contemporaneous term for a fool and perhaps also an acute intertextual reference. Vanslotten, the presiding "judge" is more difficult to trace. In Thomas Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller*, a "gobbledegook" passage of Dutch from the Wittenberg leg of the tour includes the line, "*Vanhotten, slotten, irk bloshen*" (p. 247), which might have been in the author's mind. This is obviously highly speculative, but it might be significant that the passage includes some jokes about oysters and also a pointed reference to *Acolastus*, the hugely successful prodigal play and archetype of Christian Terence drama. Ironically, what should have been seen as an explicitly pure Christian performance is instead described by Nashe's narrator as having been "filthily acted", in almost opposite terms to Baylie's description of St John's slovenly play. The name of Pamphagus, which means "Eating Everything", also evokes *Acolastus,* since it is the name of one of the play's main parasites. The allusion to *Acolastus* in *Grobiana's*

8 In his edition, Davenport glosses the word as "Jobbernowl: a blockish or stupid head, a blockhead" (p. 261).

Nuptials, and to the pan-European tradition of Christian Terence, may give a clue as to May's project in *Grobiana's Nuptials*.

VI

Material deemed suitable for pedagogical drama was an understandably fraught subject throughout the early modern period. As David McPherson explains, "stern moralists have always been suspicious of comedy, especially of its supposed effects upon the young" (p. 19). The problem for early modern pedagogues, however, was that Latin comedy, particularly Terence, provided perfect examples of pure Latin and accreted *scholia* with which to teach both language and rhetorical technique. The authors of propaedeutic texts that taught through double-translation were able to avoid charges of immorality through simply reproducing anatomised phrases and sentences, as in the respective *Vulgaria* of John Stanbridge and Robert Whittington, both schoolmasters at Magdalen College School in Oxford, or Nicholas Udall's hugely successful *Flowers for Latin Speaking* (1533)—Udall, of course, also a schoolmaster, in London at the time of publication and soon to move to Eton. Pedagogues and theorists who defended the use of Latin comedy argued that Terence offered valuable moral lessons through negative example, Erasmus, who is certainly the most famous example, writing, "I am convinced that these [comedies of Terence], read in the proper way, not only have no tendency to subvert men's morals but even afford great assistance in reforming them".[9] And Sir Thomas Elyot follows suit, arguing in favour of "fruitful" Latin comedy thus:

> comedies, which they [the opponents of the use of New Comedy in schools] suppose to be a doctrinal of ribaldry, they be undoubtedly a picture or as it were a mirror of man's life, wherein evil is not taught but discovered; to the intent that men beholding the promptness of youth unto vice, the snares of harlots and bawds laid for young minds, the deceit of servants, the chances of fortune contrary to men's expectation, they being thereof warned may prepare themselves to resist or prevent occasion. Semblably remembering the wisdom, advertisements, counsels, dissuasion from vice, and other profitable sentences most eloquently and familiarly shown in these comedies, undoubtedly there shall be no little fruit out of them gathered. (pp. 47-48)

9 Erasmus, *Epistle* 31, quoted in McPherson, p. 20.

Indeed, when Erasmus comes to the end of his teaching manual, *On the Method of Study*, and concludes by describing how useful an excellent teacher, such as himself, could be, he pointedly demonstrates how one could *even* teach a Terentian play (pp. 687-89).

Concerns with comic immorality were far from definitively assuaged, however, and the Christian Terence tradition represents an attempt to harness the power and popularity of New Comedy, and the value of its numerous pedagogical *scholia*, to the morality of Christianity. Often, as Ervin Beck explains, the parable of the prodigal son was used to reverse the trajectory of generational conflict: "New comedy is *adulescens triumphans*; prodigal-son comedy is *senex triumphans*. . . . in actuality, [prodigal drama] resulted in a precise inversion of the paradigm of youth in New Comedy" (pp. 110-11). Alternatively, dramatists took the opportunity to demonstrate the due punishment for viciousness within their plays. George Gascoigne's *The Glasse of Governement* (1575), for example, can be read ironically in its apparent condemnation of Terence generally, but it certainly places great emphasis on the judicial punishment of Terentian types: we learn of the offstage demise of the elder brothers, whilst the crafty servants' prosecution and punishment are performed to serve as exemplary.

VII

We have deviated somewhat from the immediate subject of *Grobiana's Nuptials* in order to demonstrate an intellectual context for the play that provides its significance. This is a play that draws upon a tight connection of drama and education only to demonstrate an apparent lack of concern for reform—or indeed for what might usually pass as either morality or civility. For all the play's satire, for all its parody of romance, education and social hierarchy, there is no fortunate turn of events by which the vicious lose out, nor indeed a Jonsonian frame to comment upon the disorder within. The Cratylic nature of the play's names emphasises the fact that reform is impossible within the world of the play: indeed, the whole purpose of the plot is to celebrate the marriage of Grobiana and thereby to anticipate the continued legacy of Grobian behaviour. Law and social norms are bent to the alternative social code of Grobianism and not vice-versa. *Acolastus* is thus brought to mind simply so that we can appreciate how far from that paradigm the play has travelled.

The play's legal reference works in the same way. Oyestus' frequent parody of legal speech throughout the play is fully realised in the trial that forms the play's final scene. This trial provides a striking subversion of what by the time of the play was a long-established relationship between legal and dramatic epistemology.[10] As described above, the trial examines the case of Tantoblin's assault on Ursin when Ursin accosts Grobiana, appealing for a kiss. The assault, which Ursin describes, perhaps comically, as "Murder, murder" (l. 694), as he falls to the ground, is sufficiently serious for him to be knocked unconscious. But the trial ends not in punishment, but rather in a bizarre judicial collusion—a closing of ranks, or imposition of community around agreed behaviour—whereby the victim of an assault is brought to accept that the blow he received was just. In order to demonstrate the extensive nature of the cod-legal interactions and the comparative suddenness of the verdict, we will here quote at length:

> *Vanslotten.* Tantoblin hath wrongd Ursin, and Ursin hath suffered an injury by Tantoblin. I cannot sodainly decide the matter. What was the cause?
> *Oyestus.* I, now you speake judiciously, causa sua.
> *Ursin.* A salutation betweene I and Grobiana made this disturbance.
> *Vanslotten.* How, what, you bearheard salute Grobiana? Intollerable! My memory is shallow, Oyestus, write it downe, Ursin saluted Grobiana.
> *Oyestus.* An't like your worship, qua formula?
> *Vanslotten.* Trouble not my more serious meditations, you conceive me.
> *Oyestus.* Soe, Omnia bene.
> *Vanslotten.* But now to the matter, for as I conceive, we have not yet spoke anything to the purpose.
> *Ursin.*Why, Sir?
> *Vanslotten.* Nay, let Tantoblin speake, the wiser man of the two, I know by his longe silence.
> *Tantoblin.* Sir, the cause is thus: To tell you true I tooke him a polt of the pate and a good on, beleeve it, for I tooke him a slubberinge of my Grobiana, and I nubb'd his noddle to the purpose.
> *Vanslotten.* Why, so then, Ursin, what needed you have this stirre, here he has confessed it, this is ample satisfaction, are you content?
> *Ursin.* If you thinke fitt, I am. But there was sombody or other which strucke me suche a blowe on the face with a flint, that it made my eye sparkle.
> *Oyestus.* O tace, peace in the bellfrie.
> *Vanslotten.* Let that passe, a blow, twas nothinge as longe as twas noe where but on the face. I could not blame Tantoblin much. Grobiana was betrothed his owne, and could not endure

10 This relationship is best explored by Hutson, *passim*.

any finger should be in the businesse butt his owne. I am to be at the solemnitie of the nuptials, soe shall you. Laugh upon there and be friendes. (ll. 847-81)

Vanslotten rules that Tantoblin's behaviour was perfectly acceptable within the bounds of the world performed by the play, as delineated by his personal sympathies and commonsense: he cannot blame Tantoblin, and Tantoblin was provoked—arguments which might weigh heavily in ordinary human experience but might be expected to carry limited weight in court. It is only in a comedic court that Vanslotten's sentence could be an appeal for a comic communal resolution: "Laugh upon there and be friends".

The humour of this scene depends on its happily inappropriate conclusion and on the effect of juxtaposed styles of speech: Oyestus' fake court-Latin lawyer meets Vanslotten's world-weary philosopher ("trouble not my more serious meditations"); Ursin's simple, monosyllabic puzzled plaintiff meets Tantoblin's dandified indignant suitor ("nubb'd his noddle"). The audience's enjoyment of the trial therefore depends on their capacity to hear these parodied speech types, and the theatrical caricatures they represent. Erudition is essential to the audience's entertainment, as is its sense of what should be the appropriate register for court speech. The play functions precisely because everyone watching and participating in it is educated in civility, the appropriate manner of speech to situation, and more generally of the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. Those boundaries, shared, understood, and ultimately celebrated by the College, provide the play with its power.

At the play's conclusion, when we might anticipate some explicit moral or didactic judgement to be given, the Epilogue Grobianus simply asks everyone to leave because the play is finished. He asserts that he is *not* the theatrically conventional epilogue, and will not ask for applause:

O now tis right, I have matcht my daughter to my minde,
Yet somewhat is left for me that am behind;
Not to begge applause or desire your handes
To joyne these jolly lovers in new bandes,
But to tell you true, because I begunne,
You may goe away, the play is done. (ll. 917-22)

Grobianus's insistence that he will not behave in the way expected of him by theatrical convention reminds the audience that in his prologue Grobian deni-

grated theatrical convention explicitly, asserting that he would only enter because there *was* no formal prologue:

> Had you had a prologue, I had not enter'd,
> for to say *the* truth I am *old* Grobian; did you ever heare
> of old Grobian? That's I, and am he that hate manners worse
> than Tymon hated man. And *what* did he hate them for?
> Marrie for their foolish, foppish, apish complements, niceties,
> lispings, cringes; can't our buisinesse bee done, and *our*
> Play acted, but a Coxe-combe in a cloke must scrape his
> lease of leggs to begge *Sir* Tottipate's applause in dogrime
> verse? (ll. 1-9)

Grobian's attack is not on play-acting itself, but on the conventions that require actors to seek the applause of their audience. This is an attack on "manners": the prologue thus frames the play's entire discussion of manners within the framework of theatre—and uses a learned allusion to Timon of Athens, quite possibly to Timon as presented by Shakespeare's play, to do so. We may guess, from Baylie's positive account of the production, that the audience nonetheless applauded, in spite of Grobian. And we may assume, too, that in spite of his instruction, the audience will not go away at all: the play has occupied their shared collegiate space, and the conclusion frames the play by stressing exactly that fact. So, although the spectators have been positioned as guests at the Grobian feast, they ultimately resist Grobian behaviour through their collectively correct behaviour as an audience. The "mock-shew" asserts, albeit through negative example, the usual behaviour that would occupy the men assembled there to play and watch it.

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The Folly of the Machiavel: Christopher Marlowe's Mortimer and the Guise

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The relationship of Christopher Marlowe's plays to the writings and reputation of Niccolò Machiavelli is one of the oldest of critical chestnuts. A great deal of ink has been spilt over the years trying to ascertain what Marlowe knew or thought about the Florentine thinker, without, it must be said, getting close to offering conclusive answers to either problem. There have also been several attempts to read his plays, especially *Tamburlaine* and *The Jew of Malta*, in the light either of Machiavellian doctrine, or anti-Machiavellian polemic, again producing many suggestive but few determinate results. Another essay on the topic (which this one is) therefore runs the substantial risk of sowing indifferent seed in barren soil, especially as it consciously refrains, like many of its predecessors, from offering hard claims about Marlowe's knowledge of, let alone attraction to, Machiavelli. Rather, it seeks principally to broaden our sense of what Richard Hillman has termed (in reference to tragedy) "the circulation and co-presence of diverse discourses within a common cultural space" (*French Origins*, p. 2), in this case attitudes towards "Machiavellian" practices of political deceit or violence in late sixteenth-century France and England. To put it another way, this essay offers a new set of contexts with which to refresh an otherwise dog-eared, unproductive theme.

Specifically, it highlights the way folly can be used to link sixteenth-century accounts both of the supposed rise of a "Machiavellian" politics and of the diffusion of Machiavelli's actual texts and ideas to Marlowe's dramatic strategies in his plays *Edward II* (performed *c.* 1592) and *The Massacre at Paris* (probably early 1593). It pays particular attention to their "Machiavellian" protagonists Guise and Mortimer. Guise and Mortimer are "Machiavellian" not simply because they possess traits common to an emerging dramatic stereotype—the "murderous Machiavel" also expressed by Shakespeare's Gloucester, later Richard III (*3 Henry VI*, III.ii.193)—but because of their plays' shared ideological origin in the bitter confessional polemics of the 1580s and early 1590s written in or with reference chiefly to France, which reflected also (either explicitly or for English readers) the precarious geo-political position of England's Protestant monarchy.[1] The reigns of Henri III of France (1574-89) and Edward II of England were explicitly linked in *Ligueur* polemics justifying opposition to the former, such as *Histoire tragique et memorable, de Pierre de Gaverston* (1588) or the deposition tract *De Justa Abdicatione Henrici Tertii* (1589), both now attributed to the radical Parisian cleric Jean Boucher. The common ideological context and indeed source materials of *Edward II* and *The Massacre at Paris* are reflected in similarities of dramatic structure and strategy, apparent even in the latter's problematically abrupt playtext. The crucial point as far as this essay is concerned is that their representation of political immorality is indebted to the French discourses of anti-Machiavellianism that figured heavily in religious polemic on both sides.[2] Marlowe's atheistic, ambitious Guise is clearly derived, more or less directly, from Huguenot and/or royalist caricature of the Catholic leader as a pseudo-Machiavel, possessing, as Jacques Hurault alleged in 1588, a "domesticall ambition" to pursue his father's "secret intente to vsurpe this crowne" (p. 9). Mortimer's characterisation—which involves him at one point invoking contemporary Catholic resistance theory—is almost certainly intended to carry similar Guisian echoes (*Edward II*, I.ii.73, I.iv.54-55).[3]

A concentration on folly will, I hope, shed new light on the moral and theatrical paradigms used by Marlowe's two plays to frame and direct audience

1 See Hillman, *Shakespeare, Marlowe*, pp. 72-111; cf. Knowles, esp. pp. 112-15; Kewes, "History Plays"; and Kewes, "Marlowe, History and Politics", p. 503. The sources for *The Massacre at Paris* are discussed in Kocher, "François Hotman"; Kocher, "Contemporary Pamphlet Backgrounds"; Briggs (1983); and Potter (1996).

2 On this, the clearest introduction is now by Anglo, pp. 227-373 and 417-33. Cf. Beame.

3 Cf. Kewes, "History Plays", p. 503. Marlowe's works are cited throughout from Bowers, ed.

responses to Mortimer and the Guise, as well as to Machiavellian practices more generally. It will also offer a subtle recasting of these characters' relationship to the Vice figure of morality drama. Marlowe's indebtedness to previous theatrical tradition has been the subject of much distinguished scholarship, from the magisterial works of Bernard Spivack, Douglas Cole and David Bevington to more recent studies like Ruth Lunney's. Guise and Mortimer resemble the archetypal figure of the Vice in their relish for their own stratagems, their unrivalled, vaunting proximity to the audience, their come-uppances, and perhaps also their Catholicism. (The Vice of the Elizabethan morality play is often seen uttering papist imprecations; early in *Edward II* [I.iv.54-55], Mortimer threatens Edward with deposition if he refuses to obey the spokesman of the Holy See.) Unlike the Vice, they are not themselves foolish or ridiculous, unless their hubristic boasts of invincibility which precede their ruin can be considered such (*Edward II*, V.iv.48-72; *Massacre* xix.978-86). Nonetheless folly illuminates important aspects of their dramatic characterisation, and indeed of the plays' treatment of fraud, violence and ambitious usurpation more generally.

II

Before examining Marlowe's plays more closely it is necessary to examine some of the historical narratives on which they depended. For certain writers of the late sixteenth century, the rise of "Machiavellian" political conduct—deceit and violence in the service of personal ends—was the result not simply of the spread of Machiavelli's own texts and ideas, but also of a fatal surrender to folly by those in charge of the body politic. This view was articulated with particular clarity in the dedicatory epistle to the Latin translation of Innocent Gentillet's *Discours sur les moyens de bien gouverner. . . . Contre Nicolas Machiauel Florentin*, often known simply as the *Contre-Machiavel*. Gentillet's original French text appeared in 1576, the Latin version—whose author has yet to be identified—a year later, in Geneva. Both were widely read in England;[4] Simon Patericke's English translation, published in 1602, was derived from the Latin version. Dedicated to two English gentlemen with strong Geneva connections, Francis Hastings and Edward Bacon, the translation's epistle advanced a brief account of sixteenth-century French history which purported to explain the Valois monarchy's (and especially Cath-

4 See Bawcutt, pp. 864-65.

erine de Medici's) complicity in the persecution of Protestants, which it linked directly to the circulation of Machiavelli's teaching. This historical narrative began with a phase of folly. The Protestant Reformation, the epistle claimed, represented an opportunity for thorough moral reform. France failed to take it, for reasons which were obvious enough, at least as far as the author was concerned. I cite Patericke's translation, noting some of the original Latin phrasing in square brackets:

> Sathan (to occupie and busie mens minds with toyish playes and trifles, that they might give no attendance unto true wisedome) devised this policie, to raise up jeasters and fooles in Courts [*scurras & moriones aulicos*], which creeping in, by quipping and prettie conceits, first in words, and after by bookes, uttering their pleasant ieasts in the Courts and banquets of kings and princes, laboured to root up all the true principles of Religion and Policie. (Gentillet, *Discourse*, sig. ¶iii^{r}; cf. *Commentariorum … libri tres*, sigs.+ii^{r-v})

Succeeding this era of godless courtly levity—represented, so the writer argued, by the "skoffing taunts" of Rabelais in France and Cornelius Agrippa in Germany—came a second of "lust and lightnesse [*libidinem ac mollitiem*]", abetted and inspired by "new Poets, very eloquent for their own profit" (*Discourse*, sig. ¶iii^{v}; cf. *Commentariorum … libri tres*, sig.+ii^{v}). The consequence was a moral hollowing-out of the court and national culture, whereby lip-service was paid to ethics and legality but "all things onely for ostentation and outward show [*in ostentationem tantum & speciem composita*]". The scene was thus set for the devastating third phase:

> For than Sathan being a disguised person amongst the French, in the likenesse of a merry ieaster [*mimum quendam hilarem*], acted a Comaedie, but shortly ensued a wofull Tragoedie. When our countrie mens minds were sick, and corrupted with these pestilent diseases, and that discipline waxed stale; then came forth the books of *Machiavell,* a most pernitious writer, which began not in secret and stealing manner (as did those former vices) but by open meanes, and as it were a continuall assault, utterly destroyed, not this or that vertue, but even all vertues at once: Insomuch as it tooke Faith from the princes; authoritie and maiestie, from lawes; libertie from the people; and peace and concord from all persons, which are the onely remedies for present malladies. (*Discourse*, sig. ¶iii^{v}; cf. *Commentariorum … libri tres*, sigs.+ii^{v}-iii^{r})

Besides its sense of writers and books as agents of moral decay, what is notable about this account is its employment of dramatic metaphor. The disastrous passage from Rabelaisian folly to Machiavellian villainy and atheism is described as if it were a morality play, jesters and fools setting up the entry of villainy and

atheism, "Comaedie" becoming "Tragoedie", "the vices" of the French ruling class behaving as quasi-stage characters.

Thus the Latin translator of Gentillet, in a work which helped shape Protestant attitudes to Machiavelli across northern Europe, not least in England, as Bawcutt has shown. On these grounds alone his account is worth considering in relation to Marlowe's *The Massacre at Paris*, which, as I argue below, echoes elements of the epistle's moral patterning. It is significant that the idea of folly as a prerequisite for the flourishing of more sinister, "Machiavellian" vices can also be detected in contemporary narratives of the medieval reign of Edward II, to which Marlowe was indebted for his play. Raphael Holinshed's account, for example, opened by informing the reader of the overall trajectory of the reign:

> But now concerning the demeanour of this new king, whose disordered maners brought himselfe and manie others vnto destruction; we find that in the beginning of his gouernement, though he was of nature giuen to lightnesse, yet being restreined with the prudent aduertisements of certeine of his councellors, to the end he might shew some likelihood of good proofe, be counterfeited a kind of grauitie, vertue and modestie; but yet he could not throughlie be so bridled, but that foorthwith *he began to plaie diuers wanton and light parts*, at the first indeed not outragiouslie, but by little and little, and that couertlie. For hauing reuoked againe into England his old mate the said Peers de Gaueston, he receiued him into most high fauour … through whose companie and societie he was suddenlie so corrupted, that he burst out into most heinous vices; for then vsing the said Peers as a procurer of his disordred dooings, he began to haue his nobles in no regard, to set nothing by their instructions, and to take small héed vnto the good gouernement of the commonwealth, so that within a while, he gaue himselfe to wantonnes, passing his time in voluptuous pleasure, and riotous excesse: and … furnished his court with *companies of iesters, ruffians, flattering parasites, musicians, and other vile and naughtie ribalds*, that the king might spend both daies and nights in iesting, plaieng, banketing, and in such other filthie and dishonorable exercises. (Holinshed, p. 318; emphasis added)

This account, which appeared also in condensed form in various editions of John Stowe's *Chronicle*, is modelled closely on Polydore Vergil's *Anglica Historia* (pub. 1534). As in the "Gentillet" account of sixteenth-century France, emphasis is placed on levity ("lightnesse"—"*leuitatem*" in Polydore), "iesting" and "plaieng" ("*iocando*", "*ludendo*") and wantonness as preparatory to "destruction", as well as on a movement from covert villainy to open crime (Polydore Vergil, pp. 346-47). If in the former narrative "Sathan" is the "merry ieaster" leading France onwards to catastrophe, in Holinshed it is Edward himself who plays the fool, acting "divers wanton and light parts".

The inspiration for such consciously theatrical tropes derived, almost certainly, from the representation of folly in sixteenth-century morality drama. There was a long-standing tradition in English morality plays, in particular, of differentiating folly—a universal human predisposition—from the specific villainous practices which its presence enabled or abetted. In John Skelton's *Magnificence* (1515-23), to take an early example, Folly and his brother Fancy—representations of universal human fallibilities—dupe the title character into the largesse that causes his downfall, but their deceitful trickery is distinguished from the destruction worked by Courtly Abusion, Counterfeit Countenance and Crafty Conveyance, each of whom figures a specific socio-satirical practice. Crafty Conveyance, left alone on stage by the two brothers, instructs the audience that his own sinister emergence is premised on Folly's ubiquity:

> It is wonder to see, the world about,
> To see what folly is used in every place.
> Folly hath a room, I say, in every rout;
> To put where he list Folly hath free chase;
> Folly and Fancy all where every man doth face and brace;
> Folly footeth it properly, Fancy leadeth the dance,
> And next come I after, Crafty Conveyance. (ll. 1328-34)

"Next come I after" invokes a pattern equally visible in the disastrous arrival of Machiavellian villainy after, and as a result of, Rabelaisian folly and lascivious wantonness in the 1577 epistle to the Gentillet translation. Yet in neither of the two prose accounts discussed above is such dramatic imagery metaphorical only. Both the French and English royal courts are portrayed as places of unbecoming levity precisely because that is where the performing arts, music as well as plays and jesting, especially flourish: and in both texts these are regarded as both cause and symptom of a collapse in moral standards. For the writer of the dedicatory epistle to the Latin translation of Gentillet, motivated no doubt by Calvinist dislike of theatrical representation, the idea that theatrical corruption can infect the political arena is a founding premise for his pejorative account of recent French history. His epistle opens by retelling from Plutarch the story of Solon, the Athenian statesman, castigating the playwright Thespis for the "feigned fables [*mendacia*]" in a much-applauded tragedy. Those who approve "this play [*ludum*]" will be doomed, Solon remarks, to discover such dishonesty sooner or later in their own affairs (*Discourse*, sig. ¶iii^{r}; cf. *Commentariorum . . . libri tres*, sig. +ii^{r}).

We can conclude, then, that when Christopher Marlowe turned to writing plays in the late 1580s, a relatively coherent tradition existed for representing historical irruptions of fraud and violence as outcomes of folly, notably the folly of courts and princes. This tradition offered a ready schema within which to place the ideas of Machiavelli, both morally and historically, while also coming pre-packaged, as it were, for the stage on account of its use of dramatic tropes. When we turn to Marlowe's *The Massacre at Paris* and *Edward II*, we find that they frame their representation of "Machiavellian" practices in very similar ways to the tradition just discussed, by making fraud and violence political vices contingent on regal folly. Indeed, they consciously exploit the ways folly was represented in Tudor morality drama to trigger certain responses in an audience equally familiar with this heritage.

One example from each play will be given here. Early in *Edward II*, the new king and Gaveston abuse the bishop of Coventry for his role in the favourite's exile during the previous reign. Their assault is both physical and verbal: they rip off his episcopal vestments and jeer at his wealth and haughtiness. Eventually, he is sent off to the Tower, his lands and see confiscated and assigned to Gaveston (I.i.175-207). The scene is based on an event in the play's chronicle sources. However, its dramatisation as an abusive personal confrontation recalls scenes from the Tudor morality tradition in which vice characters assault their victims or each other in a knockabout, but also excessive and vicious, way, inviting an audience's uneasily complicit laughter. An obvious if early example (not necessarily known to Marlowe, of course) is the beating and disrobing of Skelton's Magnificence (l. 1876 SD), probably representing another prelate, Thomas Wolsey. Marlowe gives his redeployment of the trope an intensely topical twist, appropriating only to reverse what Thomas Nashe referred to as the "launcing and worming" of Martin Marprelate in 1588-89 on the London stages, which also involved physical and verbal abuse ("A Counter-Cuff Given to Martin Junior", *Works*, I: 159). Indeed, the scene seems deliberately to stoke anti-prelatical feeling, doubtless latent in London audiences who had witnessed at first hand Archbishop Whitgift and Bishop Aylmer's aggressive crackdown on non-conformism in the early 1590s.[5] It does so unstably, however. On the one hand, Edward and Gaveston's marring of a prelate draws on the characteristic obsessions of Puritan anti-episcopacy—focusing on a bishop's popish vestments, identifying him with

5 See Collinson, pp. 403-67.

a "sea [i.e., see] of Rome" rhetorically identified with "the sea of Hell", and questioning whether wealth is compatible with priestliness (*Edward II*, I.i.177-78, 191-92, 205). But they also resemble the caricatures *of* Puritanism by Anglican conservatives, not least in their pseudo-Anabaptistic demand for him to be "in the channell christen[ed] … anew", and their greed for Coventry's "goods" and "rents" (188, 193-94).[6] Any laughter at Coventry's humiliation—and for the scene to be effective there probably does need to be some (Gaveston and Edward appear to be inviting an audience to egg them on)—therefore has a sickly edge, informed not only by topical ambivalence but by the characteristic doubleness of foolish violence on the Tudor stage. This scene not only dramatically illuminates the descriptions of Edward's levity in Marlowe's source materials, but also creates an expectation that such behaviour will in due course give way to more insidious and destructive practices. In *Edward II*, the king's abuse of Coventry directly provokes an alliance of the rebel barons with the Church; in the very long run (although not immediately), it sets in train the sequence of events that leads to Mortimer's Machiavellian regency, discussed further below.

The presentation is somewhat different in *The Massacre at Paris*. For a start, the Machiavellianism of Guise, as well as the deceit and and violence of the Catholic faction as a whole, is shown as trigger, not consequence, of the disasters befalling France. This reflects the polemical perspective of some of Marlowe's Huguenot source materials (for example, François Hotman's *De Furoribus Gallicis* [1573]), which blamed the "Guisians", as well as Catholic perfidy in a more general sense, for the St Bartholomew's Day massacres.[7] It also reflects Marlowe's decision to begin his play in 1572, rather than further back in time. Nonetheless, a pattern of folly anticipating more dangerous practices is invoked just over halfway through the play, during the scene of Henri III's coronation. The precise mechanism is a piece of comic byplay involving one of the new king's favourites, Mugeroun:

> *Mugeroun.* Then may it please your Majestie to give me leave,
> To punish those that doe prophane this holy feast.
> *He cuts off the Cutpurse eare, for cutting off the golde buttons of his cloake.*
> *King.* How meanst thou that?
> *Cutpurse.* O Lord, mine eare.

6 For these elements of anti-Puritan polemic, found for example in the works of Richard Bancroft or Matthew Sutcliffe, see Lake in Lake and Questier, pp. 538-56.

7 Marlowe's use of Hotman is convincingly argued in Kocher, "François Hotman".

Mugeroun. Come sir, give me my buttons and heers your eare.
Guise. Sirra, take him away.
King. Hands of good fellow, I will be his baile
For this offence: goe sirra, worke no more,
Till this our Coronation day be past:
And now,
Our solemne rites of Coronation done,
What now remaines, but for a while to feast,
And spend some daies in barriers, tourny, tylte,
And like disportes, such as doe fit the Court? (*Massacre*, xii.615-29)

This episode has no known historical source. However, in plays of the generation before Marlowe's, cutpurses are frequent occurrences: they are often identified at work in the theatre audience, and are then egged on by vice-characters. In Thomas Preston's *Cambises* (1560-70), for example, the Vice Ambidexter, apologising for having been temporarily off-stage, asks the audience whether "my Cosin Cutpurse" is with them "in the meantime", urging him, "to it Cosin and doo your office fine!" (ll. 603-4; cf. 998-1009). In George Wapull's *The Tide Tarrieth No Man* (1576), Courage (the Vice) similarly instructs an imaginary figure in the audience, "Good cosen Cutpurse, if you be in place. / I beseeche you now, your businesse to plye / I warrant thee I, no man shall thee espye" (ll. 1049-51). "Farewell cosen cutpursse, and be ruled by me", says Revenge at the end of John Pickering's *Horestes* (1567; sig. Eiii^{r}). Such instances associate cutpurses with specific improvised periods of Vice-audience interaction; the conventionalised byplay associated with the villain in modern English pantomime is a useful parallel.[8] Indeed, "cousin cutpurse" seems to have been an affectionate label for alleged audience members within the bantering idiolect of the Tudor Vice. It establishes a sardonic rapport (of the "you know who you are" type) while presenting himself as accomplice, or patron, of criminal practices at work in the audience and the wider world.

Thus the cutpurse scene in Marlowe's *Massacre* engages with existing traditions of performance (and audience expectations) to give Henri III's reign from the start a taint of ludic folly that is both amusing and unbecoming, degrading the ceremonial formality one expects of a royal court and especially a coronation. Henri's standing bail for the cutpurse, in fact, brings him close to enacting the same mock-patronage role taken by the Vice in relation to audience

8 For this, with special reference to Preston's Ambidexter, cf. Wiles , pp. 5-7.

cutpurses in previous plays. It is true that, according to the stage direction, the Cutpurse is stated to enter with the king's retinue at the start of the scene (*Massacre,* xii.587 SD). He may therefore seem a stage character to an audience. But not necessarily—he could equally sneak on from among the spectators. Certainly, to cut off Mugeroun's buttons, he would need to have started earlier than the second stage direction gives him time for; probably he is already at it while the high-status characters speak earlier in the scene, stirring up subversive audience hilarity. His come-uppance is certainly comic: "O Lord, mine eare" is a funny line (even or perhaps especially if screamed), and Mugeroun's return of the offending appendage ridiculous. That the severing is also uncomfortable—the play has, after all, already dramatised the sundering of Huguenot body parts—is no Marlovian innovation, but part of the queasiness intrinsic to the morality tradition's representation of vicious but amusing folly. The consequences of the episode are shown by their sequel: the Catholic faction immediately agree to use Henri III's levity as a cover for their own control of the state (*Massacre*, xii.631-56). In order to regain control, Henri III is compelled to trick Guise into being murdered, a stereotypically "Machiavellian" act (and furiously denounced as such in *Ligueur* propaganda, which it is clear Marlowe followed in dramatising the Guises' deaths), which leads to his own assassination shortly afterwards.[9] In the play—or at least, the play as we have it now - these events are crammed into a few scenes; in reality, of course, Guise and Henri died at the end of the 1580s, nearly one and a half decades after Henri's coronation in 1575.

III

It is clear, then, that both *Edward II* and *The Massacre at Paris* exploit existing theatrical conventions, and expectations, to represent folly as a precondition for more

9 For this dependence, see Thomas and Tydeman, eds, pp. 258-59; cf. Briggs, pp. 263-67. In *Histoire tragique*, Edward II (as a stand-in for Henri III) is described as "ce perdu Machiauel" and Machiavelli is claimed to have taken his precepts from him (Boucher, p. 42). Another *Ligueur* tract, the *Histoire au vray du meutre et assassinat, etc.* (1589), describes Henri's supposed resolve to eliminate the Guises as a "proposition veritablement digne d'vn Epicurien ou Machiaueliste" (p. 93). Most notably, Pierre Matthieu's fiercely pro-Catholic tragedy *La Guisiade* (written 1589) attributes to Henri an attitude all-too-welcoming to "Le Machiaveliste, et l'homme de fortune" (Matthieu, l. 379). See also the translation/edition by Hillman, who has elsewhere discussed the play as a "conditioning coordinate" for Marlowe's *The Massacre at Paris* (Hillman, *Shakespeare, Marlowe*, pp. 86-97, p. 85).

sinister political vices and/or practices, such as ambition, deceit and murder. It is clear, too, that such a strategy tracks aspects of Machiavelli's reception in late sixteenth-century France and England. To be precise, Marlowe's dramatic choices, as they have been discussed up to this point, suggest an *anti*-Machiavellian understanding of the use of fraud and violence to acquire or maintain power. Readers of this essay might be pardoned for finding such a conclusion underwhelming, not least in its implied reading of Marlowe as a moral and political conformist. Marlowe's exposure to anti-Machiavellianism, indeed Gentillet, has long been alleged.[10] It is worth wondering whether there might not be different ways to understand folly's relationship to the Machiavellian political arts in these plays.

One possible route can be identified within one of the surviving English manuscript translations of Machiavelli's *Il Principe*. (Until Dacres' published translation of 1640, anyone wishing to read this text in English could only have done so via manuscript circulation or copying.) The translation in question is the one often described, after Napoleone Orsini's pioneering research in the 1930s, as "Translation A", a label which gives away how little has so far been discovered about its occasion, authorship and date.[11] Four complete copies of this translation, in different hands, have been identified in the British, Bodleian and Harvard (Houghton) Libraries, suggesting possibly wide circulation and possibly even some form of scribal publication; no other version exists in more than two. Another translation, entitled "Machiavel his Principles", recently identified during the electronic cataloguing of manuscripts in Lambeth Palace Library, uses Translation A's rendition (with minor variants) of the second half of Machiavelli's treatise, from chapters 16 to 26, although its version of the early chapters is unique. While it is likely that all copies of the translation belong to the late sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries, only one (British Library, Harley MS 967) can be dated with any precision: as Orsini showed, it must have been composed, or copied, after 1583 ("Nuove ricerche", p. 101). This particular copy is also the only one to carry the copyist's initials, "J.[or F.] L.", although who this was remains uncertain (Orsini, *Studii*, pp. 19-33; Petrina, pp. 56-57).

Translation A is a periphrastic translation, systematically expanding Machiavelli's text and rendering it in English idiom. A compelling instance of this technique is its version of the opening of Machiavelli's sensational discussion

10 See, e.g., Orsini, "'Policy'", p. 132.

11 See Orsini, *Studii*, pp. 1-39; cf. Petrina, p. 51.

of how princes should keep their word (*Il Principe*, chap. 18), where Machiavelli goes on to recommend familiarity, when necessity requires, with the bestial arts of fraud and violence. The translation injects a discourse of folly into Machiavelli's text that cannot be found in any other published translation of the sixteenth century, whether the published Latin version of Sylvestre Tellio (pub. 1560) or the French ones of Gaspard d'Auvergne (1553), Guillaume Cappel (1553) and Isaac Gohory (1571). Nor does it correspond to any other manuscript translation so far identified:

> There is noe man so besotted, that knoweth nott, or soe shameles that will nott confesse, how holie and honorable a thinge itt is for a prince to keepe his faith and promise unviolatted and so Leade his Lief w[i]thout reprehention yett experience hath taught us, that those princes have bene most renowmend for their worthye facts that haue had least regard of their word or faith who circumventinge the simple sorte who but meane plaine sooth, haue surmounted them in dignitye. And made them poore fooles. (Lambeth Palace Library, Sion Abbey MS L40.2/E24, fol. 107[r])

The semantic choices here are worth highlighting. In *Il Principe*, Machiavelli says that "*ciascuno l'intende* [everyone knows]"[12] honest princes are praiseworthy. The translation says that you would have to be "besotted"—mentally confused—not to know it (other copies of Translation A say "sotted"). Machiavelli has princes who display "*astutia*"—"crafte, wilinesse, subtilty of wit", as John Florio later defined it—running rings round and overcoming those who rely too much on "*lealtà*", that is, "loyalty, truth, integrity, allegeance, vprightnesse, faithfulnesse" (Florio, pp. 45, 179). Many such princes, the Florentine blandly observes, have achieved "*gran cose* [great things]" (p. 31). The translation claims that in circumventing "the simple sorte who meane plaine sooth", dishonest princes make them "poore fooles", objects of ridicule for their stupidity. (In other versions of Translation A, the term "sottes" is used instead of "fooles", but the meaning is the same.) Such adjustments explicate if not erase the terse, understated irony of Machiavelli's style, coarsening its smooth amorality by presenting it as contemptuous anti-moralism. There is an especially crowing edge to the sneer with which honest princes are described as "poore fooles". For Machiavelli, *astutia* and its subsidiary arts are instrumental. They help preserve

12 Machiavelli, *Il Prencipe*, p. 31; for the Italian, I cite the 1584 edition published pseudonymously in London by John Wolfe. Regarding this passage, modern critical editions differ only over spelling and punctuation.

lo stato and achieve renown. But in Translation A, the secondary, perhaps even the principal aim, is to expose and humiliate those who abide by moral precepts, and award the privileged few who don't a sense of exclusive superiority.

This is an attitude captured also in Machevill's remark in Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*: "Birds of the Aire will tell of murders past; / I am asham'd to heare such *fooleries*" (Prol. 17; italics added). But it also reflects a reading of Machiavelli through the Protestant anti-Machiavellian lens associated with Gentillet. (There are other aspects of the translation, which I shall not discuss here, which support this interpretation.) In Gentillet's *Discours … Contre Nicholas Machiavel*, Machiavelli is similarly coarsened as having characterised honest rulers as "*lourdeaux* [dullards]" and "*idiots*", ripe for ridicule; the term for the latter in Patericke's 1602 translation is "idiot fooles and sots".[13] There are significant implications here for how Machiavelli was read and understood in late Elizabethan England. For one thing, a hard distinction between a mediated and un-mediated Machiavelli (one who speaks in his own terms) becomes difficult to sustain at the point of reception, although it is worth pointing out that other translations, French, Latin, and English, offer more literal versions of this passage. More important for the present argument is the role played by folly in framing Machiavelli's advocacy of craftiness. For although it seems to echo the moral-historical idea, discussed above, that folly is a universal human failing which enables villainous practices to flourish, in fact it sees sottishness as the symptom and sign chiefly of those doomed to succumb to princely *astutia*, and thereby worthy of contempt, if not indeed deserving of their fate. Perhaps inadvertently, the translator's own anti-Machiavellianism has allowed a seductive if hyperbolically cynical "Machiavelli" (not to be confused with the original Italian thinker) to take shape within his idiomatic English prose.

Detecting a similar outlook in *Edward II* or *The Massacre at Paris* requires more than simply identifying similar sneers by his Machiavellian protagonists, Mortimer and Guise (although these do exist), as these can easily be recuperated and contained by standard moral perspectives. It requires, in fact, some further ratification within or by the play-world as a whole, a sense, that is, that cunning, dissimulation and violence *are* intrinsic to power, whatever moral judgments other characters or the audience may wish to make, and whatever the

13 Gentillet, *Discours*, pp. 388, 426 (III.xii, xviii); *Discourse*, p. 247, translating the Latin terms "*fatuos* [foolish] *et incautos* [unwary]" from the Latin version of 1577 (*Commentariorum … libri tres*, p. 443).

personal fates of the Machiavellian characters. *The Massacre at Paris*, at least in its present textual state, suggests little in the way of such dramaturgical ratification. To be sure, there are ample instances of fraud and violence in the play, while credulity, whether pious in the case of the massacred Huguenots or hubristic in those of Guise and (arguably) Henri III, tends to mark people out for imminent death. Yet as Hillman has most eloquently argued, the recurrent framing of the actions in terms of a providential justice acting in support of the reformed religion, notably in the language used repeatedly by Navarre and, when dying, Henri III, makes the play difficult to read as a jeering critique of ethical gullibility.[14] Of course, Navarre's godliness fails to convince many of Marlowe's modern post-religious readers, the latest being John Guillory (p. 724n19); the juxtaposition with Marlowe's own (alleged) unorthodoxies of belief offers ready temptations. It is true that, historically speaking, rumours of Navarre's apostasy from Protestantism were already abroad at the time the play was likely performed, in early 1593 (his conversion finally occured in July), and doubtless coalesced with the already well-established Catholic portrait of him as a violent, deceitful hypocrite, a "heretique notoire", "schismatique" and "pariure" who conducted a "vie cruelle & tyrannique, soit par effusion de sang des Catholiques", as one 1591 tract succinctly described him (*Les raisons*, pp. 3, 10, 11, 12). Yet the play makes no obvious reference to either his possible conversion or the *Ligueur* stereotype; the idea that the audience were *expected* to perceive the play's Navarre in light of them remains speculative.

The play-world of *Edward II*, contrastingly, can be argued to endorse some aspects of the "Machiavellian" contempt for fools, and celebration of *astutia*, glimpsed in the passage of Translation A. It does not do so systematically, however; there is a marked transition in the way political power is seen to operate before and after the crucial scenes dramatizing Edward's defeat, flight, and deposition (IV.v-V.i). In the early scenes of the play, politics is chiefly represented as a public struggle between the king and his opponents for control of the speech act, and power is implied to consist in an ability to command rhetorical assent, in full view of an audience. The latter's rapt attention, focused on each speaker as they try to seize *la parole*, thus buttresses (claimed) political with theatrical authority. This is, to use the terminology of Max Weber, a "charismatic" model of power, which Marlowe also employs in other plays—for example, *Tamburlaine*—and

14 See Hillman, *Shakespeare, Marlowe*, pp. 75-82; contrast, however, Preedy, pp. 158-59.

which he probably derived from classical and Renaissance glorifications of the orator (Weber, II: 241-45). But unlike in *Tamburlaine*, in *Edward II* the model is from the start disfunctional. The king and his nobility first enter quarrelling (I.i.74ff.), and Marlowe's verbal patterning is often one of stasis.

The dramatic representation of politics changes markedly when power in the state has shifted to usurping Mortimer. To begin with, as a passage in one of Mortimer's soliluqies indicates (V.iv.57-64), the *location* of power retreats from view, into the Council chamber, a venue not really mentioned until this point in the play and also, crucially, an off-stage space inaccessible to the audience. Power itself, meanwhile, is represented less by the declaratory speech acts characterising the first scenes in the play than by letters, seals, ambiguous written instructions: all the confusing, remote apparatus of the early modern bureaucratic state. (Although a letter of a very different kind, from Edward to Gaveston, commences the whole play, letters as such do not feature prominently, or as signs of political authority, until Mortimer's regency.) Both these dynamics assist an impression created throughout the post-deposition scenes that Mortimer controls affairs without always being personally present or identifiable. His power is diffused into an ubiquitous, menacing but often invisible *authority*, maintained, of course, as much through a climate of fear and intimidation as through the impersonal mechanisms of conciliar government.

This transformation of political conditions after Mortimer's usurpation is experienced by the audience in terms of an epistemological revision of their own role in relation to the action. Increasingly, they find themselves relying on Mortimer's reports, delivered in soliloquy, not only to understand the sinister motions at the heart of his cabinet councils, but for basic knowledge about what is really going on in the state—knowledge supplied to them by the one character whom they must least trust to deliver a version unskewed. This narrowing of knowledge is, then, also an awakening of and to their own political *subjectivity*, in the manifold senses of the term. To be sure, Mortimer's soliloquies are partly boastful performances, traceable to the Vice tradition of gloating interaction with the audience. But in *Edward II* such a perspective is given greater dramaturgical support. In a world where knowledge is assymetrically distributed, politically *and* theatrically, and transmitted from an invisible centre by a corrupt yet glamorous tyrant, deception and dishonesty come to seem both essential and dynamic.

Two aspects of the "Machiavellian" play-world introduced with Mortimer's supremacy are particularly worth noting. First is the language used at the moment of transition. "Faire *Isabelle*", Mortimer remarks, awaiting news of Edward's resignation of the crown, "now have we our desire, / The proud corrupters of the light-brainde king, / Have done their homage to the loftie gallowes" (V.ii.1-3). The term "light-brainde" may seem a mere variation on the theme of Edwardian "lightness" prevalent in the play's chronicle sources. Yet it points to a subtly different view of Edward, one increasingly ratified by Mortimer's subsequent self-revelation to the audience as master manipulator. The deposed monarch is less frivolous, it would seem, than simply stupid, a kinsman perhaps of the "poore fooles" (to use the wording of the Sion Abbey version of Translation A) upon whom Machiavellian cunning proves its radical grasp of the truth of power.

Secondly, the reshaping of politics in the last scenes of the play survives the fall of Mortimer himself. It is true that, constitutionally speaking, his death restores monarchical authority and legitimacy. Edward III, the avenging monarch, is told, "know that you are a king" (V.vi.24), before commanding Mortimer's arrest. The moment parallels Henri III's reaffirmation of royal supremacy after Guise's murder in *The Massacre at Paris*: "I nere was King of France untill this houre" (ix.1027). Yet when we ask where Edward III's regenerated authority comes from, it is significant that he emerges, as the queen fearfully reports, from the space of Mortimer's regency: "into the councell chamber he is gone, / to crave the aide and succour of his peeres" (V.vi.20-1). When he enters he is fittingly accompanied by anonymous "lords", who replace the individuated, quarrelsome aristocrats who have dominated much of the play's action: indeed Mortimer is arguably the last of their breed. At the end of the play "order and ceremony" may be restored (Bevington and Shapiro, p. 274), but the nature and source of power remain mediated and opaque; there is no straightforward return to the public-rhetorical style of politics characteristic of the early scenes. The perpetuation of a play-world with "Machiavellian" coordinates may be designed to suggest to audiences the realities of political knowledge and action in the late Tudor state.

Marlowe's *Edward II* and *The Massacre of Paris*, then, use folly to dramatise "Machiavellian" political practice. However, the former's treatment is, dramaturgically and politically, more complex and innovatory than the latter's. Both plays are clearly indebted to a morality tradition, dramatic and non-dramatic,

in which a descent into folly greases the path for the temporary triumph of the Machiavel as a fashionably updated but nonetheless familiar figure of criminal vice. But in the final scenes of *Edward II* an alternative paradigm is suggested, whereby power's foundation in cunning is a truth conveyed by the dramaturgy, rather than simply the discourse of the Machiavel character, and survives as a fundamental element of the play-world even after his extinction. Crucially, in *Edward II* both paradigms give coherent readings of each other. They can be superimposed or flipped without difficulty. What one treats as the survival beyond the Machiavel of Machiavellian insight into the truths of power, to the other is the morality commonplace of vice remaining even after individual Vices are identified and punished. Whereas the "lightness", or predisposition to folly, of a ruler like Edward induces and invites the entry of villainous intrigue within a vice-multiplies-vice formula common in Tudor morality drama, it shades also into the quality of being "light-brainde", a ready-made doltishness for the Machiavellian agent to scoffingly prove his world-view on. The former reading, of course, understands folly as a latent human, that is universal, disposition, the latter as a property only of that substantial cross-section of mankind (or princes) who are easily duped. But "history", the setting of either play, is a solvent for any straightforward distinction between particular and general. Edward could be either type of fool, or indeed both. An audience can (or indeed could) choose which pattern to believe in. The fact that *Edward II* has such a double coherence takes us to the heart of Marlowe's dramatic art, and his precarious position in the history of theatre as complicit in and also in arms against its strategies of meaning-making.

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The Vice of the Interludes and the Mannerist Tradition: A Family Resemblance?[1]

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In this essay I will revisit the much discussed figure of the Vice of the Tudor interludes, his particular brand(s) of folly, and his dramatic progeny. My aim is not fundamentally to redefine the nature of the Vice, but more modestly to suggest an additional angle from which his stagecraft and dramatic function might be viewed. The familiar landmarks in the authoritative historiography of the Vice will thus remain important for the analysis. I shall discuss once more the Vice's relationship with the audience, his employment of the mode of playing associated with the *platea* which stands between the world-in-the-play of the dramatised narrative and the play-in-the world of the spectators,[2] his emotional volatility, and his energetic, often acrobatic performativity.[3] But, rather than seeing these things as completely idiosyncratic and unique to the Vice tradition, I will suggest possible parallels with aspects of representative techniques observable elsewhere, specifically in the visual arts of the sixteenth century. Again, the aim

1 I am very grateful to Professor John J. McGavin for his comments and suggestions on an early draft of this paper that helped to focus my ideas and removed many a slip.

2 For the terminology of *locus* and *platea*, "world-in-the-play" and "play-in-the-world", see Weimann, *Popular Tradition,* and Weimann, *Author's Pen*.

3 For key examples of the historiography of the Vice, see Spivack, Mares, Happé, "The Vice", Happé, ed., *Tudor Interludes*, Dessen, and Debax.

will not be to claim some unnoticed and revolutionary influence between the drama and the fine arts, whether in one direction or the other, but simply to note some suggestive similarities, and to ponder how they might inform and inflect the way we think about the Vice of the interludes and (briefly, by way of conclusion) his dramatic descendants in the works of Shakespeare. In so doing I hope both to offer a more nuanced account of features of the Vice tradition and Shakespeare's uses of it than has been hitherto suggested, and to engage with an important contribution to our understanding of the history of representation in the period.

Mannerism: Artifice, Impertinence, and Disorientation in Religious Art

In a rich and challenging study of the moral trajectories of Shakespeare's problem plays and the Mannerist tradition, Jean-Pierre Maquerlot draws attention to the disorienting effects achieved in a number of major Mannerist works of the sixteenth century through the deliberately non-naturalistic representation of human figures in pictorial space. He notes how, for example, in Bronzino's *An Allegory of Venus and Cupid* (ca. 1546), also known as *Venus, Cupid, Folly, and Time*,[4]

> the positioning of Venus's legs is contradictory to the positioning of the rest of the body; the direction imparted to the arms is contradictory to that of the forearms, and they themselves are in conflict with the hands. It is as if Venus's body was carefully avoiding subordinating all its gestures to the accomplishment of one clear gestural intention, but tentatively and simultaneously exploring several possibilities of action. (Maquerlot, p. 22)[5]

The figure of Deceit in the same image is also, more strikingly (and more obviously appropriately for its subject) an amalgam of incompatibilities. Its left hand is attached to its right arm and vice-versa, while its body is half-human and half-reptile, embodying deceit and perversion in every aspect of its repre-

4 In the National Gallery, London; image online at <http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/bronzino-an-allegory-with-venus-and-cupid> (accessed 10 February 2016).

5 In drawing on Maquerlot's excellent discussion of these Mannerist works, I am, of course, stressing only certain aspects of his analysis of the Mannerist mode, which in turn stresses only some aspects of the wider tradition. For a useful overview of the tradition as a whole, see Shearman. The drama I shall discuss shares Shearman's sense of Mannerist works as "virtuoso performances" (p. 81), but not that sense of effortless *sprezzatura* of execution and apparent enervation of content that many of the works discussed by Maquerlot also display.

sentation.[6] But Cupid, too, is presented in a strikingly unnatural manner, his body elongated and his posture contorted so that his buttocks are thrust out towards the viewer, his weight born by his left knee while the right is seemingly thrust painfully into Venus's thigh. The more one considers his figure, moreover, the stranger it becomes. His back is arched backwards and to the left, and his neck, which is concealed behind Venus's shoulder and her raised right arm, would have to be impossibly long and serpentinely flexible to twist up and round to allow him to deliver his kiss on his mother's chin. Similarly, his left arm, stretching all the way around his body to cradle the back of her head, must be considerably longer than his right, which reaches around her front to grasp her left nipple. From the viewpoint of conventional anatomy, the entire image is unbalanced, fragmented and implausible; unsettled in its own geometry and queasily unsettling to the viewer: a physical correlative of the unnatural desires seemingly embodied in the painting as a whole.

Other works in the same tradition confuse the viewer's eye in different ways, distracting it from the ostensible subject of the painting towards other, seemingly minor or irrelevant matters, or, as in Michelangelo's *Last Judgement* (in the Sistine Chapel, the Vatican), disrupting vanishing lines and perspective to create non-realistic landscapes and disorienting the arrangements of figures in space (Maquerlot, p. 25). Maquerlot comments further:

> [The aim] … is to wrench the viewer from visual habits largely conditioned by the use of a single perspective. [The artist] … baffles commonsense expectations of a reassuring space in which each object looks the way it should with regard to the laws of maths. (Maquerlot, at plate IV [unpaginated])

Viewing Rosso Fiorentino's *The Deposition From the Cross* (Pinacoteca, Volterra),[7] Maquerlot suggests, "the eye comes to hover over certain details that unduly engross the attention" (Maquerlot, plate V). There is seemingly a gust of wind blowing from right to left in the picture, but it tugs at only some garments, not others, twisting some naturalistically, but shaping the cloak of the uppermost figure into a highly stylised canopy. The men who are starting to lower Christ's body are poised at odd angles to the ladders that notionally support them, and the figure to the right of the cross, who must be supporting most

6 See Maquerlot, discussion at plate VIII (unpaginated).

7 See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deposition_from_the_Cross,_Volterra_(Rosso_Fiorentino)> (accessed 10 February 2016).

of the weight of the body, encircles it with an arm so relaxed and limp, the wrist dangling downwards rather than clutching onto Christ's side, that the arrangement makes no physical sense. At the centre of the scene, Christ himself seems to float in the air, a look of apparent rapture on his far-from-dead-looking face (Maquerlot, plate V). Everyone seems weightless, exquisitely posed, and preoccupied with anything but the arduous task ostensibly in hand. Where we expect to see a credible representation of the world and its physical laws, we see instead the defiance of such credibility, a world of mannered gestures and postures, a work of painterly artifice that draws attention to itself as artifice. The purpose of these "provocative" (Maquerlot, p. 20) displays of "disparity or dissonance" (p. 24), "the stylistic exploitation of incompatibilities" (p. 21), is, Maquerlot suggests, precisely to unsettle the viewer out of familiar habits of viewing and to implicate him or her unexpectedly in the subject matter of the image. Thus, in *The Deposition*,

> the personages are not meant to look lifelike, their function is not to make us become emotionally involved in their suffering in spite of the side-long glance cast at us by one of their number. Taking a scene familiar to the Christian conscience, Rosso introduces incongruities incompatible with traditional schemes of thought and sensibility, and thereby aims at creating a feeling of unease, a disturbance of the eyes and soul. (Maquerlot, plate V)

The Mannerist Vice

My aim here is not to suggest that the interlude playwrights knew of or were influenced by these images, or vice-versa; it is simply to observe how many of the features of Mannerist art identified by Maquerlot also apply to the Vices of the Tudor drama, and with broadly similar effects. The Vices too are flamboyantly, self-promotingly dissonant, standing at oblique angles to the drama's internal geometry, its ostensible grain and purpose. They are "impertinent" to it, in Robert Weimann's apt phrase (*Popular Tradition*, p. 119), both irreverently mocking of their own play-world, and fundamentally at odds with it. Like those Mannerist figures which Maquerlot notes are represented as seemingly too large for the architectural spaces within which the artist has contained them, the Vices too seem to "fling themselves out of the painted space towards us", threatening to "invade … our space and upsetting our normal relationship with painting"

(Maquerlot, pp. 23-24).[8] They famously thrust themselves out of the world-in-the-play into the spectators' world, addressing them directly, insulting, cajoling, or teasing them, asking them for help or demanding their connivance or approval, trying to make room for themselves in the space around the play as well as that within it. In so doing, they too force spectators to take a new position in relation to the material being presented to them, to look at it afresh and reconsider its implications for them.

It is not simply the fact that the Vices speak to the audience that makes them so disruptive to the habits of normative modern spectatorship: it is the way that they do so. Many characters in the interludes address spectators directly.[9] The protagonist and the virtuous Charity and Knowledge all do so in the anonymous early morality *The Interlude of Youth*, for example,[10] as do both the Vice, Nichol Newfangle, and Virtuous Living in Ulpian Fulwell's *Like Will to Like*, the latter with a nicely metatheatrical twist:

> As the end of virtue is honour and felicity,
> So mark well the end of wickedness and vice:
> Shame in this world and pain eternally.
> Wherefore, ye that are here, learn to be wise,
> And the end of the one with the other weigh
> By the time you have heard the end of this play. (ll. 586-91)

Neither Vices nor Virtues are committed to maintaining any notional "fourth wall" between themselves and the audience. But where the other characters address audiences collectively, and usually with the intention to inform or instruct, the Vices tend to single out individuals for special attention, and do so as if they already know them, with remarks that are often suggestive of knowledge about their secrets.

Nichol Newfangle, for example, addresses spectators by name (although presumably not using the real names of the spectators concerned): "What sayest thou to that, Joan with the long snout?" (Fulwell, l. 227); "How say you, little

8 Maquerlot is here discussing specifically Bronzino's *St John the Baptist* (Galleria Borghese, Rome) and Michelangelo's *Prophets* and *Sybils* in the Sistine Chapel.

9 See Spivack, pp. 178-79.

10 "Aback, fellows, and give me room," says Youth, entering the play, "Or I shall make you to avoid soon" (ll. 39-40). Charity observes, "Farewell my masters everyone, / I will come again anon / and tell you how I have done" (ll. 195-97; see also ll. 540-41), while Humility addresses the moral of the play directly to the audience at ll. 776-79.

Meg?" (l. 1183). Like Deceit, the only figure in Bronzino's *Allegory* to meet the viewer's gaze, and who does so with a slyly knowing look, Nichol seems to know what we are like, to anticipate our anxieties and predilections, and to be always one step ahead of our responses, aware, for example, that we (fallen creatures as we are) will not believe him or take his advice, even when it is in our best interests:

> See to your purses, my masters, and be ruled by me,
> For knaves are abroad; therefore beware;
> You are warned, and ye take not heed, I do not care. (ll. 605-7)

He seems simultaneously both a figure of mischief in the play and intellectually and morally superior to the spectators witnessing it, an agent both of sin and its correction.[11]

> Do you all hold your peace?
> Why then, good gentle boy, how likest thou this play?
> No more but say thy mind;
> I swear by this day, if thou wilt this assay,
> I will be to thee kind. (ll. 1175-79)

Like those painted figures whose gestures, posture, colouration, or scale signal an at-best awkward accommodation to the physical laws, space, and interpersonal relationships of a Mannerist work, the interlude Vices seem to exist permanently at a tangent to both the narrative imperatives of the world-in-the-play and the other characters within it. One conspicuous example of this is their tendency to deliver bravura set-piece speeches whose content and virtuosity are largely irrelevant to and in excess of the requirements of the plot, speeches which delay the progression of the narrative and remind spectators that this is indeed a piece of entertainment that they are witnessing, a work of art and craft rather than an attempt to reproduce real events in real time. Merry Report's list of the places he claims to have visited since he was last onstage in John Heywood's *The Play of the Weather* (ll. 197-213) is a good example, as is Avarice's listing of the gleanings he hopes to pick up from the eponymous protagonist's tottering state in Nicholas Udall's *Respublica* (ll. 35-46). Similarly, Haphazard's opening speech in "R. B."'s *Apius and Virginia* is an extended riff on, first, the possibilities of

11 See Spivack, pp. 135, 176-78.

what he himself might be (running from "a scholar or a schoolmaster, or else some youth" [l. 181], through "a louse or a louser, a leek or a lark; / A dreamer, a drommel [*dozer*], a fire or a spark" [ll. 185-86]), and then on those upon whom he preys ("A maid or a mussel-boat, a wife or a wild duck' [ll. 195ff.]). These speeches have no narrative function in the plays that contain them. Indeed, both their virtuosity and their implausibility as accounts of mimetic action make a nonsense of those narratives in real terms. How could Haphazard be mistaken for a leek or a spark? How might he prey upon a wild duck? The speech directs spectators' attention away from such pragmatic, mimetic questions and toward the non-representative pleasures available from a virtuoso performance of rhetoric, alliteration, rhythm, and rhyme.

Equally redundant in plot terms and metatheatrical in effect are those speeches of figures such as No-Lover-Nor-Loved, the Vice of Heywood's *A Play of Love*, which pick up on a word or phrase spoken by another character and make them the subject of an extended quibbling disquisition, no doubt accompanied by flamboyant movement and gestures. Thus, responding (but never quite replying) to Lover-Not-Loved's observation that he and Loved-Not-Loving had been in the acting area before him, the Vice delivers eight lines of comic commentary on the possible meanings of "before", as both "prior to" and "in front of", many of them potentially bawdy:

> Ye have been here before me before now,
> And now am I here before you,
> And now I am here behind ye,
> And now ye be here behind me,
> And now we be here even both together,
> And now be we welcome even both hither;
> Since now ye found me here, with court'sy I may
> Bid you welcome hither as I may say. (ll. 705-12)

Not satisfied with wringing out the implications of "before", he later makes a similar rhetorical and acrobatic mountain out of the suggestion that each of the characters might be "joined" to one of the others (in that each one either loves someone else or is loved by someone else) and "parted" from another (because half of them are also not loved, while the other half do not love anyone else):

> Loving not loved, loved not loving,
> Loved and loving, not loving nor loved,

Will ye see these four parts well joined?
Loving not loved, and loved not loving:
These parts can join in no manner reckoning.
Loving and loved, loved nor lover:
These parts in joining in likewise differ.
But in that ye love ye twain joined be,
And being not loved ye join with me;
And being no lover with me joineth she,
And being beloved, with her join ye.
Had I a joiner with me joined jointly,
We joiners should join joint to joint quickly;
For, first I would part these part in fleeces,
And, once departed, these parted pieces
Part and part with part I would so part-like part,
That each part should part with quiet heart. (ll. 776-92)

A further step away from such bravura punning and whimsy are those speeches which are completely and self-avowedly nonsensical, such as Haphazard's lines, loosely prompted by the notion of hanging, in *Apius and Virginia*:

I came from Caleco even the same hour,
And hap was hired to Hackney in hempstrid;
In hazard he was of riding on beamstrid.
Then crow-crop on treetop hoist up a sail;
Then groaned their necks, by the weight of their tail.
Then did carnifex put these three together,
Paid them their passport for Christening together. ("R. B.", ll. 862-68)

To this the bemused Apius can respond only, "Why, how, how, Haphazard, of what doest thou speak? / Methinks in mad sort thy talk thou dost break" (ll. 869-70).

Such moments are in only the loosest sense part of the dialogue of the world-in-the-play. Like Mark Antony's "delights" in Shakespeare's tragedy, they show their back, dolphin-like, above the element they live in,[12] drawing attention to their own theatricality, as do those moments of song and dance that the Vices occasionally indulge in, seemingly for their own sake, or simply to pass the time while no one else is "onstage". Thus Nichol Newfangle, left alone for a moment when the other actors exit, announces, "And now will I dance, now will I prance, / For why [*because*] I have none other work" (Fulwell, ll. 571-72).

12 See *Antony and Cleopatra*, V.ii.87-89, in *The Oxford Shakespeare*. All references to Shakespeare's plays are to this edition.

At such points in the performance spectators are indeed cued to adjust and reassess their relationship, not only to the character speaking and their current situation, but also more fundamentally to the dramatic process itself—to see the play not as mimetic, a "fourth wall" representation of a world complete in itself and separated from them in space and time, but as a work of art that is part of, and has implications for, their own world, and for their own conduct in it.

The Vice's capacity to unsettle spectators and prompt an adjusted response to the performance in hand is thus fundamental to his nature as a dramatic character or role. For it is what the Vice *is*, or seems to be, as much as what he sometimes says or does, that makes him the distinctive and crucial element in the dramaturgy of the interlude. And central to that identity is his celebrated inconstancy, his disconcerting failure to be reliably either one thing or another. He is one moment laughing, the next weeping; one instant subservient or wheedling, the next proud and overbearing, capable of switching from downcast despondency to exultant triumph or vice-versa in the blink of an eye, and apparently without the slightest of provocations or consequences. Such a role has no secure or consistent grounding in plausible human psychology, and makes no sustained appeal to realistic emotional commitment from spectators, even though the Vice frequently invites us to sympathise with him or to recognise in him a reflection of our own desires, anxieties, and predilections. He is, as critics have frequently observed, protean and mercurial, both inside and outside the unfolding drama, irrelevant to the plot on one level, and yet central to it on all others. One moment he is seemingly part of the world of the *locus*, addressed familiarly by the other characters and interacting with them, seeming like them to experience real hunger or pain, real fear or desire, the next he is beyond the play-world, in the *platea*, confiding in spectators that such things do not really matter to him, and have no reality beyond the make-believe of performance.

But it would be limiting to understand this amphibiousness solely on the level of character, as simply a remarkable if generic feature of a particular kind of a dramatic role, or a reflection of the skills of a certain kind of actor. It is also a structural feature of the interlude drama, the key to the form of engagement required from spectators by this kind of performance.[13] To reach for another analogy from sixteenth-century art, the Vice, like the anamorphic skull in Holbein's *The Ambassadors*, cues spectators through his distorting and disruptive effect

13 See Spivack, pp. 135, 176-77.

upon the normative relationship between the viewer and the viewed world of the performance to adopt a particular, oblique and self-reflexive viewpoint to the unfolding narrative—a viewpoint which takes in both the picture and the frame which presents it to them, and cues them to readjust and reassess their own position in relation to both. From the perspective of the *locus*, the Vice makes little or no consistent sense, so spectators must adjust their stance to accommodate his performance and to get him into focus. And once we do so, the whole narrative begins to look very different. Those figures that initially appeared to be "real" begin to look two-dimensional or merely symbolic, and the Vice who seemed artificial now appears boldly before us, the only significant figure on the stage, and one who is looking directly, challengingly solely at us, knowing our secrets and challenging us to acknowledge our affinity with him. The result is—or seems designed to be—to take the viewer unawares, suddenly turning the play from a narrative to be witnessed to a lesson to be learnt, with the Vice as the expositor of and intermediary between the action and each individual spectator, addressing them directly in the privacy of their own thoughts.

The Mercurial Vice

A classic example of the Vice's performative emotional volatility is the entrance speech of Nichol Newfangle in Fulwell's *Like Will to Like*. In the course of thirty lines he seems to move from aggressive provocation through crestfallen disappointment and self-pity, to a need for approval, then back to self-confidence, without any conventional acknowledgement of the transitions, or, once the moment has passed, any hint that the previous emotions have ever existed. Throwing a knave of clubs ostentatiously onto the ground and challenging a male spectator to pick it up (and so acknowledge his own knavery), the Vice enters the play laughing,

> Ha, ha ha, ha, now, like unto like, it will be none other,
> Stoop, gentle knave, and take up your brother.
> Why, is it so? And is it even so indeed?
> Why, then, may I say, God send us good speed.
> And is everyone here so greatly unkind,
> That I am no sooner out of sight but quite out of mind?
> Marry, this will make a man even weep for woe,
> That on such a sudden no man will let me know.

Sith men be so dangerous now at this day,
Yet are women kind worms, I dare well say.
How say you, woman—you that stand in the angle —
Were you never acquainted with Nichol Newfangle?
Then I see Nichol Newfangle is quite forgot.
Yet you will know me anon, I dare jeopard a groat.
Nichol Newfangle is my name, do you not know me now?
My whole education to you I shall show. . . . (ll. 37-52)

Know you me now? I thought that at last
All acquaintance from Nichol Newfangle is not past.
Nichol Newfangle was, and is, and ever shall be,
And there are few that are not acquainted with me. (ll. 65-68)

No naturalistic dramaturgy or plausible psychology would account for this emotional trajectory. It is pure performance, aimed at delighting spectators with its very unpredictability and challenging them to acknowledge their real acquaintance with him and all he represents ("Know you me now?"). A more condensed version of the same trope is offered by Ambidexter in Thomas Preston's *Cambises*, who enters apparently lamenting the murder of the virtuous Prince Smirdis, but quickly starts to laugh instead, cueing spectators to share in his self-delight:

Ah, good Lord; to think in him, how it doth me grieve.
I cannot forbear weeping, ye may me believe.
Oh my heart, how my pulses do beat,
With sorrowful lamentations I am in such heat!
Ah, my heart, how for him it doth sorrow!
Nay, I have done; in faith now, and God give ye good morrow.
Ha, ha! Weep? Nay, laugh; with both hands to play! (ll. 738-44)

In many interludes, Vices disorient other characters through these switches of apparent mood and action. Spivack notes the ways in which such mercurial behaviour is often a product of the plot, as when Envy in *Impatient Poverty* feigns solicitous concern for Conscience but, as soon as the latter has left the stage, reveals what seem to be his "true" feelings to the audience:

[*To Conscience.*] This is an heavy departing:
I can in no wise forbear weeping.
Yet, kiss me or [*ere*] ye go;
For sorrow my heart will break in two. [*Exit Conscience.*]
Is he gone? Then have at laughing!

Ah, sir, is not this a jolly game,
That Conscience doth not know my name? (*A new enterlude*, sig. Ci^{v})

In this context, Spivack observes, the Vice's volatility has a homiletic function: "His rapid alternation between one mood and the other, and the no less rapid conversion of face and body to suit, as he oscillates between his victim and his audience, express in compact theatrical metaphor the homiletic duplicity that is at the heart of his role" (p. 182).

But it is not the case simply that the Vices are masterful actors in role, tricksters who exploit the gullibility of their fellow characters—although this is, of course, a part of their personae. Their protean changeability runs deeper than this, transcending mere plot functionality and entertainment value. Such volatility is an intrinsic part of their nature, and is as likely to get them into trouble with other characters as to win them their way out of it. Hence Newfangle cannot resist comic ad-libbing even when swearing the oath enjoined upon him by his "godfather" Lucifer:

Lucifer. "All hail, oh noble Prince of Hell . . ."
Nichol. All my dame's cow-tails fell down the well.
Lucifer. "I will exalt thee above the clouds . . . "
Nichol. I will salt thee and hang thee in the shrouds. (Fulwell, ll. 206-9)

But the sense of potential danger that such moments create is only fleeting. The Vices quickly forget any blows they receive as a result, as they are fundamentally disengaged from the world-in-the-play, in which such things as pain and even death have no real meaning for them. As Spivack eloquently puts it,

> The allegorical immunity of the Vice to any real curtailment of his universal and timeless existence inevitably subdues the effect of his capture and condemnation into a kind of dark-grained farce. His behavior in this situation is no more than a parody of the alarm and resistance of the human criminal confronting the same fate. . . . Impervious to his own destruction, the Vice is equally impervious to any emotion corresponding to the moral seriousness of the play or the very real jeopardy of his human victim. (pp. 196, 198)

Thus Haphazard goes to his own execution in *Apius and Virginia* with a flippant aside on his lips:

Must I needs hang? By the gods, it doth spite me
To think how crabbedly the silk lace will bite me.
Then come, cousin Cutpurse, come run, haste and follow me;

Haphazard must hang; come follow the livery. ("R. B.", ll. 1003-6)

Courage in G. Wapull's *The Tide Tarrieth No Man* offers a similarly indifferent response to the same situation (ll. 1724-28), and Iniquity in *Nice Wanton* assures his captors, "Yea, within this month, I may say to you, / I will be your servant, and your master too—yea, creep into your breast!" (*A preaty interlude*, sig. Biv[r]). Ill Report in Thomas Garter's *The Comedy of the Most Virtuous and Godly Susanna* is still more emphatic:

> Must Ill Report die?
> No, no, I trow,
> The world goes not so,
> Then all were awry,
> For neither of prince nor king,
> Nor of any other thing,
> But my tongue shall walk.
> The proudest of them all
> Shall not give me such a fall,
> Or shall let [*prevent*] me to talk. (Garter, sig. Eiv[v]; spelling modernised)[14]

Spivack helpfully points up the contrast between the role and that of the interludes' protagonists. The latter, he suggests,

> is a moral being in a moral universe … subject to death and damnation as well as to the sorrows that afflict humanity this side of the grave … [whereas the Vice] is fundamentally, beneath his human features and habiliments, a moral personification. … Free from human limitation, he is equally free from human passion and responsibility. … Professional and impersonal, he is immune to the gravity of his aggression—a gravity that exists everywhere in the play except in him. (p. 195)

14 See also Inclination's exit to prison in *The Trial of Treasure* ("Well, yet I will rebel, yea, and rebel again / And thou[gh] a thousand times you sholdest me restrain!" [*A new and mery enterlude*, sig. Eiv[r]; spelling modernised]), and Ill Will's in *Wealth and Health* ("Lock us up and keep us as fast as ye can, / Yet Ill Will and Shrewd Wit shall be with many a man" (*An enterlude of welth, and health*, sig. Diii[v]; spelling modernised). In their capacity to transcend pain and even death, the Vices are fundamentally different from those other creatures of the early modern *platea*, the Clowns, as for the latter hunger and beatings are represented as all too real. Hence their emotional trajectories carry greater plausibility. While the clown is victim of his own bodily and material needs, however basic and comic they may prove to be, the Vice is always fundamentally indifferent to his, seemingly undisturbed for long either by the events of the narrative or by the audience's neglect or approval.

Recalling Maquerlot's observation of those apparently weightless figures in Rosso Fiorentino's Mannerist *Deposition*, it is striking that Spivack is drawn to the ambidextrous word "gravity" here to describe the quality lacking in the Vices. For the latter do indeed seem to be immune alike to both the seriousness and the physical laws of the play-worlds that they so problematically inhabit. They laugh at misfortune—their own and others'—not simply because they are trivial-minded and amoral, but because suffering in the world-in-the-play has no meaning for them and comes to have less meaning for audiences as a consequence. Thus we are prompted to look for the "real" meaning in the interlude, not to the confrontations and resolutions offered within the world-in-the-play, but to the extra-theatrical confrontation between the Vice and us. Whereas the hitherto Vice-like Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice* can unexpectedly command spectators' emotional affirmation and achieve a new dignity and solidity with the questions, "If you prick us do we not bleed? . . . If you poison us do we not die?" (III.i.59-61), the Vices of the interludes could never do the same, as for them the answer would always be "no". The physical laws of cause and effect, act and consequence, do not apply to them in the same way that they do to normal human beings, and so they cue us to respond to them differently. (But more about Shakespeare's characters and the Vice tradition in the final section of this essay.)

Like Cupid in Bronzino's *Allegory*, then, the Vices of the interludes remain puzzlingly, teasingly, anamorphic in the world-in-the-play around them, their apparent emotional states and the life experiences they claim for themselves always a twist and turn beyond the plausible capacities of a naturalist human anatomy, a tantalising step or two away from making full, rational sense. A striking final example of this might be found in No-Lover-Nor-Loved in *A Play of Love*. Although in many respects he is quite unlike the Vices of the later mid-century interludes (he is not especially amoral, for example, nor does he attempt to lure the other characters into sin), he exhibits very clearly their characteristic capacity to play fast and loose with his own apparent emotions—claiming to the audience that he feels one thing, while his actions and asides effectively render such claims unreliable. His most substantial contribution to the play is a lengthy monologue, the stated intention of which is to show how indifferent he is to the snares of love, whether as a lover himself or as the object of another's love. The monologue concerns his relationship with an unnamed woman whom he set out to mock, he claims, by pretending to fall in love with her, but who ulti-

mately mocked him instead. The story of flirtation, fulfilment and betrayal is itself a predictable misogynistic fabliau, but the more closely one looks at it, the more unconvincing and uncertain in its implications it becomes.

The story has two ostensibly distinct levels of implication. The surface meaning is provided by No-Lover's stated version of events, in which he assures the audience that he entered into the relationship purely to mock the young woman and play with her affections:

> Ye shall understand that I with this mistress
> Fell late acquainted, and for love no whit,
> But for my pleasure to approve my wit. (Heywood, *A Play of Love*, ll. 480-82)

But running alongside and beneath this story is the ironic subtext—one that for the most part No-Lover seems intent upon denying—which reveals him to have always been the victim of the young woman's pragmatic attitude towards "love" as a means to make money. Only at the end does he accept that this was indeed the real "moral" of the story: "If she had not wit to set wise men to school, / Then shall my tale prove me a stark fool" (ll. 477-78). And yet neither narrative dominates the story clearly or consistently for long enough to claim the status as master narrative. Throughout the monologue the rival trajectory and rival "moral" is always at least partially showing through beneath the dominant one, threatening to muddy and subvert it, and No-Lover himself remains, dolphin-like, both within and above the story. And this is presented in theatrical terms analogous to the gestures of Mannerism which at once make the gesture and strain its credibility.

He begins with the bold assertion, "I did determine / To mock or be mocked of this mocking vermin" (l. 492), but the first evidence he cites to show that "though fair flattering behaviours … [he] Seemed anon so deep in her favour" (l. 498) is that she would not allow him to leave her company until her had given her the "best jewel I there had" (l. 504) and promised to return the next day. The following day, however, he feigns sadness ("So must I show, for lovers be in rate, / Sometimes merry, but most times passionate" [ll. 523-24]), provoking a scene of burlesque melancholy between the two of them:

> We set us down, an heavy couple in sight,
> And therewithal I set a sigh, such one
> As made the form shake which we both sat on,

Whereupon she, without more words spoken,
Fell in weeping, as her heart should have broken,
And I in secret laughing so heartily,
That from mine eyes came water plenteously. (ll. 526-32)

Is the woman genuinely distressed? Is No-Lover "really" laughing or crying? The overtly performed nature of the emotions on display by both parties prevents spectators from being entirely certain. And, within a dozen lines of revealing that it is his doubts about her honesty that have made him sad, the two are performing equally excessive (and represented as excessive) displays of affection:

"Sweetheart", quoth I, "after stormy cold smarts,
Warm words in warm lovers bring lovers warm hearts.
And so have your words warmed my heart even now,
That dreadless and doubtless now must I love you."
Anon there was, "I love you", and, "I love you"
(Lovely we lovers love each other.)
"I love you", and, "I for love love you,
My lovely, loving loved brother."
Love me, love thee, love we, love he, love she,
Deeper love apparent in no twain can be.
Quite over the ears in love, and felt no ground;
Had not swimming holp, in love I had been drowned. (ll. 577-88)

Here again the Vice's knowing performance of his own emotions, coupled with the cynicism implicit in the final line, keeps the emotions on display firmly in the realm of the burlesque, and the direction of any authentic emotional charge hard to determine.

The couple continue in loving vein for a month, we are told, the woman becoming increasingly jealous of any hint of infidelity on the part of No-Lover (from which he assumes "she loved me perfectly" [l. 598]), while he allegedly simply led her on for his own amusement:

By this and other like things then in hand,
I gave her mocks, methought above a thousand;
Whereby I though her own tale like a burr,
Stuck to her own back, *moccum moccabitur*. (ll. 601-4)

And yet, when he finally decides to deliver the mocker's coup-de-grâce and leave her, he cannot do it: "my heart misgave me" and "pity so wrought me / That to return anon I bethought me" (ll. 609, 612-13).

On returning to the woman's lodging, however, he discovers her in bed with another man:

> And there looking in, by God's blessed mother,
> I saw her naked abed with another,
> And with her bed-fellow laughed me to scorn
> As merrily as ever she laughed beforn. (ll. 627-30)

When he confronts her through the window to declare that he had never really loved her anyway, she jumps up, and with a clear echo of Alison in Chaucer's *The Miller's Tale*, merrily "shut[s] the window to" (l. 661),[15] leaving No-Lover to look on in the humiliating position of the impotent clerk Absolon in the fabliau. At which point he is prepared to admit that it was indeed he who was out-mocked and played for a fool:

> Which done, I had no more to say or do,
> But think myself or any man else a fool
> In mocks or wiles to set women to school. (ll. 662-64)

The experience, he claims, has been salutary, confirming him in the wisdom of rejecting all forms of love ("yet doth this tale approve / That I am well seen in the art of love" [ll. 667-68]), love being only "a drink meet / To give babies for worms, for it drinketh bittersweet (ll. 678-79).

On one level the moral of the story also seems to echo that of *The Miller's Tale*—namely, that provided a man gets what he wants from his partner, he should not enquire who else is sharing her company (a husband should not be inquisitive "Of Goddes pryvetee, nor of his wyf" [Chaucer, l. 3164]), or he risks disillusionment, humiliation and grief. But this story is undercut by the fact that No-Lover has been taken for a fool throughout. There never was any true love, certainly on the woman's side, as she is revealed at the end to be a prostitute (her lodgings, it seems, are a brothel run by a madam, "an ancient wise woman, who was never / From this said sweeting, but about her ever" [ll. 617-18]). Thus it was only no-Lover who was ever emotionally involved—if he ever was. He is thus

15 Cf. Chaucer: "'Tehee!', quod she, and clapte the wyndow to" (l. 3740).

ostensibly the victim of his own story, and it is only his status as the victim that allows him to emerge from events a sadder and a wiser man. And yet the way in which he distances himself from the emotions generated and described, both within the narrative (imperfectly, through denying any emotional investment) and in its narration (more confidently, by burlesquing, parodying, and self-ironising any emotion displayed by either character), cues the spectator also to experience a fundamentally ambivalent relationship to the story and the Vice's involvement in it.

At no point does the monologue strike an authentic emotional tone, regarding either the experience of being in love, or the wisdom (or even the possibility) of shielding oneself from such emotions, leaving the viewer to observe the unfolding narrative with a slightly queasy sense of detached amusement, watching what from one angle appears to be a set exercise in ringing the changes on the term "*moccum moccabitur*", lacking any objective correlative in felt emotional experience. The only authentic element in the story is thus the presence of the actor who narrates and orchestrates it, and though he repeatedly challenges us to respond to it emotionally and intellectually, he never allows us to do so from a secure sense of its import and implications. Like the later Vices in the tradition discussed above, he ensures that audiences do not know how to handle him, offering them, not a consistent set of behaviours, but a having-it-all-ways-at-once reminiscent of the Mannerist Venus of Bronzino's *Allegory*. Because he seems ultimately indifferent to the emotions he describes—which are ostensibly the subject of his monologue—he cannot act as an authoritative didactic figure. He warns us of how important it is to resist the lures of love, and uses himself as his moral exemplum, but the burlesque nature of the story serves only to problematise messenger and message alike. He looks out from the play at an oblique angle, causing us to reassess its ostensible verities, and our own relationship to them.

The Vice of the Tudor interludes is thus in many ways Mannerist in the senses described by Maquerlot: protean and playful, but also fundamentally and unsettling inconsistent and impertinent, both emotionally and behaviourally. He is a performative creature who draws attention to his own performativity, thrusting himself out beyond the frame of the world-in-the-play, immune to its fundamental laws, alien to and disruptive of its geometries, confronting and provoking the spectator to engage with its action disruptively, the catalyst for our own work in and with the narrative. Challenged directly to share or reject

the Vice's malicious delight in his mischief, his lack of moral scruple, or concern for the fate of his (non-existent) soul, each spectator has to address in real time the accuracy of the Vice's apparent measure of their shared culpability ("Know ye me now?"). He cues a fully-engaged spectatorial response that is in part an emotional one, prompted by the affective nature of the events presented, but which is also separated from such an emotional engagement by the acknowledgement of the artificial, created nature of the theatrical event that the Vice's role insists upon. Thus, while the narrative of the world-in-the-play engages spectators as affective beings, seeking to draw us into the story, to take its emotions and relationships seriously, the Vice engages with spectators as spectators, as customers, and social and moral agents. He seeks to provoke us, both subliminally and at times directly, to reflect upon our own involvement with the events represented and their meaning in the world, both in the "then" of the narrative and the "now" of the performance. The Vice's importance to the interlude drama is, as many critics have observed, fundamental to such plays' nature and success, and, despite some appearances to the contrary, its lifespan as a fully functioning dramatic figure was also limited to that of the form that gave it life, as a brief look ahead to the plays of Shakespeare will suggest.

Shakespeare's Peculiar Vices

Shakespeare's borrowings from the Vice tradition in figures such as Richard III, Aaron the Moor, Falstaff, Iago and Edmund are well known, and are signalled as borrowings by Shakespeare himself. But it is instructive to note how different these figures actually are to their precursors in the interludes, despite their surface similarities; for Shakespeare incorporates them into his own dramaturgy in ways that are fundamentally un-Mannerist in Maquerlot's sense. Unlike the Tudor Vices themselves, such figures as Aaron and Richard do not end their plays in the audience-facing zone of the *platea*, the play-in-the-world.[16] All of these Shakespearean "villains" are ultimately absorbed within, and claimed by, the world-in-the-play of the *locus*, endowed with authentic emotional lives within their respective narratives and diminished in metatheatrical terms as a result. All die "in character", and most are even allowed moments of pathos that give their deaths additional affective richness. Aaron in *Titus Andronicus* is shown to love and

16 For a slightly different view, see Spivack, pp. 198, 228-29 and 311-12.

care for his newborn son, and to suffer as a result; Edmund recalls with evident satisfaction that he was "beloved" (*The Tragedy of King Lear*, V.iii.215), even if only by the murderous Goneril and Regan, and seeks to do a noble deed, "[d]espite of [his] own nature" (220), before he dies; the Hostess says of Falstaff, "The King has killed his heart" (*H5*, II.i.84). Such moments make sense emotionally only if the deaths concerned are understood to have substance in the context of the play. Falstaff might playfully resurrect himself in *1 Henry IV*, but in *Henry V* he dies (offstage) for real. Similarly, Richard III and Iago are drawn from the *platea* into the *locus* of their plays and end their lives defeated by the more limited characters for whom the world-in-the-play is their only reality. The contrast with Haphazard and Ill Report going glibly to the gallows, winking knowingly to the audience as we all understand that death has no meaning for them, is clear.

Maquerlot's analysis of Mannerism is thus highly suggestive of the degree to which the drama of the sixteenth century, and of Shakespeare in particular, shared key features with the art of the period. But I would draw from it a slightly different conclusion. For Maquerlot, the Mannerism of Shakespeare's Problem Plays suggests the playwright's attempt in a particular period of his career to distinguish himself from the drama and narrative of his forebears. Thus the plays from *Hamlet* to *Measure for Measure* foreground the artistic control and skill of the playwright and disorient the spectator morally, presenting characters as complex, multivalent entities, neither wholly virtuous nor wholly vicious, challenging audiences to respond to them in equally sophisticated, self-conscious ways. For Maquerlot, this suggests a novel deployment of a Mannerist sensibility to address a particular aesthetic challenge associated with an anxiety of influence. This is a persuasive account of these morally and generically troubling plays of Shakespeare's "middle period". But I would suggest that the playwright's employment of techniques which Maquerlot associates with Mannerism was rather more widespread, and drew directly upon his dramatic inheritence. From the evidence of plays from *Titus Andronicus* and *Richard III* onwards, Shakespeare had always been aware of, and prepared to use, the dramatic potential of this kind of representation, having witnessed it manifested in the dismorphic, anamorphic and disruptive presentation of the Vice of the interludes. Such techniques were not absorbed into English dramatic culture through Italian Mannerism, despite the suggestive similarities between the two forms, but were already present in the drama of the long Tudor century. Shakespeare deployed them in plays ranging from the tragic to the historical as a means of engaging spectators

in a particularly personal, culturally powerful way for specific effects. And the result was more specific and controlled than the more pervasive and fundamental impact claimed by Maquerlot for the Problem Plays.

From the beginning of his career, Shakespeare used Mannerist aspects of the Vice's role and function in his plays, but always in the wider interests of an essentially mimetic narrative. Falstaff, Aaron, and Richard, Iago and Edmund, for all their cynicism and moments of apparent metatheatrical insight, are not fundamentally sceptical of their own performative context or of the immersive emotional enterprise of the theatre more generally in the way that the Vices are. This is probably at least in part because Shakespeare's aim was not to cue in his spectators a self-reflexive attitude for primarily moral or theological ends. When his plays cue self-reflexion, and they frequently do, it is as just one of the theatrical pleasures that he offers his audiences, an added level of enjoyment and knowing engagement to augment their dramatic experience. Hence, while he was evidently ready to asset-strip the Vice of a number of the role's most striking performative features, and willing to tease audiences with the likeness of some of his characters to the principal role of the interlude tradition, his dramaturgy did not require them to remain sceptical of the authenticity of the play-world's relationships and emotions much beyond the momentary ironic effect. Having offered spectators a moment of metatheatrical alienation with the suggestion that we all know that this is all just artifice, he quickly draws them back into emotional, kinaesthetic engagement with the plot and its characters. The result is a set of characters who are more consistent, more psychologically plausible, and richer in their affective power, but who are as a consequence less fundamentally unsettling to the dramatic frame that presents them to the world. For the interlude writers, the self-awareness and self-reflexion of the Vices were more fundamental to their dramatic intentions, and their works were more fundamentally Mannerist in effect as a result. Play-world and real world, world-in-the-play and play-in-the-world, had to be kept in tension throughout the interlude if it was to deliver the full range of its intended challenging, homiletic effects, and the Vice was the engine which generated that tension.[17] Such moments of

17 Interestingly, the only play in which Shakespeare seems to have aimed for a fundamentally "divided" spectatorial experience throughout, in which it is important to the full impact of the play for spectators to be both emotionally engaged with the narrative and also simultaneously alert to the means by which that engagement was generated and sceptical of them, is *Henry V*. And there the playwright reached not for the Vice but for another traditionally liminal figure, both inside and outside the play, the Chorus, as the device that would cue that response, producing

self-conscious performativity prompted spectators in turn to be all-too-aware of their own roles as spectators at a performance,[18] and so to engage with the Vice on rather different terms than with the other characters in the play. As with the skull in Holbein's *Ambassadors*, once the Vice has caught our full attention and we have realised its true nature, we can never look at the play in quite the same way again.

a play that was both about English history and about the ways "history" is created from the ambivalent, unstructured events of the past.

18 See Jones and Johnson.

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