Theta VIII

est publié par le Centre d'Études Supérieures de la Renaissance,
dirigé par Philippe Vendrix,
Université François-Rabelais de Tours, CNRS/UMR 6576

Responsables scientifiques

André Lascombes & Richard Hillman

Mentions légales

Date de création

Juillet 2009

Four Poets as Presenters and Interpreters in Late Tudor Drama

Jean-Paul Débax

Université de Toulouse II (Le Mirail)

The theatre, which is a visual art relying on spectacle, consists in the creation and perception of images; but is this a reason to consider that the same creations are *ipso facto* "true", that, so far as the stage is concerned, "seeing is believing", in a domain which is also the field *par excellence* of deceit, jugglery and illusion and not of "belief" in the most exalted sense of the word? It is not unusual to see on stage things and people that are not supposed to be "there" in the physical sense of the word—for instance, the ghost in *Hamlet*, the witches, Banquo and the four apparitions in *Macbeth* (IV.i). What is difficult is to know when we are supposed to believe in what we see and when we are not. This difficulty can, of course, be ascribed to the absence in a dramatic text of a narrator (as understood in a nar-ratological approach) who would be answerable for the truthfulness of what is being said or shown. Is Banquo truly "there" after his murder? Macbeth says he is there, but he is not visible to the other guests. Which are we to trust?[1]

---

[1]   Another classical difficulty lies in the definition of the terms used in this proposition, "see" and "believe". The theatre being the realm of illusion (material as well as interpretative), it seems advisable to stick to the traditional, and probably unsatisfactory, definition: what we "see" is what we "think" we see, and theatrical belief is not of the nature of religious belief; it refers only to the temporary explanation we can give of our visual impressions.

When trying to sort out what is "true" from what is deception, it would be a mistake to transfer modern categories and concepts to Tudor drama. Fortunately in this case, Tudor plays are more varied than modern ones, and use a vast range of theatrical techniques, implying a multifaceted relationship with the audience. Of particular interest seem to be the inductions, prologues, epilogues, dumb shows and stage directions present in most plays of the period. They all have in common the effect of introducing, closing or bringing to a temporary halt the usual dramatic intercourse. These passages, often considered as marginal, belong to the performance text (as opposed to the dramatic text) in their own right, and constitute a threshold between the non-dramatic environment and the dramatic creation. When you listen to a prologue, you suspect that something is brewing, that there will be a sequel to it, even if you do not know exactly what. A prologue does not exist in isolation. Take, for instance, the exchange between A and B at the beginning of Medwall's *Fulgens and Lucres*: one might think that they are just two poor unemployed blokes, who strongly deny that they could be actors—until one of the two admits that he has some knowledge of the plot of the play that is coming, and then immediately engages in the delivery of a regular, and particularly emphatic, prologue, in the form of a detailed summary of the plot.

There are numerous types of prologue: some are no more than a few words of welcome for the spectators, a call for attention and silence, or a stimulation of the audience's imagination (*Henry V*). Some take the form of a discussion about the different dramatic genres, tragedy, comedy, and so forth (*Warning for Fair Women* [1599]), or a presentation of the play by some allegorical character (Fame in *The Three Ladies of London* [1581]), or a heavenly court (*The Rare Triumphs of Love and Fortune* [1582]). Those, I will call formal prologues. Of greater interest for our purposes are the muses that introduce *The Misfortunes of Arthur* (1587) or the Ceres and Mercury prologue of *The Cobbler's Prophecy* (1589), as well as the symbolic scenes with allegorical characters or plots (*The Spanish Tragedy* [1590] or *The True Tragedy of Richard III* [1594]), or scenes staging historical or legendary characters (e.g., Sesostos in *Jocasta* [1566]). The dramatist himself may play the part of Prolocutor (Bale's *Three Laws*, *St. John*, *Temptation of Our Lord*). In all these cases, the credibility of the action and

characters of the prologue rests on their belonging, one way or the other, to extra-dramatic history, society or culture, so to a reality whose existence does not depend on the following dramatic action.[2]

In this paper, I wish to draw attention to the particular situation created when a poet is part of the prologue as a character, or simply quoted. The presence of a poet may be interesting for a double reason: he is, first, a historical figure and, secondly, the creator of a fiction similar to the play he introduces. In what has been described as Skelton's "*Apologia pro vita sua*", that is, in his *Garland of Laurel*, we read that, entering the Palace of Fame, he meets with three poets, Gower, Chaucer and Lydgate, who welcome him to that seat of eternal glory.[3] Although the idea is jocularly presented in the form of a dream, Skelton certainly wishes to imply that he also belongs to the magic circle of the elect. Thus is constituted the quartet of "old" English poets that were revered throughout the sixteenth century. By a curious coincidence they are all four included (each appearing only once) in the prologues of four plays written at the turn of the century: Chaucer, in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (1613); Lydgate, in Tarlton's *The Plot of the Seven Deadly Sins* (1588); Gower in *Pericles* (1607); and Skelton in the two parts of Munday's Robert, Earl of Huntington plays, *Downfall* and *Death* (1597).

Pericles

Shakespeare manifests no ambitions of originality when he opens the play *Pericles* under the aegis of "Ancient Gower": "To sing a song that old was sung, / From ashes ancient Gower is come" (I.Cho.1-2). The terms "old", "ancient" and "ashes" give to the first two lines of *Pericles* a melancholy and conservative ring. Indeed, Shakespeare was being conservative in both subject matter and form. He admits he found his plot in a well-known story from Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, in the same way as Barnabe Barnes had used Guicciardini's *History of Italy* in his *Devil's Charter*. In both cases the borrowing is explicit and advertised: Guicciardini appears as prologue to Barnes' play; so does Gower, who alludes to his own book when he declares that "lords and ladies … / Have *read* it" (I.Cho.7-8, italics mine). While Barnes' Guicciardini only gives a short commentary of a dumb show in

---

2   The relationship between extra-dramatic reality and the fictional creation of the play is particularly well illustrated by the dialogue between Truth and Poetry, used as a Prologue to *The True Tragedy of Richard III.* This play, a history play, is presented as being "Truth's pageant" (l. 67).

3   See Skelton, ed. Henderson, p. xix. For Skelton's welcome in the Palace of Fame, see *Garland*, ll. 1135-39 and 1156-62. See also Walker, p. 57.

the opening words of his play—"Thus, first with golden bribes he did corrupt / The purple conclave" (ll. 60-61)—Gower is more prolix, as there is at the opening of *Pericles* no visual spectacle, no dumb show on which he could rely to impart to the spectators the main lines of the plot. As a quasi-contemporary of Chaucer he unnecessarily insists on his own antiquity, and in the eyes of the spectators of 1607, addressed as "you born in these latter times" (11), he easily appears as a representative of a long-gone Ricardian past. But, beside the written word, Gower insists on another sort of tradition, that of popular festivals—"ember-eves" (referring to the liturgical *quatuor tempora*) and "holy-ales" (6),[4] during which legends and tales were not only told but sung ("To sing a song that old was sung")—and he then asks the spectators "to accept his rimes" (12) (which can refer either to singing or to reciting), and "to hear an old man sing" (13), which can evoke a minstrel's performance. These allusions to folk traditions are deliberately used to produce a romantic atmosphere.

There are also textual proofs of the existence and influence of the play's sources, not only Gower's *Confessio Amantis,* but also Lawrence Twine's *The Patterne of Painefull Adventures*, of which we find, if not exact quotations, at least paraphrases in the text of *Pericles*.[5] Gower, in fact, returns at the beginning of each act, mostly as commentator on a dumb show or a tableau adumbrating the following action. This recurring presence helps the spectator structure the play by giving him information about the complexities of the plot, while allowing him to concentrate on particularly striking events (e.g., Pericles shipwrecked on the sea-side near Pentapolis at the beginning of Act Two, or his speech from the ship's deck at the beginning of Act Three). So the invitation addressed to the spectators to use their imagination (IV.Cho.1) is anything but an invitation to dream freely or extemporize, and the spirit of Gower reminds his human counterpart, "old Gower", of the importance of the accuracy of the play: "this 'longs the text" (II Cho.40).

Like *The Travels of Three English Brothers*,[6] by John Day, William Rowley, and George Wilkins, *Pericles* is built on a succession of passages seen, that is, explicit, in

---

4 In the prologue to *A Tale of a Tub*, Jonson refers to "Wakes and Ales", and considers the stories told on such occasions (old wives' tales) as "authorities" or "country precedents".

5 For references of passages influenced by Gower or Twine see Hoeniger, ed., Introd., pp. xiv-xvii. The play contains a prologue, four choruses and an epilogue.

6 Notice, in the third Chorus of *Travels*, three occurrences of "suppose" (799-820) and the synonymous "intreate your thoughts" (800). In the second chorus, "Our storie then so large we cannot give / All things in acts" (663-64) underlines the alternation between "acts", i.e., staged actions based upon

which the characters play their parts, as it were, "realistically", and, on the other hand, tableaux (the dumb shows), which, although perceived by the eye, are not really "seen" because they can be understood or deciphered only with the help of commentaries (the choruses). This is, then, a kind of indirect perception, or perception at a remove, which demands an effort on the part of the spectator, creating distance, or rather juxtaposing two stages, in the perception of the spectacle: the dumb show and/or the poet's speech conjuring up the image of the poetic source, the romantic, medieval or traditional past; and, on another level, the "acting", which is a sort of bridge between a real or re-created collective memory and the actual re-enactment of the same events in a game which is never presented as anything but a game, an illusory poetic creation[7] in which actors of flesh and blood act and speak in place of, and in imitation of, the "historical" characters. This denudation of the creative process is certainly suitable for securing maximum audience participation.

The Two Noble Kinsmen

The Two Noble Kinsmen, by Shakespeare and Fletcher, has a less strictly structured composition. No regular return of the chorus indicates the change from one act to the next. Only at the end of the play does the Epilogue re-establish direct contact with the audience. By again using the word "tale" (Epi.12), the Epilogue takes up the concept found in the Prologue of *Pericles*, which is there expressed by "song". A special emphasis is laid on the notion by the phrase, "For 'tis no other" (13), in the next line. Thus the cultural nature of the story which constitutes the basis of the theatrical action is made clear. During the play we watch the actors that embody the characters of the tale; we listen to their words, but the question arises: should we have faith in a tale?

The Prologue tells us that this is not just any tale: "it has a noble breeder and a pure" (Pro.10). Indeed, the reference text, Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, ranks among the most famous. It was certainly known by a majority of educated spectators; the author was a real national hero, probably the most representative English poet for an early seventeenth-century spectator, a figure just as impressive as Shakespeare would be for later generations. The image associated with

dialogue, and link passages that sum up journeys or the most intricate parts of the plot, or provide moral or psychological appreciation ("trayterously" [668], "base" [669] and "credulous" [670]).

7   See n. 2 above on Truth and Poetry in *The True Tragedy of Richard III*.

Chaucer is that of poetic perfection, and the task of the dramatists who take up the same plot is to imitate that model without ever hoping to reach the same standard. The imitation of Chaucer was the duty of the poets after him, Lydgate and Skelton included. The source of the play, Chaucer's tale, appears, then, not as a piece of fiction, but as a historical fact, just like Chaucer's fame, which has no equal "'twixt Po and Silver Trent" (Pro.12). The story of Palamon and Arcite had not been told by Chaucer alone; it was one of the most popular legends at the end of the Middle Ages, traditional lore which could be considered by any citizen as a personal treasure. We can also imagine that the great success of Richard Edwards' lost *Palamon and Arcite*, performed before the Queen at Cambridge in 1566, was in all minds, and constituted an event which confirmed the reliability of the story.[8]

So, what Shakespeare's contemporaries considered as being "the truth" in a literary work did not exactly coincide with today's demands in the scientific field, but was rather grounded on information and events established by human evidence and experience, or social consent; and a good approach to the relationship between the reliability of the sources and the esthetic experience of the theatre-goer can be found in these lines from the Prologue to *Damon and Pithias* (1571):

> [the matter] which here we shall present is this, *Damon and Pithias,*
> A rare example of friendship true. It is no legend-lie,
> But a thing once done, indeed, as histories descry,
> Which, done of yore in long time past, yet present shall be here
> Even as it were in doing now, so lively it shall appear. (Edwards, ll. 30-34)

The Downfall and Death of Robert Earl of Huntington

Let us now turn to Munday's *The Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntington* and its sequel, *The Death* (both 1597). Both plays use as prologue another famous English poet, John Skelton. Skelton (1460-1529) was the most recent of the four English poets used as presenters in late Tudor and early Stuart plays, and could still be considered in 1597 as part of contemporary history, as he had lived the whole of his active life under Tudor rule. But at the same time, the play takes us back to leg-

---

8   "[B]ecause of the Queen's presence, several eye-witnesses left detailed accounts" (Potter, ed., p. 46), which in their turn could be held as proof of the historicity of the story. Furthermore, a song from that play can be found in a seventeenth-century MS, and so could have been known in 1613 (Potter, ed., p. 46).

endary times, as it belongs to the abundant production of Robin Hood literature of the turn of the century.[9]

The part played by Skelton in this play is more active than, and different from, those of the poets used in *Pericles* or *The Two Noble Kinsmen.* Skelton appears as a poet and under his own name only twice in Part I (*Downfall*) and once in Part II (*Death*). Part I begins as a realistic play with a conversation between Skelton and Sir John Eltham. We gradually understand that Skelton and his interlocutor have prepared, at the request of King Richard, an interlude, which soon turns out to be a Robin Hood play. Furthermore, this play, as we learn, was written by Skelton himself, for he declares, paraphrasing the well-known saying, "Many talk of Robin Hood, that never shot in his bow, / But Skelton writes of Robin Hood what he doth truly know" (ll. 79-80), and he quite naturally suggests that he, the author, will stand prologue to the play, in order to explain the opening dumb show.

But there is more to it than that: we soon learn that Skelton takes the part of Friar Tuck and Sir John Eltham will play Little John (ll. 20-21), while other members of the Court take secondary roles (l. 76). According to a well-known trick, this sort of impromptu rehearsal becomes the play of the *Downfall,* supposedly performed in the presence of King Richard. So Skelton enjoys a double status in the play: his fame as a poet would have been warrant enough to justify the audience's belief in the events reported under his authority (so much the better in this case, as he was also a dramatist and not only a poet), but Skelton is also present throughout the play under the disguise of a character. Taking the part of Friar Tuck was not a random choice: Skelton's Friar Tuck is a notable manager and manipulator, in a role somewhat akin to the Vice of the almost contemporary interludes.

The spectators watching the play in 1597 supposedly see the same spectacle as that given for Richard, but from a different perspective in time. The first performance and the events it contains constitute in a sense the referential "truth" of the later occasion. In order to reinforce the "long ago and far away" atmosphere of the play, medieval allusions are dropped here and there, such as the presence of allegorical characters, including Ambition and Insurrection in the

9   The Robin Hood stories were criticized by Langland as early as 1377; a similar attitude is to be found in the author of *Dives and Pauper, c.* 1426-27. There was a performance of a Robin Hood play at Exeter, and many more after 1475. See Pollard, pp. 9-14. Among the abundant literature on the Robin Hood theme, we refer the reader to the thirty-two tales edited by Child, vol. 3.

dumb shows (*Death*, l. 252), ballads (*Downfall,* ll. 773-817, *Death,* ll. 815-26) and, signifi-cantly, occasional "ribble rabble rhymes skeltonical" (*Downfall*, l. 2141).[10]

The Plot of The Seven Deadly Sins

Like Skelton (and even more so!), Tarlton belonged to the Tudor show-biz world. No dramatic text remains of his production, but it seems probable that he wrote tragic as well as comic pieces.[11] The only extant document is the plot of the second part of *The Seven Deadly Sins* (1590). The poet that serves his turn in this play is Lydgate, "flowre and tresure of poise",[12] who, although a monk, was also in his way a show-biz man. In the sixteenth century, Lydgate was probably held to be the first English playwright. Indeed, among his poems some, tradition-ally known as "mummings", seem particularly adapted to solemn occasions at the Court. What must be noted about these mummings is that they differ in an important way from most modern drama: they are not simply devised for enter-tainment. They represent the spoken part of, if not a religious, at least a formal and traditional, ceremony of homage to the sovereign (or other important per-sonages or institutions). So, the mumming (also called "disguising") bore the image of a "ceremony with a purpose"—social, political, etc.

No text of Tarlton's play remains—only a plot—and so a lot of guess-work is necessary to make it speak. Yet a comparison with contemporary plays allows us to supply the missing text with reasonable chances of guessing right. It seems that, instead of being a play with a central plot, possibly illustrated by dumb shows, *The Seven Deadly Sins* was made up of scenes, mostly dumb but pos-sibly partly speaking. The second part contains three such tableaux, illustrating three sins. The story of Gorboduc illustrates the sin of Envy, Sardanapalus the sin of Sloth, and Tereus and Philomela the sin of Lechery. The other four sins were probably the subject matter of the first part (which is lost). Eight times in the course of the document is to be found the tantalizing and exasperating stage direction, "Lidgate speaks", but his words are not reproduced. No doubt, in such

10   Skeltonics occur at *Downfall*, ll. 80-104, 1479-1525, 2040-58, 2148-63 and 2395-2401, and at *Death*, ll. 1-16 and 34-41. On one occasion (*Downfall,* ll. 818-19), the characters call each other by their "true" names and not by those of the characters they impersonate.

11   His only extant works are his *Jests* and *News from Purgatory*. Notice that the title "Seven Deadly Sins" would also fit Gower's *Confessio Amantis*.

12   Quoted from a letter from Benedict Burgh to Lydgate dating from the early 1440s, printed by Hammond, ed., pp. 189-90.

monologues, he explained the meaning of the dumb shows which are vaguely hinted at in the plot. A stage direction at the beginning of the plot, "A tent being plast on the stage for Henry the sixt—he in it—A sleepe", and another one a few lines further down, "Henry awakening", clearly show that the dumb scenes are "visions"[13] which appeared to Henry during his sleep, and by the same occasion are shown to the audience. At another point, Henry is mentioned as speaking to Lydgate. These two characters clearly constitute a link between the tableaux: the presence of these two historical characters, a king and a poet—the latter responsible for an enormous literary production that was still popular in the sixteenth century—gives credit to the visions which constitute the body of the play. As in Munday's play, allegorical characters (Sloth, Envy and Lechery), who walk across the stage introducing each tableau, give the play a medieval flavour, and may remind the spectator that Lydgate himself played the role of presenter and interpreter in some of his own mummings.

Conclusion

> Why, how now, humorous George? What, as melancholy as a mantle-tree? Will you see any tricks of legerdemain, sleight of hand, cleanly conveyance, or *deceptio visus*? What will you see, gentlemen, to drive you out of these dumps?

These lines come from *Wily Beguiled*, a comedy in which, as is clear from its title, all is guile and deceit.[14] The leader of the game is a knavish character, very similar to the Vice of the contemporary interludes, whose tutelary spirit is the facetious and mischievous Robin Good Fellow, and who, at some point in the story, dresses like a devil to frighten the scholar, Sophos. But the truth will out, and the play ends in bliss and marriages.

The contrast between the plays staging truths and a spectacle of pure illusion can be illustrated by a comparison of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* with *The Merry Devil of Edmonton*, or of *Nice Wanton* with *The London Prodigal*. At the end of Marlowe's play, Faustus is damned, whereas the "merry devil", Fabell, goes to meet his friends and unites the lovers; the wicked children of *Nice Wanton* go to hell, while the London prodigal is pardoned and gets married. The same contrast may be observed in popular stories. Legend has it that during a performance of *Doctor*

---

13   The dumb shows are called "strange visions" in Munday, *Death*, l. 886.
14   The title of this play, possibly written as early as 1566-67, evokes the "*moccum moccabitur*" theme in Heywood's *Play of Love.*

Faustus, "as Faustus was busy in his magical invocations, on a sudden they (the devils who helped Faustus in his conjuring) were all dashed … for they were all persuaded there was one devil too many amongst them". They interrupted the play and "the people understanding the thing as it was, everyman hastened to be first out of doors" (cited by Chambers, 3: 424). The other story is that of "A man who acted in a play as a devil".[15] Having no change of dress, the actor was returning home in his devil's costume, when, walking through a warren belonging to a neighbour in the village, he espied a priest and some other men hunting rabbits. Thinking he was a true devil, the poachers scampered away in fright. Our actor took the priest's horse loaded with the dead rabbits back to the warren's owner, where several servants successively closed the door upon him—until he managed to make himself known, and they all had a good laugh together. The play devils of the Mysteries could be a real threat, and provoked conversions. (Stories are numberless.) This could also be the effect of domestic plays. Hamlet voices this point of view:

> I have heard
> That guilty creatures sitting at a play
> Have, by the very cunning of the scene,
> Been struck so to the soul that presently
> They have proclaim'd their malefactions. (Shakespeare, *Ham.*, II.ii.584-88)

This moral fits in well with the tone of the play, since, like revenge plays in general, *Hamlet* is a serious play. In comedy, on the other hand, all is illusion. And the juggler's part, such as the one in the prologue of *Wily Beguiled*, can be taken as the symbol of such plays.

The four plays we have been dealing with in this essay are all serious plays. Their seriousness does not manifest itself in the religious, moral or historical fields, but in the romantic. In order to give them a solid basis of credibility, who could be more fitting than a poet?

---

15   From *A Hundred Merry Tales* (1526), in Oesterley, ed.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

BARNES, Barnabe. *The Devil's Charter, Edited from the Quarto of 1607*. Ed. R. B. McKerrow. Materialien zur Kunde des älteren englischen Dramas, vol. 6. Louvain: Uystpruyst, 1904.

CHILD, F. J., ed. *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. 6 vols. Boston: Houghton 1882–98.

DAY, John, William Rowley and George Wilkins. *The Travels of the Three English Brothers*. John Day. *Works*. Ed. A. H. Bullen. 1881; rpt. with an introd. by Robin Jeffs. London: Holland Press, 1963.

EDWARDS, Richard. *Damon and Pithias. A Select Collection of Old English Plays Originally Published by Robert Dodsley in the Year 1744*. 4th ed. rev. and enl. by William Carew Hazlett. 15 vols. London: Reeves and Turner, 1874-76. Vol. 4.

JONSON, Ben. *A Tale of a Tub. Ben Jonson's Complete Plays*. Introd. Felix E. Schelling. 2 vols. Everyman's Library. London: Dent, 1910. Vol. 2.

HAMMOND, Eleanor Prescott, ed. *English Verse between Chaucer and Surrey, Being Examples of Conventional Secular Poetry, Exclusive of Romance, Ballad, Lyric, and Drama, in the Period from Henry the Fourth to Henry the Eighth*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1927.

MUNDAY, Anthony. *The Downfall and Death of Robert Earl of Huntington. A Select Collection of Old English Plays Originally Published by Robert Dodsley in the Year 1744*. 4th ed. rev. and enl. by William Carew Hazlett. 15 vols. London: Reeves and Turner, 1874-76. Vol. 4.

OESTERLEY, Herman, ed. *Shakespeare's Jest Book: A Hundred Mery Talys, from the Only Perfect Copy Known*. London: J. R. Smith, 1866.

SHAKESPEARE, William. *Hamlet*. Ed. Harold Jenkins. The Arden Shakespeare (2nd ser.). London: Methuen, 1982.

____. *Pericles*. Ed. F. D. Hoeniger. The Arden Shakespeare (2nd ser.). London: Methuen, 1963.

SHAKESPEARE, William, and John Fletcher. *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Ed. Lois Potter. The Arden Shakespeare (3rd ser.). London: Thompson Learning, 1997.

SKELTON, John. *John Skelton's Complete Poems*. Ed. Philip Henderson. 3rd ed. London: Dent, 1959.

Tarleton, Richard. *The Plot of the Seven Deadly Sins. Dramatic Documents from the Elizabethan Playhouses; Stage Plots: Actors' Parts: Prompt Books.* Ed. W. W. Greg. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1931.

The True Tragedy of Richard III. Shakespeare's Library: A Collection of the Plays, Romances, Novels, Poems, and Histories Employed by Shakespeare in the Composition of His Works, with Introductions and Notes. Ed. William Carew Hazlitt. 2nd ed. London: Reeves and Turner, 1875.

Wily Beguiled. A Select Collection of Old English Plays Originally Published by Robert Dodsley in the Year 1744. 4th ed. rev. and enl. by William Carew Hazlett. 15 vols. London: Reeves and Turner, 1874-76. Vol. 4.

Secondary Sources

Chambers, E. K. *The Elizabethan Stage.* 4 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923.

Pollard, A. J. *Imagining Robin Hood: The Late-medieval Stories in Historical Context.* London: Routledge, 2004.

Walker, Greg. *John Skelton and the Politics of the 1520s.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.